

Ardington and Lockinge Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting for
Ardington and Lockinge Parish Council
Held Tuesday 10 January 2023, 8:00pm at the Loyd-Lindsay Rooms

Hugh Roberts (HR) Chairman	
Nicky Hancock (NH) Councillor	
Paul Gibbs (PG) Councillor	
Derek Morrow (DM) Councillor	
Ron East (RE) Councillor	

1.	Apologies	Actions
	John Hedgecock.	
2.	Declarations of Interests	
	There were no declarations of interests.	
3.	Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 8 November 2022	
	These were approved by Councillors and signed by the Chairman.	
4.	Matters arising from the Minutes of 8 November 2022 Meeting	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HR reported that one applicant for the Parish Clerk post had so far had emerged and that she seemed very well qualified. He had explained to this applicant that interviews could not take place until after the end of this month, but that we would hope to make an appointment swiftly thereafter. The advertisement for the vacancy will be repeated on the Parish Facebook site in the hope of encouraging further applications. DM reported on the RoSPA report on the Playground which had now been received. This highlighted a relatively small number of things requiring attention sooner rather than later, and of these the majority concerned such points as decayed timber fencing. Overall the report was reasonably positive. DM has kindly agreed to deal as far as possible with the points raised in connection with equipment. In discussion Councillors agreed that a future project for the Council should be a complete refurbishment and updating of the Playground. Council approved the payment of the RoSPA inspection invoice. DM reported that the Lockinge defibrillator required new pads. In discussion, Councillors felt there was some uncertainty about the external monitoring regime of the villages' defibrillators. NH undertook to enquire about this and report back. DM, who in the absence of a Clerk has kindly taken on the management of the repair and refurbishment of street lights, reported on the overall financial implications of the work that has been undertaken thus far and will in all probability be required in future. He has received and circulated quotations 	<p>NH to repeat the job advertisement on Facebook</p> <p>DM</p> <p>NH</p>

	<p>and invoices for work by Daniel Kerr, the electrician employed to date by the Council. These were felt to be unsatisfactory insofar as there was no clear indication of his current hourly charge (which would seem to be a great deal higher than a year ago), and that no account in his charges had been taken of the considerable amount of preparatory work undertaken (with no charge) by DM. The possibility of obtaining alternative estimates for future work was discussed but the point was made that finding an electrician prepared to undertake this sort of work has proved to be difficult if not impossible. In the light of the Council's concerns over the cost implications of this ongoing work, DM has undertaken to try and clarify with Daniel Kerr the way he calculates his charges.</p> <p>Councillors recognised that the funding of this work, which is essential for the wellbeing of the inhabitants of the villages, will make a big hole in the Council's finances, even though the work will be phased over a number of years. HR reported that he had spoken to Terry Bond, Chairman of CBPT, to enquire if this project would be likely to be supported by the Trust. Mr Bond indicated that there was every likelihood, but that a proper application, supported by figures, would need to be made by the end of February.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> JH has continued to monitor the website. No significant traffic recorded. 	<p>DM</p> <p>DM/HR</p>
<p>5. Reports</p> <p>No reports had been received, although our County Councillor had engaged in the matter of the proposed Music Festival (see below). HR undertook to enquire of those who normally reported (or in the case of our County and District Councillors) normally attended our meetings, whether they would be in a position to attend in future.</p>	HR	
<p>6. Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Payments already made and signed off by two authorised signatories were noted and approved by Councillors. Two further invoices were approved by Councillors and cheques were made out. The current balance at the bank was duly noted. The principal matter for discussion and approval was the budget and setting of the precept for 2023-24. In the absence of a Clerk, PG had assembled the documentation and prepared a comprehensive outline budget together with a carefully considered proposal for the precept. This considerable task had been carried out with the invaluable assistance of Carol Gibbs, for which work Councillors expressed their sincere appreciation. The point was very strongly made that our Council had slipped very considerably behind the average for neighbouring parishes of similar size. The proposed budget, which has taken account of factors such as the current rate of inflation, the increased cost of a Clerk (when appointed) and the undertaking of projects including the street lights, as well as the need to establish a contingency, indicates very clearly the need for a substantial increase in the precept. Without such an increase, Council recognised that it will find it difficult to fulfil its duty to maintain its responsibilities in the villages in an appropriate manner. Importantly, the financial effect on residents from such an increase would not be onerous. Following discussion, the Budget was approved and the proposal to apply for a new Precept of £15,800 was approved. HR undertook to submit the precept application form <p><u>Post Meeting Note:</u> The application has been submitted by email and an acknowledgement has</p>		

	been received.	
7.	<p>Matters arising from comments by Councillors at this Meeting</p> <p>HR reported that he had been contacted by our County Councillor in connection with the proposed Camp Soul Music Festival. Concerns had been raised with her by worried inhabitants of Ardington. Her concern as a County Councillor relates to traffic and access. HR copied her that section of our meeting in November (which she had been unable to attend) dealing with the proposed event and encouraged her to pursue the matter of licences with OCC and VWHDC. He also forwarded the email to our District Councillor.</p> <p>As requested at the Parish Council Meeting on 8 November, at which two representatives of the Sports Club were present, a public meeting was held on 16 December at the Sports Club. This was attended on behalf of the Council by NH, PG and RE. NH reported on the meeting and an abridged version follows:</p> <p><i>It became apparent in the meeting that the event was going ahead anyway, and that this gathering was only to try and reassure villagers. There was an admission from the Sports Club that communication from them had been poor, but they also claimed (quite wrongly) that we, as the Council, were at fault for not informing the villages about such an event, following an email they had sent us on the 3rd November. In this email they mentioned that they had discussed the event with the Estate and that they had had no objections; and at the Parish Council Meeting on 8 November, when asked why they had not consulted villagers about the proposal, they had said 'the Estate said it wasn't necessary'. It is clear from the Camp Soul website that this event had actually been planned and set in motion long before contacting the Council on 3 November. On 30th October 2022, the website stated 'we have a new home - Ardington Sports Club' and tickets were already on sale. Those of us at the meeting were not sure where this leaves the proceedings other than the event is going ahead, pending specific licensing by VWHDC.</i></p> <p>Other points raised and noted were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The state of the roads in the villages is increasingly poor and repairs previously carried out have not lasted. • There have been more power cuts in the villages than in previous years. • The salt bins, which have been checked by DM, are still full, owing to the (so far) relatively mild winter. 	
8.	<p>Items for Trumpeter and Facebook</p> <p>Advertisement for the Parish Clerk position will be repeated on Facebook</p>	
9.	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>7 March 2023 at 8pm.</p>	