

REPORT ON THE PHOENIX
for Ashwick Parish Council Meeting
Wednesday 22 May 2024

When The Beacon announced that it would cease publication, we were dismayed and felt this left a huge gulf in communication amongst and between the communities. I mentioned it to Lizzie, who said "Oh that's awful. We should try and continue it." Little did we know what we were taking on!

As this was no longer to be a Parish magazine, we needed to start from scratch. A new company had to be formed with charitable status - a Community Interest Company, registered with Companies House - and we had to find a bank prepared to take us on as an account holder. This all took time, so it was a full five months before we were able to circulate our first issue.

We are a small team - Lizzie Lewis and I are co-Directors and we were joined from the start by Will Thomas, who does a fantastic job preparing the layout every month ready for the printer. Not only is Will a busy architect, he has recently become engaged, so we are extremely grateful that he can spare time each month to get the magazine to the printers on time. Without Will we would be lost.

Also an essential part of *The Phoenix* is our team of 30 distributors, who manage to get out whatever the weather to make sure every household gets their free copy of the magazine.

We rely heavily on our contributors to provide interesting content - Jill Townend who has an encyclopaedic knowledge of poetry for every occasion, Lin Thorley, who has provided wonderful pictures and stories from our local history, Zac Cambourne for his delicious recipes, to name but a few. We are always looking for more stories and would love to hear from our readers, maybe with their opinions for a Letters page or news about a local club or society, or suggestions for articles. Any promotion which is for the good of the community will be free of charge - advertising rates are only charged if money is being raised for a commercial, rather than charitable, venture. Of course, if you wished to promote something non-commercial but would like to make a donation, we would not refuse!

We are extremely grateful to all those advertisers who were willing to take a risk and support us, and to our generous sponsors - in our first year these were Morris & Perry, Massey Wilcox, LKAB, and the parishes of Ashwick and Binegar. We have also received donations from individuals with messages of encouragement. All these sources of revenue have been vital to our survival and we are proud to announce that, in our first 12 months, we have been able to carry forward a small balance to the following year - a projected balance of £185.

We are now working hard to make sure we have sufficient funds to continue with *The Phoenix* for a further year. Our outgoings are easy to predict, mainly printing costs of £565 per month, an annual fee to Adobe for the software package (£187 for the current year) and sundry fees, eg to Companies House. Therefore, assuming that printing costs are not increased during the year, our target is to raise £7,200.

So far we have confirmed advertising revenue of £4,400 and sponsorship of £800. If the remaining sponsors continue with the same donations as for 2023-24, this will bring in a further £1,000, making a total income of £6,200. We are therefore almost there. However, some of the advertisers we are hoping to attract may well decide not to - either because they are too busy and cannot take on any more business, or because they believe they can do just as well (or better) using social media.

We do not wish to charge for the magazine - (a) we see it as a vital service to the community and (b), looking at it very selfishly, it would be a huge administrative headache to manage! Therefore to make sure we survive another year and reach our second birthday, we do need a grant from the Parish Council(s).

Monica Mundy
Phoenix Community Magazine CIC