

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL OPEN MEETING  
ARNCOTT PARISH COUNCIL, VILLAGE HALL  
ON Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> MAY 2017, AT 7.30PM**

**Present:** Paul Wilson (Chairman), Martin Byrne, and Lee Savidge.

**Apologies:** Ade Dore, Nicola Smith, Di Selby

**Also Present:**

20 Parishioners  
Marc Hendrickse Chairman Bardwell Football Club  
Kevin Jessop (Garrison Adjutant)  
John Cooper (VHC)  
Representatives of Village organisations and societies.

**1. Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> h May 2016, having been circulated, were approved as drawn.

**2. Chairman's Report**

Attached.

**3. Finance**

The Clerk reported that, as residents will see in the packs of papers in front of them, the Parish Council has a balance of £128074.29 in its Bank account at the end of March 2017, although £75,000 of this is held in a savings account with the Cambridge Building Society. Some of this money is to cover maintenance costs in the new playgrounds that have been transferred to the Parish Council.

The Parish Council has also been advised by Cherwell District Council that it is holding just under £50,000 to improve "off site sports facilities" in the Village. The Clerk asked if there were any volunteers present who would work with the Parish Council to develop a project to improve and fence the Playing field. In addition there is a further £7500 allocated towards a community art project.

**4. Councillor's Report**

The meeting was advised that David Hughes (CDC Councillor for the Parish) had attended earlier and updated the Council on CDC's proposals to improve the parking in Woodpiece Road. Proposals will be considered by CDC's Executive in July , and provided that they are approved, work could start before the end of the year.

The Conservative candidate for the OCC election attended the meeting and introduced himself to Councillors and residents

**5 Garrison**

Kevin Jessop, the Garrison Adjutant, introduced himself to the meeting. He was asked to make enquiries about the ownership of the ditch running between the Playing field and the MOD land.

C/O Richard Hallam will be taking over responsibility for the DEMS training site.

**6 Bardwell Football Club**

The Chairman reported that 16/7 had been a good year for Bardwell Football Club. The number of players has increased, and the Club is now running 2 under 7 teams . The have about 150 members and are one of the larger football clubs in the Bicester area. The football

season is coming to a close, but training will continue until the summer holidays, and then start again in September. The Club is run by volunteers and they do not turn children away if they cannot afford to pay the weekly fees. They have some players from Arncott, and it was agreed that details of the Club would be included in the Parish News. Their Annual presentation Day will take place on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2017.

#### **7. Scouts.**

The First Ambrosden Scout group has started using the Village Hall for scout activities on a Friday evening. Currently they have 12 members, and are looking for volunteers to work with the Scout group (10-14) and the Beaver group (8-10). They are looking for parents to become involved (even on an occasional basis) and plan to have a stand at the Village fete. Currently they are fundraising for activities and equipment.

Members of the group are charged £25 per school term, and their aim is to double the numbers attending the group.

It was agreed that the Scout leaders would come along to the July meeting of the Parish Council to report on progress.

#### **8. Village Hall**

See Chairman's report attached..

#### **9. Arncott Community Association**

Over the last year the club received payments of £1361 and paid out £495 in winnings. This was spent on a very successful Children's party with small gifts, party bags and an Entertainer, and a Senior Citizens Christmas party, which was also a huge success.

Thanks were given to Jim May for auditing the accounts..

#### **10. Crafters' Club.**

Arncott Crafter's Club meets every Thursday in the Common Room at Greenfields between 6.30 and 8.30pm. Current crafts are knitting, card making, crochet, quilting and cross stitch. The cost is 31.00 per session and new members are very welcome. There is also a dancing class at 7.15pm on Wednesdays – the cost is £2.00 each.

#### **11 Friendship Club**

The Friendship Club has been running for about 25 years and now meets at 1.45 pm on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of every month. in the Common Room at Greenfields.. They have a wide variety of events, including Bingo, quiz and raffles with refreshments. It is suitable for every taste and all residents of Arncott are very welcome. If necessary transport to the Club can be arranged.

#### **12 Any Other Business**

The Murcott Road build out was questioned. Residents were advised that OCC would be installing another "inch point" in the Murcott Road by St George's Barracks. The Parish Council are hoping that work will start after August 2017.

Concerns were raised that the path from Orchard Close does not continue and school children have to cross the road twice to reach the stop for the school bus. The Council agreed to ask the Clerk to raise this with OCC.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.45pm

ARNCOTT PARISH COUNCIL  
ANNUAL OPEN MEETING – TUESDAY MAY 2nd 2017  
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

#### INTRODUCTION

Good evening ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to this open meeting and thank you for coming along.

The purpose of this evening's meeting is to give you the opportunity to hear the annual reports from the parish council and the voluntary organisations that we have in our village. We also have representatives from the MOD, Bardwell Youth FC and the Scout group. Towards the end of the meeting there will be an opportunity for you to ask any questions that you may have.

Please note that the parish council meetings are held here in the village hall on the first Tuesday of each month starting at 7.30pm. There are usually twelve meetings per year plus the annual open meeting in May. All parishioners are welcome to come to the meetings and talk with the parish council about any items of concern that they have relating to our parish.

#### PARISH COUNCILLORS

Your parish council currently has six members and many of you here will know who we are. For those of you who don't, my name is Paul Wilson and I am the current parish council chairman. The other five councillors are Lee Savidge who is the current vice chairman, Martin Byrne, Adrian Doore, Di Selby and Nicola Smith. All of your councillors live in the village.

This time last year I was a fairly new recruit to the parish council. Taking over from John Cooper as parish council chairman was a little daunting so, on a personal note, I would like to say a special thank you to John, Anne, Lee and Martin for always being available to give me their advice, guidance and the benefit of their experience. I'm also grateful for the fact that they didn't put my telephone number on their call blocking lists.

All of your parish councillors are volunteers and give their time freely. However, just like everyone else, the councillors have many other commitments in their lives so finding time slots to carry out parish council work isn't always that easy to do. All councillors attend the monthly meetings whenever they can but there are times when it isn't possible to have a full council at a meeting. However, a minimum of three councillors have been present at every meeting since last May so all of those meetings have been quorate. Although councillors are legally entitled to claim a small financial allowance each year for services given, no expenses or allowances have been paid to any councillor during the last twelve months.

#### PARISH CLERK

Our parish clerk is Mrs Anne Davies. Anne is not a member of the parish council but is employed by it. Anne's role carries a big responsibility and she plays a very pivotal part in the running of your parish council. Anne takes care

of the necessary clerical work needed, maintains the mandatory financial records that are required and advises the parish council with regard to legal and financial issues. We all benefit from Anne's experience, wisdom and knowledge. Her advice and guidance on the various parish matters that arise is always much appreciated. It's fair to say that we would definitely struggle without her know-how so, on behalf of us all, I would like to say a very special thank you to Anne for all of the work that she does on behalf of everyone in our village.

## WHAT DOES THE PARISH COUNCIL DO ?

Your parish council does its best to ;

- 1) Make reasoned and balanced decisions that it believes are in the best interests of our community.
- 2) Ensure that the money belonging to our parish is used wisely.
- 3) Help with parishioners' problems and concerns where those are within our remit.
- 4) Liaise with the appropriate authorities to try and get various projects, repairs and work carried out as is necessary throughout our village.
- 5) Ensure that the views and feelings of our parishioners are made known to Cherwell, Oxfordshire and other authorities and organisations as appropriate.

The work needed for all of these things is ongoing and gets done during each month on a part-time basis. Most people will be oblivious as to the work that goes on to try and get our village problems resolved. A councillor will typically be involved with making telephone calls, writing, sending and answering emails, occasionally meeting up with district and / or county council people, going to the occasional meeting and generally trying to arrange for things to happen.

Common issues such as speeding, parking, road and pavement repair, street lights etc. require action to be taken by the Oxfordshire and / or Cherwell authorities. Unfortunately, all your parish council can do regarding these problems is to keep making contact with those authorities to try and get resolution. To this end the parish council maintains close contact with both our district and county councillors in an effort to make sure that they are aware of our problems and concerns and to ask them for their help and advice as necessary.

Items and issues of concern to the village are discussed at the monthly meetings as they occur throughout the year. These items and issues are documented in the minutes of the parish council meetings and they also form the basis of our village entry in the Parish Matters magazine. The minutes of our parish council meetings are available on the parish council website or on request from the parish clerk.

## WHAT HAS THE PARISH COUNCIL DONE ?

A few examples of things done over the last year would be the repairs to the vandalised bus shelters, establishing a cutting and maintenance plan for roadside verges following on from Oxfordshire County Council's decision to stop verge cutting, making arrangements for surveys and maintenance of trees and hedgerows, arranging for the purchase, installation and training course for defibrillator units, getting a first aid training course organised,

reporting and chasing up street light, road, pavement and drain issues. Not that much at first glance but a lot of work needed to make it all happen.

Issues requiring the involvement of the highways and planning departments of the district and county councils are invariably long, drawn-out affairs. Getting repairs done to our roads, pavements, drains and street lights are no exception. Progress on the Woodpiece Road parking issue and the new Murcott Road build out has been slower than we would have liked. At various times during the last year your parish council and its clerk have been contacting people within the district and county council departments with letters, emails and phone calls in an effort to get solutions. Some of these efforts have resulted in some success. An open meeting recently took place to discuss possible solutions to the Woodpiece Road parking issue. Oxfordshire County Council agreed to our need for the additional road build-out on Murcott Road. We have been advised that this could possibly be built in August this year. Some new street lights have recently been erected along Ploughley Road. Unfortunately, seven months on, we still have no date from Oxfordshire County Council regarding the repair needed to the street light in the alleyway between Woodpiece Road and Murcott Road.

## FINANCE AND FUNDING

The day to day funding required for the village is paid for from the village precept money that the parish receives each year. The precept money is a part of your council tax bill and averages out at around £40 per household per year. The parish will receive a precept of £15,000 for 2017 / 2018. The financial report compiled by our parish clerk shows in detail where your money is spent and you can see the report should you wish to do so. The parish finances are audited on an annual basis. The precept money is used to pay for many things and a few examples would be the cost of buildings insurance, clerk's salary, playground equipment inspection and repair, emptying of dog poo bins, clerical costs, audit costs, repairs, cleaning. A major cost is the grass cutting that needs to be done several times a year on the open green spaces and roadside verges within the village.

The parish is in a sound financial position with total overall cash assets of around £120,000. £75,000 is deposited in a savings account with the Cambridge Building Society. £50,000 of that amount is kept in reserve for maintenance to the village playgrounds and equipment. The parish is also entitled to some additional funding. Oxfordshire County Council is currently holding around £12,500 so this money will be spent on the construction of the new road build-out along Murcott Road. Cherwell District Council is holding £49,996 which can be used for improving off-site sports facilities, pitches and changing facilities within our locality. Cherwell is also holding a further £7,500 which can be used for a village art project. A year ago, no-one in the district and county authorities knew where this funding had gone or how much funding there was. A massive thanks is therefore due to our clerk, Anne, for all of her hard work and tenacity in pursuing those authorities and getting them to track it all down.

## COMMUNITY

With regard to our community, the parish council would ask you to please contact the police and report any antisocial behaviour that you see such as the driving of cars and motorbikes on the football pitch, acts of vandalism, damage, trespass, lighting of fires, underage drinking etc. The cost of

repairing the damage to the vandalised bus shelters was £650 and that came out of our precept money and should have been used for something else.

If anyone has an idea for a community project then please send in the details to the parish email address or get in touch with any parish councillor. Funds may be available for that idea.

It is pleasing to report that Bardwell Youth FC continue to use the village football pitch. This is a mutually beneficial arrangement for the parish and the football club. The club chairman is here with us tonight to let us know how the season went for the youngsters and what the club's future plans are. We now also have a weekly Scout group here in the village hall on Friday evenings and the Scout leaders will talk about this a little later on. Hopefully, the presence in the village of both the football club and the Scout group will encourage our local youngsters to get involved.

If there are any parents or other volunteers in the village who would like to help out, or re-establish the youth club, or any other sports teams, then please get in touch.

#### CLOSING REMARKS

I would like to say a very sincere thank you to all of my fellow councillors for all of the time they have given up and for the work they have done over the last twelve months on behalf of us all. Many thanks also to both our county councillor, Tim Hallchurch and our district councillor, David Hughes for all of their help and advice over the last twelve months. Both attend our monthly meeting whenever it is possible for them to do so. Particular thanks to David for all of his work on our behalf in progressing the Woodpiece Road parking issue. In addition to the parish councillors, there are many people in the village who give up their own time to be involved with our village community organisations. Without their sterling efforts there would not be any community organisations. These volunteers are involved with the Village Hall Management Committee, the Arncott Community Association, the Arncott Friendship Club and the Craft Club. Yet again, the vast majority of our villagers will be totally unaware of the hard work that these people put in behind the scenes for the benefit of others. So, finally, on behalf of the parish council and everyone else, I would like to say a massive thank you to all of those people involved with the running of our village community organisations.

Thank you very much.

Paul Wilson Chairman Arncott Parish Council 2nd May 2017

# **ARNCOTT VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR ANNUAL PARISH OPEN MEETING 2ND MAY 2017**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Committee was reformed at the VHMC AGM on 31st May last year, and consists of Christine Dunkin, Tricia Bowen, Terry Chiddle, Wendy Wilkins, Di Selby, Jim May, Josie Procter and me, and I was elected Chairman. Jim May agreed to continue as Treasurer until a replacement could be found.

Peter Forrest attended the meeting and offered to become the Secretary. This was unanimously accepted and Peter joined the committee.

Christine Dunkin continues as Lettings Secretary, and also looks after the hall and the notice boards.

Wendy Wilkins continues to run the 300 Club, with Marion Moore remaining as ACA Treasurer, and Gwen McEwen is also an ACA member.

VHMC meetings are held on the last Tuesday of each month, starting at 7.00pm in the Village Hall, except in December, giving eleven meetings per year, and parishioners are welcome to attend these meetings.

## **VHMC RESPONSIBILITIES**

The major responsibilities are to ensure that the village hall and surrounding area are properly maintained, keep the finances in good order, and make sure that the hall is compliant with all the laws and regulations regarding hiring out etc.

The trustees must also ensure that it is compliant with the rules and regulations to keep its charitable status, this is worth around £2,500 this year in not having to pay Council Tax on the hall, and allows the Parish Council to reclaim VAT on its associated expenditure.

## **FINANCE**

Jim May has prepared the Annual Financial Statement, which shows a balance of £11,931, a profit of £2,502 being made during the year. This was mainly due to the profits from the Fun Day of £966, the Christmas Table Top Sale and raffle made £180, refunds of £239 from SSE, and the extremely generous decision of the trustees of the Arccott in Need charity, which has not been used for a very long time, to close the charity and donate the balance of its funds to the village hall.

This amounted to £4,679, which was a lot more than originally anticipated, and the trustees stipulated that it was to be used for improvements to the hall and its facilities. We have spent £1,600 on new curtains and blinds, and £146 on replacing equipment, and will shortly be obtaining 100 new chairs, at an approximate cost of £1,500.

This donation means that we can continue to make much needed improvements to the facilities of the hall, whilst the Community Benefit donation from SunEdison is being used to improve the actual building, this year we have replaced all the windows and the main entrance doors, replaced all the radiators, added electrical sockets, boxed in the pipework and redecorated the main hall, at a total cost of approximately £8,000.

Further improvements to be carried out include redecorating the exterior of the building, putting security shielding on the gutter downpipes, and replacing the floor coverings in the 3 toilets.

Lettings, mainly to regular repeat users, have raised £3,362 this year, and donations amounted to £560, whilst these amount to a reduction of £1183 from 2015-16 the cost of utilities, cleaning, various improvements, maintenance and repairs etc also fell by £1414 to £4093.

This means that without the fund raising activities the hall would have lost about £170 in the last year, thereby showing the importance of these activities.

We have taken steps in conjunction with Utility Aid to fix our energy rates for the next 3 years for gas, and 4 years for electricity. Unfortunately as a small business the pool of energy suppliers available to us is quite small, and it has been decided to stay with the established national concerns, rather than taking a chance on smaller providers. We are also expecting to receive shortly a back-dated payment from SSE for the electricity generated by the solar system, this should be a healthy sum as we have not received any payments yet, and have generated over 13,000 units since installation.

I want to thank Jim for all his work as Treasurer, he has now handed over to Tricia Bowen, who was already a committee member, and there are vacancies on the committee. If anyone is interested in joining us, or getting involved in organising activities, please contact any VHMC member.

## **TRUSTEES**

The VHMC is formed from the Trustees, as per the Deed of Trust between the Parish Council and the VHMC, plus other members co-opted on by the committee. We also have regular attendances at our meetings by 'Friends of the Village Hall'. Trustees are either appointed by various village organisations, elected at this meeting, or co-opted by those already in place.

We have 7 trustees, at the AGM I was elected Chairman of the trustees, and Peter Forrest was elected as Vice Chairman, and also acts as secretary. If anyone is interested in becoming a trustee please contact anyone mentioned above.

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

We are now taking a comprehensive review of all of our facilities, processes, hiring agreements, documentation, etc under the general heading of health and safety, to ensure that we are fully legally compliant and that all the people who hire the hall are fully aware of their responsibilities when using the hall, kitchen, etc. This will



probably mean that additional notices will have to be put up in various areas of the building, if you do hire the hall please be aware that these are there for your protection and to ensure that you and everyone else can enjoy the occasion safely.

All the people I have mentioned above have given their time voluntarily to the village hall and the activities that have taken place, and I want to give them a huge thank you for all their efforts, which have meant that your village hall has remained a viable and integral part of the community.

John Cooper  
Chairman, Arncott Village Hall Management Committee  
1<sup>st</sup> May, 2017