

Ardington and Lockinge Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting for
Ardington and Lockinge Parish Council
Held Tuesday 12 July 2022, 8:00pm at the Loyd-Lindsay Rooms

Present	Apologies
Hugh Roberts (HR) Councillor/Chairman	Ron East Councillor
Derek Morrow (DM) Councillor	John Hedgecock Councillor
Nicky Hancock (NH) Councillor	
Paul Gibbs (PG) Councillor (by Zoom)	

1.	Apologies and Declarations of Interests Apologies were received from Ron East and John Hedgecock. There were no declarations of interests.	
2.	Minutes of the AGM and Council Meetings held on Tuesday 10 May These were approved and signed by the Chairman. As a result of the resignation of the Clerk (Megan Boyle), certified on 18 June, the action points noted in those Minutes are deferred until the appointment of a new Clerk	
3.	Chairman's update <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Karen Wheeler, recommended by OALC, was appointed on 28 June to organise the papers that were handed over by Megan Boyle and prepare them for the Annual Accounts and External Audit. She has carried out an extremely efficient and meticulous survey of all the documents and provided the Council with all the necessary paperwork to proceed. She has also provided a list of useful recommendations for the Council to consider, which provide the basis for this update. Some of these are to be actioned immediately, others will be deferred until the appointment of a new Clerk 2. The Annual Accounts were examined and approved and the Explanation of Variances 2021-2 was signed by the Chairman. These documents were deemed ready to be passed to the external auditor (Jane Olds). Councillors noted that the correct timespan for the Annual Accounts is 1 April to 31 March. [Post meeting note: all relevant papers will be delivered by the Chairman to Jane Olds on 14 July] 3. The outstanding bills were examined, payment approved and cheques signed by two signatories. These will be posted tomorrow. Some of these refer to the current year, for which period Karen Wheeler has started a new file. This will be taken over by the new Clerk when appointed. Councillors noted that in future all invoices must be paid directly by the Council. If this does not happen, VAT is not reclaimable. [Post meeting note: all cheques posted] 	

	<p>4. The Chairman and DM reported on their visit to NatWest Bank, Abingdon to obtain an up-to-date statement of the Parish account, to review and revise signatories and standing orders, and to enquire further about online banking, this latter being a strong recommendation. If correctly instituted, the Clerk would operate the online banking account, but payments would in every case require authorisation by two Councillors. Councillors agreed this will be instituted as soon as a new Clerk is appointed.</p> <p>5. Councillors having agreed that the Council is exempt from limited assurance review or the need for an Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), and having signed a paper to this effect, the Exemption Certificate, signed by the Chairman, will now be scanned and sent to Moores, while the full document will go to Jane Olds for completion. [Post meeting note: certificate has been emailed to Moores]</p> <p>6. The VAT reclaim was examined, approved and signed by the Chairman ready for posting tomorrow. [Post meeting note: this has been done]</p> <p>7. Public Liability Insurance is covered and DM will copy the relevant document for display on the Parish noticeboards.</p> <p>8. Council agreed on the absolute necessity for a Locum Clerk to be appointed as soon as possible. PG undertook to investigate further the three names supplied by OALC.</p> <p>9. Councillors discussed the OALC recommendation, supported by Karen Wheeler with her experience of working on the Parish accounts, that the advertisement for a new Clerk should be revised in respect of hours and salary. The proposal is that the hours should be reduced to 5 hours/week and the salary increased from £10.04/hour to £12.98/hour, while the paid holiday entitlement should be increased 40 hours to 48 hours. The home office allowance would remain at £26 p.c.m. OALC and Karen Wheeler felt that with this adjustment there was a better chance of attracting a new Clerk, given that there are a number of Clerk vacancies at present. Councillors agreed this proposal and recommended that the advertisement should be briefer than originally drafted (bearing in mind the difference between an advertisement and a Job Description).</p> <p>10. Councillors noted that the Precept had been increased this year, following discussion in January. With the current level of Precept, the Council should be able to manage this year, but there would be little in reserve for any emergency. It was agreed that the incoming Clerk would certainly need to review the figure again.</p> <p>11. The Chairman reported that he had contacted VWH Planning and asked for all Planning Notifications to be sent to him for distribution until a new Clerk is appointed. A single very opaque Notification has been issued, in connection with the Andersey Farm development. The Chairman will circulate an explanatory letter, received since from VWH Planning.</p>	
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4.	Reports from District Councillor, County Councillor and PCSO None received.	
5.	Date of next meeting Confirmed for 13 September 2022 at 8pm in the Loyd-Lindsay Rooms	