

ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL

CLERK'S BRIEFING NOTES

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING ON 1 April 2021

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Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Agenda Item 9

Correspondence

Ltr to G Long – Allotment Trustee Appointment – 13 Mar 2021

Ltr to M Ordish – Allotment Trust Appointment – 13 Mar 2021

Ltr to Mr Baughan – Dog Bin on Ham Lane – 26 Mar 2021

All other correspondence by email.

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Agenda Item 8c

Guidance from OALC previously circulated by email on 11 March 2021.

In the continuing absence of a solid statement from central government it would seem sensible to start planning for a possible return to physical meetings but in the hope that it won't be necessary. Hold the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and the Annual Parish Meeting virtually (if you don't have elections this year) by the 6th May. It is difficult to try and bring items or projects forward such is the reactive nature of much of the work of parish councils. We suggest you have one eye on the horizon and try to be prepared but hope that your planning won't be needed.

NALC has general advice on its website here <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/coronavirus#preparing-for-the-possible-return-of-face-to-face-meetings> but you know your village hall or usual meeting place better than NALC. Whether the 2m rule will still apply after 7th May is uncertain but natural caution would suggest if a return to physical meetings is necessary you will need to apply sensible covid safety measures:

- Providing hand sanitiser to those entering the meeting room and making sure hand sanitiser is readily available in the room itself.
- Staggering arrival and exit times for staff, councillors and members of the public.
- Placing seating at least 2-metres apart
- Ensuring everyone wears face masks.
- Holding paperless meetings
- If papers are provided, people should be discouraged from sharing with others and asked to take the papers with them at the end of the meeting to minimise how many people handle the papers.
- Arranging seating so people are not facing each other directly.
- Choosing a venue with good ventilation, including opening windows and doors where possible
- Choosing a large enough venue to allow distancing – this may mean choosing a different venue to what the council used before.
- The council (or venue owner/operator) will need to identify the venue's maximum capacity in their risk assessment, taking into account the need for social distancing. Consider how the council will ensure this capacity is not exceeded and how it will manage the situation if more people wish to attend than capacity allows. For example, could meetings be live-streamed, or could members of the public submit questions via email?
- If the venue has an NHS QR code to support test and trace then all attendees should register using that app, for those without access to the app they should register attendance in line with the venue's test and trace procedure. NB all venues in hospitality, the tourism and leisure industry, close contact services, community centres and village halls must have a [test and trace procedure](#)
- Venues must conform with the government guidance for [multi-purpose community facilities](#) and for [council buildings](#). If the venue is run by the council then the council must take responsibility for this, otherwise, the council can ask the venue to provide confirmation that they do conform to this guidance.
- The council must understand and ensure it is acting in compliance with the latest government [safer workplaces guidance](#)

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Agenda Item 8d

Future of North Farm – Responses to Stage Consultation as of 26th March 2021

I am writing to express strong support for the proposals for development of North Street Farm put forward in the letter included with Voices. Many thanks to you and the other parish council members for your work on this.

OCC's suggested housing development sounds very reasonable and their support for a Community Hub is excellent news. The relocation of the village shop and possibly the pub to a courtyard incorporating housing sounds excellent. There is real scope to create a large farm shop showcasing local suppliers. A larger pub with a beer garden would be a fantastic addition to the village; indeed, outside seating seems almost essential for the pub given that Covid variants are likely to be around for many years.

Please could you clarify if the eight affordable housing units are included in the 15 open market houses? Given the promising comments about the northern paddock being gifted to the village I assume the new houses would be centred around the old farm buildings and southern paddock? As residents of St James Court our house backs onto the northern paddock we would naturally prefer not to have building work and then houses close to our boundary (especially given our large bedroom picture window!).

I wrote to astonpc.live.co.uk in November with some similar proposals (see below), so I'm very pleased these look like there is a possibility they may make it into reality.

I really appreciate the effort the Parish Council have made in taking this proactive approach. As you say, another standard housing development on the site is inevitable eventually, so I agree it's much better to shape this into something that will benefit all residents of Aston.

If we can be of any help, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

I was interested to read the communication with this month's Voices and would like to submit my opinion for the North Farm site.

I think it would be a great idea if the site were used to build a new public house to replace the Red Lion as suggested. We only rarely go to the Red Lion, simply because it is very small with no real outside eating & drinking area except a couple of tables on the road, and so can't really maximise its potential.

However, if North Farm was developed into something like the Maytime Inn at Asthall, we would definitely visit regularly as I dare say would many others and even from outside the immediate area.

It would need adequate parking, which given the size of the site should be no issue, with the entrance along Aston Road to lessen traffic through the village.

Besides the obvious indoor dining and drinking areas, it should have generous outside fully open and also covered outside dining areas so you could still eat outside in most weathers, with a garden area and an area for children to play and facilities for outside music entertainment. There

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

could also be a barbecue and pizza oven.

It might also be nice if there was something a little special and different such as an Italian delicatessen attached (*run by someone not part of the pub?*).

Making this appeal to as many people as possible, especially families, would more likely ensure financial security.

I would support for a Community Hub with cafe and relocation if the shop.

I would not support affordable housing as there has already been enough development in the village with insufficient development of the infrastructure to support it.

Any development should include an element of conservation and "re-wilding" to improve biodiversity and I would personally be willing to get involved in such a project.

I read with interest, the comments re the above.

As a 'newbie' to Aston (I recently moved in to the Hawthornes Development), I understand the communities concern re further additional housing.

But I do like the ideas of a community 'hub' and Public house being developed.

The housing stock has increased as I understand by 20%. The addition of 15 more houses should not adversely affect the infrastructure, particularly if

An on-site dedicated treatment system was installed. (Hopefully Thames Water will also be making some improvements to the current drainage and pumping station issues)

I believe the hub and Public house would be warmly welcomed both by existing and new residents.

Aston is crying out for a more social uplift and personally believe the outlined proposals fit the bill exactly.

I would favour moving The Red Lion pub to the North Farm plot.

Having received the letter in the voices magazine about North Street Farm we would like to add our thoughts to the consultation. We are keen on the ideas of having:

A Community Open Space would be our preferred options. It would be ideal to take into consideration the wildlife that I am sure has made the site it's home too. All the housing developments seem to be eating into any spare land and reducing habitats.

A Community Hub is also an idea which we would be in favour of, which would benefit all who live in the village, and from the brief has lots of great ideas.

A Public House could also be a community positive if it was developed in an appropriate way.

We would not be in favour of a car park which seems not best use of this precious space, or any more housing as we feel the some of the new developments have negatively impacted the village.

Just reading the public consultation notes I our "Voices" village magazine.

Really love the idea of a community hub and also relocation of the Red lion pub. Some green space would also be lovely, something for nature.

Please...no more housing! We've had our fair share of housing development and there seems to be an excessive amount of house building in West Oxfordshire already. This is increasing the traffic through the village and plenty of speeding drivers.

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Many thanks for the inclusion of the information regarding the potential redevelopment of North Farm, Aston in the latest edition of The Voices. I live on Back Lane in Aston and would like to raise the following comments which hopefully add benefit to the current consultation stage –

1. I have no issues at all with further controlled development of new housing in the village on the scale of 15 open market homes. I would support the view that an alternative development scenario of 40 plus homes on the site is less desirable and 15 homes would be more in keeping with the street scene of the village.
2. With regards the affordable housing I totally support the need for this housing and would prefer to see more affordable housing and less open market housing on the site. My only comment would be to question the logic of 6 flats and 2 houses in a village. Logically houses are more appropriate than flats in a village based on young families who want to move out of Witney/Carterton?
3. The Community Hub and community land would be an amazing asset to the village and is a once in a generation opportunity for the residents of Aston. I feel this could put Aston “on the map” and be a fantastic facility. With the car parking and increased visitor numbers it would likely bring I would suggest consideration to walkers is made. At present the public footpath on the Aston mile is a fairly treacherous 200m walk from the village boundary with no safe footpath along the road to access. If this footpath could be accessed safely circular walks would be much easier and hence attract visitors to the hub, plus people could safely walk to Aston from Witney / Ducklington / Yelford to enjoy the Community Hub / Shop / Pub etc. (I would also suggest consideration to making the public footpath access on the Bampton roadside of the village safe with a footpath logical to again link up the communities). Regardless of the North Farm plan, I would suggest the Parish Council puts consideration to making safe footpath access to these public footpaths a priority in order to add great benefit to the village residents.
4. As a local resident I took the decision to buy the Aston Stores building last year in order to support the ACS project. ACS need to make the right decision for the village which I 100% support, however if the shop did relocate, I would be left with a retail unit which would be challenging to rent. I always felt the ACS was the last chance for village shop in Aston (what an amazing job they have done). Therefore, if it did relocate, I would look to convert the building into a residential unit which I think would have planning merit to do. I just wanted to mention this as all decisions have knock on considerations.
5. With regards the proposal for the public house relocating to the existing Farmhouse at North Farm I would be interested in buying the building to convert into a pub and rent to a landlord. This might have interest to OCC when looking at the scheme and maximising its value from the site as detailed in your letter. I feel a good pub / food destination with outside space would be of great benefit to the village and the wider community. I would be happy to talk about this if worth consideration from your perspective?

To conclude I am supportive of controlled housing development on the North Farm site with more consideration to affordable housing. The community hub is potentially a game changing for the village by providing a unique once in a generation opportunity.

Many thanks for your great efforts

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

I would like to comment on the document distributed in the March/April edition of Voices.

Firstly, I would like to congratulate the Parish Council on the progress that has been made so far. On the specific options mentioned:

- I support the building of 15 open market homes if they are essential to enable the development of community facilities on the site. These houses should, however, be no more than 3 bedrooms, so that they better match local needs.
- I also support the building of 8 affordable housing units.
- If the owner of the Red Lion is supportive, I think relocating the pub to this site would be a good idea for the reasons mentioned in the document. This would presumably allow the existing pub building to be converted into a dwelling.
- I support the provision of community car parking, which could serve both the pub and existing North Street residents (reducing some of the current congestion on North Street) as well as visitors to the village.
- I don't think it is really necessary to relocate the Community Shop, it seems well-placed where it is, and it is hard to see alternative uses for the current building.

Just some thoughts about North Farm!

Firstly I think it would be good if some small units for people to use if they have business, they run from home i.e., florist, cake decorator, etc.

Secondly I wouldn't be sure about moving the shop there as I think it would be a bit out of the way.

Thirdly, a car park is a good idea if it relieves The Square of vehicles. Crossing by the garage with young children is not the easiest thing to do. I don't know if yellow lines in front of Dippers Cottage and Florey's Cottage would help!

Fourthly, I think that an open space for dog walkers, etc would hopefully take the problem from the village hall. (It seems that people don't seem to get the message about dog fouling on the playing fields!)

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Agenda Item 13c

Refurbishment of Telephone Box in Cote

The Parish Council inviting quotes for the refurbishment of the telephone box in Cote.

The following specification is for the works to be carried out:

1. Inspection of hinges, glass, other fixings and replacement as required.
2. Removal of grout and telephone signs at the top of box to allow for new defibrillator stickers can be installed on the signs before reinstallation and regrouting. The parish clerk will supply the stickers.
3. On completion of painting and refurbishment all glass to be cleaned.
4. **PAINTING as per BT standard below:**

The primer for repainting housings should be a universal primer for wood and metal.

All internal & external surfaces to be painted should be primed, clean and dry. No painting should be undertaken when surfaces are damp.

All bare wood or metal surfaces shall have had a minimum of one prime.

The primer should be brush applied. No paint should be applied to the door hinges or closer arm joints. The primer and paint should be applied in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

External quality fillers should be used as required. Fillers used should be single pack Polyester or Epoxy Resins and compatible with the paint system. The appropriate safety precautions as indicated by the Manufacturer should be complied with.

It is recommended that two coats of finish paint should be applied.

White colour paint is recommended inside the kiosk within the ceiling area down to the level of the ventilation openings and a clean horizontal break line should be applied.

Black colour paint should be applied to the external base of the Kiosk if it is already coloured black.

British Standard Colour References for Paints used previously by BT.

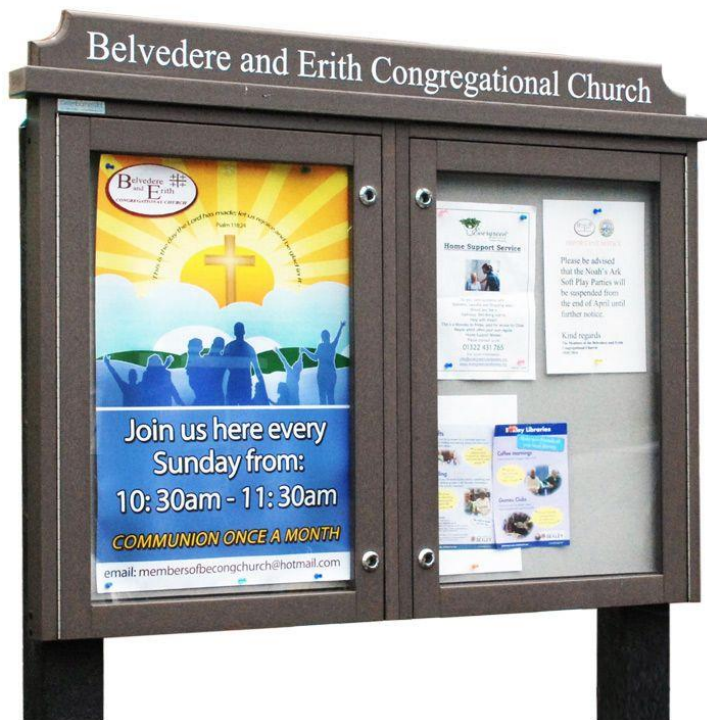
Currant Red	BS381C – 539C	Black	BS4800 - 00-E-53
White	BS4800 – 00-E-55	Gold	BS4800
Green	BS4800	Grey	BS4800

I would be grateful if you could prepare a quotation based on the above and send it to me by Friday 26 March 2021. The Parish Council will make a decision at their meeting on 1 April 2021, and we would be looking for the work to be completed within 3 months of this date. When sending your quotation please confirm that £10 million public liability is held by supply a copy of the certificate, confirm that the required CoSHH certificates are held and that the staff who would carry out the work will be appropriately trained and qualified.

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Agenda Item 13d

Noticeboard for Cote



Greenbarnes 2-bay, 4 x A4 Man-made Timber noticeboard (Ref: PDN)

From: £936.48

2-bay, 4 x A4, external, lockable, Man-made Timber notice board, portrait format, glazed. Can be wall, post or railing-mounted. Overall dimensions 1270mm wide x 848mm high. Display dimensions 453mm wide x 682mm high per bay. Display capacity 4 x A4 sheets in portrait format per bay.

When it first launched over 20 years ago, the PDN offered a radical alternative to what might be viewed as the archetypal timber-built village noticeboard. These days it has pretty much become the archetypal village noticeboard! Its popularity is not, however, confined to parish and town councils; this board is also a firm favourite with churches, schools and a host of other users too.

This is the same as the one in Aston and from the same supplier.

With a proven track record now in excess of 20 years and offering a genuine, low-maintenance alternative to traditional timber notice boards, the extensive Greenbarnes range of Man-made Timber noticeboards combines the benefits of modern materials with tried and tested detailing. Manufactured largely from recycled plastics, these boards have a convincing timber appearance but require none of the regular maintenance that is required by timber equivalents.

Standard specification includes:

- **Man-made Timber (recycled plastic) frames and ABS back panels**
- **Dark brown textured finish with the appearance of wood**
- **4mm polycarbonate glazing**
- **Integral weather seal and ventilation**
- **Stainless steel piano hinges**
- **Lockable (glazed bays)**
- **Self-healing rubber pinboard**

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Agenda Item 11b

St Mary's Grass Cutting Grant

ST MARY'S, SHIFFORD
c/o Mrs Marilyn Ordish
15 Woodbridge Close
Aston, Bampton
OX18 2DB
marilyn.ordish@btinternet.com

23rd March 2021

Mrs Elaine Anstee
16 Foxwood
Aston
OX18 2DZ

Dear Elaine,

Grant from Aston, Cote, Shifford & Chimney Parish Council

On behalf of St Mary's, Shifford I am writing to request a grant towards the cost of grass cutting for the present year 2021.

A copy of our 2020 accounts is attached, where you will see we spent £210 during the year.

Regards,

Marilyn Ordish

Treasurer

St Mary's, Shifford

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

ST MARY'S, SHIFFORD
2020

INCOME AND
EXPENDITURE

INCOME		2020	2019
COLLECTIONS:			
Gift Aided	166.3		
Cash	66		
Direct Debits	204	436.3	1009.6
Donations		60	300
Grants: Grass cutting		300	180
Interest: CBF		249.96	329.28
Transfer from CCLA			
January and Dec.		6000	0
Fees		101	478
Gift Aid		311.33	287.77
 TOTAL		 7458.59	 2584.65
 EXPENDITURE			
Parish Share		3390.68	2849.7
Electricity		106.67	164.61
Insurance		1162.74	666.93
Church Running Costs	*	208.31	257.4
Fees - OBDF		81	-
Grass Cutting		210	270
		5159.4	4208.64

* Fire Extinguisher checks
x 2
plus, candles

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Agenda Item 11c

Small Grant Application – Aston Brownie Unit – First Page Redacted Name and Address

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

PROJECT SPECIFIC INFORMATION :			
Please give more details about the project for which you are applying for this grant:			
GOING TO CAMP. WITH GIRLS (JUBILEE HOUSE). WEEKEND SLEEP OVER / OUTSIDE ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES.			
Please justify the need for this project?			
ALL CURRENT GIRLS IN UNIT, NONE HAVE BEEN AWAY TO CAMP. DUE TO CANCELLED LAST YEAR.			
How will you monitor the progress of the project?			
PHOTOS, BADGES EARNED. WORKING TOGETHER INVOLVED WITH OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES.			
How do you plan to judge the success of the project?			
WE DO FEEL THAT THE GIRLS WILL BENEFIT ENORMOUSLY. IT WILL BE SOMETHING TO AIM FOR, A GOAL FOR THEM.			
TIMESCALE :			
Start Date	1st June 2021.		
Finish Date			
Ongoing, give details			
Please confirm that the expenditure has not yet been occurred nor the order placed by ticking in this box:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
FINANCIAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT :			
Please provide a break down of the total cost of this project including VAT (please provide details on a separate sheet if necessary)			
COST	PER GIRL	\$35.00.	
\$35.00	x 11 =	\$385.00.	
How much funding is your organisation requesting from Aston, Cote, Shifford & Chimney Parish Council via this form?		\$385.00.	
Please detail other sources of funding obtained for this project, including funds being provided from the organisation's reserves		NO FUNDRAISING WAS DONE LAST YEAR, WHICH WAS HOW WE WOULD FUND THE WEEKEND.	

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

DETAILS OF ORGANISATION STRUCTURE :				
Constitution	Do you have a constitution?: Please indicate: YES (Please attach) NO			
Status: Are you one of the following? (If not, it does not prevent you from applying for a grant)				
Please indicate:	A registered charity?	A company limited by guarantee?	Applying for charitable status?	Other: Please state:
When did your group/organisation start?	Unit is 50 years old.			
What does your organisation do?	Aston Brownie Unit.			
Who does your group /organisation serve mainly?	e.g. children, young people, senior citizens, rurally isolated people etc Children.			
DETAILS OF ORGANISATION FINANCES : Please attach a copy of your most recent accounts				
Total income in the last financial year including date of year end:	£786.53.			
Total amount spent in the last financial year:	£499.95.			
Current unrestricted reserve or savings as at date of application:	—			
Current restricted reserve or savings as at date of application:	—			
From what sources does your organisation raise its income?	Income Source	Amount £		
	Fund Raising.	£00.00.		
		During 2020 due to covid-19.		

DETAILS OF MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE :	
How many people are there on your management committee?	—
How many staff do you employ?	—
How many volunteers do you have?	2. Volunteers.

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

REDACTED - Signature

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Agenda Item 11d

Cote Chapel – Grass Cutting Grant Request

Telephone 01993 851219

Exeter House
Cheapside
Bampton
Oxfordshire

23 March 2021

OX18 2JL

Dear Elaine,

As suggested by your helpful message of 22 March, I am writing to request consideration by the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council of a grant to support the maintenance of the chapel graveyard at Cote during the calendar year 2020, in line with arrangements for previous years.

The total cost of the grass-cutting and other maintenance activities during the year was £500. I enclose copies of the receipted quarterly bills. It is perhaps worth noting that the equivalent figure for 2010 was £440.

You have also requested a copy of our most recent audited accounts. I enclose a copy of a return submitted to the owners of the chapel, the Historic Chapels Trust, on 25 June 2020. It may be helpful if I add that the Local Committee has received no income to speak of since that point, because of pandemic restrictions ; our bank balance currently stands at £301.36.

As I have already indicated to you, we have to face the real possibility that we shall be unable to finance any graveyard maintenance in 2021. However, we are actively seeking ways forward, such as the 'champing' proposal which I mentioned to you in my message of 20 March, and we hope that the Parish Council will agree to look favourably on that initiative.

Yours sincerely,



(Dr. Michael St. John Parker,

Chairman and Treasurer, Cote Historic Baptist Chapel Local Management Committee)

The Clerk, Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council.

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Redacted - Signature

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

INVOICE

31

DATE 6 August 2020

FROM ALLSTAIR FERGUSON

TO COTE CHAPEL

INVOICE FOR 3rd QUARTER
OF SEASON 2020
GRASS CUTTING

125-00

V.A.T.

TOTAL

125-00

Recd 1 Sept 2020

330

TO CODE CHAPTER _____

20.6.20.

29

DATE 12 MAY 2020

FROM ALISTAIR FORBES

TO COTE CHAPEL

INVOICE FOR 1 ST QUARTER OF SEASON 2020 GRASS CUTTING			125-00
V.A.T.			
TOTAL			125-00

Rev'd 19.5.22

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Redacted - Signature

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Agenda Item 11e

Councillors' Travelling Allowances Scheme

Aston, Cote, Shifford & Chimney Parish Council, in exercise of the powers conferred by the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, hereby makes the following scheme:

1. Name and Duration

- 1.1. This scheme may be cited as the Aston, Cote, Shifford & Chimney Parish Council Councillors' Travelling Allowances Scheme.
- 1.2. This scheme shall have effect for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

2. Travel and other Expenses

- 2.1. The duties and activities in respect of which travel, and related expenses will be payable, are:
 - (a) the attendance at a meeting of the authority or of any committee or sub-committee of the authority, or of any other body to which the authority makes appointments or nominations, or of any committee or sub-committee of such a body, subject to the meeting taking place outside the parish boundary, in accordance with clause 2.9.
 - (b) the attendance at a meeting of any association of authorities of which the authority is a member.
 - (c) the performance of any duty in pursuance of any standing order made under section 135 of the Local Government Act 1972 requiring a member or members to be present while tender documents are opened, subject to the venue being outside the parish boundary, in accordance with clause 2.9.
 - (d) attendance at training events and information seminars either organised by the Council or where attendance has been authorised; and
 - (e) the carrying out of any other duty approved by the authority, or any duty of a class so approved, for the purpose of, or in connection with, the discharge of the functions of the authority or any of its committees or sub-committees.
- 2.2. The approval for members to carry out additional duties falling within 2.1(e) above will in general be granted at a previous Parish Council meeting. Where that is not possible, the Clerk, after consultation with the Chairman, has the authority to approve additional duties falling within 2.1(e) above.
- 2.3. A Councillor may be reimbursed for travel and other expenses incurred in connection with or relating to the duties specified in 2.1 above.
- 2.4. Notwithstanding 2.3 above, the following shall be excluded from the scheme in relation to travel and other expenses:
 - (a) attendance at social events unless this is attendance at such functions as the Parish Council deems it proper for the member to attend as representative of the Council.
 - (b) attendance at a meeting of an outside body for which travel, and other expenses are paid for by that body
- 2.5. The rates of the allowances in respect of travel shall be as follows:

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

All Vehicles Inland Revenue non-profit making rate.
(currently 45p per mile)

- 2.6. Taxis should be used, and payment will be made, only where travel by other forms of public transport or by car is not possible.
- 2.7. Standard class fares only will be reimbursed.
- 2.8. Related travel expenses, including car parking and road tolls will be reimbursed.
- 2.9. Travel allowances and related expenses will only be reimbursed for travel or duties undertaken outside the parish boundary.
- 2.10. In respect of all the claims for travel allowances and related expenses, it is expected that members exercise economy and efficiency, to minimise claims.

3. Claims and Payments

- 3.1. A claim for travel or other expenses under this scheme shall be made on the claim form designed for the purpose, a copy of which can be obtained from the Clerk.
- 3.2. A claim for travel or the reimbursement of expenses shall include details of the duty/activity in respect of which the claim has arisen, and a travel claim shall specify the total number of miles travelled.
- 3.3. A claim for the reimbursement of expenses, shall be supported by a receipt.

4. Publicity

- 4.1 The Travelling Allowances Scheme will be publicised on the noticeboards in the parish for 14 days after its adoption and will be published on the Parish Council website.
- 4.2 After the end of each financial year the total amount paid to each member of the Parish Council under the Travelling Allowances Scheme will be publicised on the noticeboards in the parish for 14 days and will be published on the Parish Council website.
- 4.3 Reports of the Parish Remuneration Panel, a body of the District Council, will be published on the noticeboards and on the Parish Council website.

This allowances scheme was last adopted by
Aston, Cote, Shifford & Chimney Parish Council
on 4 April 2019

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council**Agenda Item 14a*****Financial Matters*****Cash Balances**

£

UNITY TRUST CURRENT ACCOUNT

Balance on 28 February 2021	24,444.60
March payments	(669.89)
Bank Charges	(18.00)

Balance on 31 March 2021	<u>23,756.71</u>
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CCLA INVESTMENT ACCOUNT

Balance on 31 January 2021	48,691.24
Transactions in month of February	1.52

Balance on 28 February 2021	<u>48,692.76</u>
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TOTAL CASH HOLDING AT 31 March 2021	<u>£72,449.47</u>
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Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Agenda Item 14b

Community First Oxfordshire (CFO) Renewal for 2021-2022

MEMBERSHIP OF COMMUNITY FIRST OXFORDSHIRE 2021/22

In 2020, CFO reached its centenary: that's one hundred years of supporting communities to find solutions to their planning, housing, social action, and service needs. We began our celebrations with a series of [Centenary Lectures](#) and will soon be launching a creative writing competition.

This year more than any other has shown us the true value of community. It has been heartening and humbling to see so many people stepping up to look out for each other and roll out COVID-support initiatives, often building on fantastic community work that has been taking place for so long.

CFO has only been able to remain in existence by responding to the changing needs of communities. The challenges of the pandemic are uppermost right now and by talking to you - our members - we have developed and launched a **new service** - [Community Reviews](#) - and [extended our training opportunities](#). These are designed to help your community to take stock and plan ahead, finding out what's needed and setting out what needs to be done to achieve it.

More 'traditional' challenges remain, related not the least to supporting volunteers and social action projects and responding to the pressures of new housing development. We are very pleased to **launch a new range of** [Town Planning services](#). Building on our [Neighbourhood Planning](#) service, these are designed to help communities successfully deal with the often complex spatial planning and development issues facing them.

We've brought all these ideas and services together in an **upgraded membership offer** that also continues to offer you all the usual benefits. You can explore the full range of what your membership brings in the attached leaflet. We can also confirm that **fees remain the same as last year**.

We really do hope you will consider becoming a CFO member this year. To do so, simply complete the attached form along and email it back – we will also be sending this letter by hard copy.

Our warmest regards,

Emily Lewis-Edwards and Tom McCulloch
Joint Chief Executive

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Agenda Item 14c

Renewal of OALC membership for 2021-2022

Please could you ensure this is passed to your Chairman

Dear Chairman,

As Chairman of the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils (OALC), I hope your Council will continue its membership of our Association for the coming financial year 2021 – 22.

This past year has been exceptional and membership of OALC has provided support and information to its member Councils and Parish Meetings in an ever-changing Covid pandemic. We have tried to assist our member councils by providing guidance, frequent briefings and advice to keep ahead of the constantly altering situation. We will continue to do this for our member councils as we will hopefully emerge from this crisis.

OALC is entirely independent of all of the Oxfordshire district councils and the county council as well. We receive no funding from them, but we do have constructive relationships with all of them.

What are the benefits of membership?

- Representation at district, county, regional and national level, 95% of town and parish councils, in Oxfordshire belong to OALC; we represent your interests at all levels of local government. Membership of OALC includes membership of the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) which lobbies Ministers and central government on our behalf. They have successfully lobbied to ensure no cap on precepts, no requirement for councils to have a Data Protection Officer for GDPR and the removal of business rates on public toilets (currently receiving its second reading). NALC also respond to the flow of government consultations, to emphasise those issues affecting town and parish councils.
- Advice, guidance, briefings and information; we answer hundreds of queries by phone and email for member councils, the queries cover all manner of governance, procedure and administration. If we don't know the answer, we can pass the query on to NALC solicitors for their opinion or to other experts in appropriate organisations without cost.
- Monthly Update for councils; keeping you and your council up to date on new legislation, news and consultations – these updates have been particularly important throughout the coronavirus pandemic and will continue to provide information and guidance for councils on local activities including playgrounds, playing fields and the opening of village/community halls.
- Specialised advice from OALC consultants on HR/Employment issues and Finance, Audit and VAT. Initial advice is free of charge. We pay for member councils to benefit from this specialised advice.
- Training; an expanding and comprehensive online training programme for clerks and councillors, with reduced rates for member councils. Look at the events section of the website. There are 20+ training sessions planned for this year. Topics include GDPR, end of year audit, Finance for Councillors, Councillor Fundamentals, Chairmanship, Neighbourhood Planning, Cemetery Management, VAT and employment matters.
- Access to the Members Areas of OALC and NALC websites, which provides many useful reference documents, briefings, including 88 Legal Topic Notes.

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Members of our Executive Committee represent the interests of local councils on various outside bodies at both county, regional and national level. We participate in County and District partnerships where they still exist. We work to improve the efficiency, transparency and professionalism of town and parish councils and parish meetings and use every opportunity to lobby relevant bodies on parishes' behalf. At the present time there are a number of vacancies on the Executive, and we would like to hear from anyone interested in joining.

Our income comes from just two sources, subscriptions and training. The subscription is calculated on your electorate and is a combination of the NALC affiliation fee and OALC's membership fee. This year there will be an increase of 4% (equivalent to just 0.592 pence per elector) which includes the 3% NALC increase. An invoice for the annual subscription is attached to this email. We would encourage your council to pay the invoice by BACS, if possible, quoting the invoice number as reference. This helps us to keep administrative costs down and is safer in the current covid environment.

The Association office is staffed by Christine Lalley, the County Officer and Lucy Dalby, Assistant County Officer, both of whom will be happy to provide further information about our work if you wish to contact them.

Cllr Ian Charlton
Chairman

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Agenda Item 14d

Loans and Investments Policy

Document Control

Review date is indicative and will depend on changes in legislation, best practice or when required.

Alternative formats of this document may be available upon request.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Should the Parish Council need a loan from the Public Works Board Loan or wish to place an investment of its monies, the terms shall be negotiated by the Parish Clerk in the name of the Council and shall be for a set period of time in accordance with resolution from Full Council.

1.2 This policy sets out the financial management procedures for the monitoring of the cash flow and banking arrangements of Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council.

1.3 Authority reference is to the Council's Financial Regulations.

1.4 The Local Government Act 2003 Section 12 provides the power to invest in the following circumstances -

- a. for any purpose relevant to its functions under any enactment; or
- b. for the purpose of the prudent management of its financial affairs.

Section 15(1) of the Act requires a local authority to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

1.5 The Council acknowledges its duty of care to the community and the prudent investment of funds.

1.6 Changes to loans and investments should be reported to the Full Council at the earliest opportunity.

1.7 The Council's Sustainability Framework will be considered when approving the Council's financial institution for investments and when ensuring that the Council's reserves are invested wisely.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

2.1 The Council's priorities are, in the following ranking order -

- a. The security of capital to minimise the risk of losses.
- b. The liquidity of investments to meet the cash flow needs of the council; and
- c. Maximising income within the framework of the national economic situation.

2.2 The Council will aim to achieve a high rate of return on investments commensurate with adequate safeguards of security and liquidity.

3.0 LOANS

3.1 Any loans made by the Council should be approved by the Full Council and in the name of Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council.

3.2 Any loans given should be reviewed by the Full Council on an annual basis against the Terms of the Contract.

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4.0 BORROWING

- 4.1 All borrowings shall be taken out in the name of Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council.
- 4.2 Any formal decision to apply for and to exercise a borrowing approval must be made by Full Council.
- 4.3 The Council may borrow funds but will require the formal written approval of the Secretary of State.
- 4.4 The Council must contact the Oxfordshire Associations of Local Councils (OALC) to discuss the proposal and to obtain the Application Form for the Approval.
- 4.5 Borrowing must be for a specific, generally capital expenditure, purpose detailed on the application form and in a report to council.
- 4.6 Whilst the loan may be taken from any source, the Public Works Loan Board (PWLb) is preferred. Irrespective of the source, an Approval is required and no mortgage or charge on property is allowed.

5.0 INVESTMENTS

- 5.1 All investments and money under the control of the Full Council shall be in the name of Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council.
- 5.2 All investment certificates and other relating documents shall be retained in the custody of the Parish Clerk.
- 5.3 All investments, deposits and interest will be in pound sterling (£).
- 5.4 All investment and deposits will be with banks or building societies registered in the United Kingdom.
- 5.5 The credit ratings of the institutions will be a minimum of 'A' and these will be monitored regularly.
- 5.6 In order to spread the financial risk to a minimum, investments will be made with a minimum of two financial institutions.
- 5.7 Investments for current expenditure will be on instant access accounts with a daily feeder to the current account.
- 5.8 Investments not required for current expenditure (i.e., earmarked reserves) may be placed on medium term deposits to be reviewed each year one year.
- 5.9 Investments not required for current expenditure (i.e., general reserve) may be placed on longer term deposits of up to two years.

Adopted on 2021

Review Date – March 2022

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2021-2022

1. Introduction

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council acknowledges the importance of prudently investing the temporarily surplus funds held on behalf of the community.

This strategy has been prepared in accordance with the Guidance on Local Government Investments ('the Guidance'), issued under section 15(1) (a) of the Local Government Act 2003, effective from 1st April 2010.

The Local Government Act 2003 states that a local authority may invest:

- for any purpose relevant to its functions under any enactment,
- for the purpose of prudent management of its financial affairs

The Council defines its treasury management activities as "The management of the Council's cash flows, its banking and money market transactions, and the effective control of the risks associated with those activities, and the pursuit of best value performance consistent with those risks."

The Guidance states:

- a) Where a Town or Parish Council expects its investments at any time during a financial year to exceed £500,000, the Guidance should apply in relation to that year.
- b) Where a Town or Parish Council expects its investments at any time during a financial year to exceed £10,000 but not £500,000, it should decide on the extent, if any, to which it would be reasonable to have regard to the Guidance in relation to that year.
- c) Where a Town or Parish Council expects its investments at any time during a financial year not to exceed £10,000, no part of the Guidance need be treated as applying in relation to that year.

The Council expects its investments during the 2021-22 financial year not to exceed £500,000 and therefore has agreed to apply the Guidance as set out below.

2. Investment Objectives

The Council's investment priorities are:

- 1) The security of its reserves.
- 2) The liquidity of its investments; and
- 3) The return on investment.

The Council will aim to achieve the optimum return on its investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity.

All investments will be made in sterling and, as a minimum, surplus funds will be aggregated in an interest-bearing bank account.

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The Department for Communities and Local Government maintains that borrowing of monies purely to invest, or to lend and make a return, is unlawful and this Council will not engage in such activity.

Investments will be spread over different providers where appropriate to minimise risk.

3. Security of Investments

Government guidance differentiates between specified investments and non-specified investments.

3.1 Specified Investments

Specified investments are those offering high security and high liquidity with a maturity of no more than one year. In addition, short-term sterling investments must be with bodies/institutions with “high credit ratings”.

For the prudent management of its treasury balances, maintaining sufficient levels of security and liquidity, the Council will use:

- • UK banks and UK building societies.
- • Public Bodies (including Local Authorities and Police Authorities).
- • UK FCA regulated qualifying money market funds with a triple A rating.

3.2 Non-specified investments

Non-specified investments are usually for longer periods (i.e., more than one year) and with bodies that are not highly credit rated. No non-specified investments are included in the Investment Strategy for this Council as these investments are not acceptable due to their higher potential risk.

4. Liquidity of Investments

The Parish Clerk in consultation with the Full Council of Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council will determine the maximum periods for which funds may prudently be committed so as not to compromise liquidity.

5. Long Term Investments

Long term investments shall be defined as greater than one year. The Council will use the same criteria for assessing long term investment as identified above for specified investments.

The Council does not currently hold any long-term investments.

6. Risk Assessment

The Parish Council's funds are covered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (up to £85,000) as our total expenditure does not exceed £500,000 and but must still be carefully managed to mitigate the risk of losses.

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

The Council will only invest in institutions of “high credit quality” as set out in section 3.1 of this strategy. The Council will monitor the risk of loss on investments by reference to credit ratings. The Council should aim for ratings equivalent to the Fitch F1 rating for short-term investments or Fitch A- for long term investments. The Council will also have regard for the general economic and political environment in which institutions operate.

The investment position will be reviewed monthly by the Parish Clerk and reported to the Full Parish Council.

The Council does not employ, in-house or externally, any financial advisors but will rely on information which is publicly available.

7. Use of Investment Managers

If external investment managers are used, they will be contractually required to comply with this strategy.

8. Investment Strategy 2021/22

The Council will invest as much of its balance as possible in a low-risk product in order to achieve its investment objectives.

To maintain a return on its investment and in the light of low interest rates currently available to the Council and considering the potential performance of lower liquidity investments; it is recommended that the Council will continue with its investment with the Public Sector Deposit Fund of the CCLA in order to aim to achieve an optimum return on funds. The recommendation is that £ (check current holding) currently invested in the fund is maintained.

Dividends from this investment will be placed in the current account for use supporting grant applications and projects within the parish.

The Public Sector Deposit Fund (PSDF) has been identified as a low risk, high liquidity option (funds can be moved in or out in the same day) to be used in the first year of investment. A minimum £15,000 will remain as our operating costs in the Unity Trust account.

The relevant FPC officers shall have delegated authority (as contained within Financial Regulations) to set up any accounts/funds as approved in this policy and undertake transfers between the Unity Trust Account and the PSDF as required to ensure the minimum operating cost balance is maintained.

9. Investment Approval

The Full Council has the authority to consider and make any short-term investments (maximum of twelve months), in accordance with the Annual Investment Strategy, subject to the prior approval of the investment provider by the Parish Council. All resolutions relating to investments will be noted in the minutes of the Full Council meetings that are circulated to all councillors.

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10. Investment Reports

The Parish Clerk will prepare a report on investment activity for each Full Parish Council meeting. The report will be circulated to all councillors with the agenda and papers for the Full Parish Council meeting.

11. Review and Amendment of Regulations

The Investment Strategy will be reviewed annually. The Annual Strategy for the coming financial year will be prepared by the Parish Clerk and reviewed by the Full Council.

The Council reserves the right to make variations to the Strategy at any time, subject to the approval of the Full Council. Any variations will be made available to the public.

12. Freedom of Information

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this Document will be posted on the Parish website and a hard copy will be available from the Parish Clerk.

Approved by Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council on under minute number.....

Monthly (Year to Date) Financial Report – For Information

Clerk's Briefing Notes – 1 April 2021
Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

2020-21 Budget	£	As at 31/03/2021	Performance Against Budget	%	Commentary
RECEIPTS					
Precept	28988	28988	0	0%	505 received in April - remainder due in September
WODC Grant CTSG	436	436	0	0%	505 received in April - remainder due in September
OCC grass cutting grant	1049	2299	-1250	-119%	Received in Full against Grass Cutting Verges and WM plus CILr PG for Lights and defibrillator
Interest	360	95	265	74%	CCLA Investment Account
VAT Refund	0	2570	-2570	0%	
INVESTMENTS IN	0	0	0	0%	
Sundry	0	10000	-10000	0%	\$106 for Traffic Calming in Aston
Total Receipts	30833	44388	-13555	-44%	
EXPENDITURE					
Clerk's salary	3,740	3687	53	-99%	
Working from home allowance	216	208	8	-96%	
HMRC	900	994	-94	-110%	
Bank charges	72	72	0	-100%	£6 per month due quarterly.
Office equipment	2,000	693	1307	0%	
Office running costs	284	650	-366	-229%	Photocopying/Printing/Stamps plus sundries
Website costs	150	143	7	-96%	Renewed for 2 years in 2020
Insurance	361	307	54	-85%	This has been paid in full so £54 surplus
Audit	240	200	40	-83%	
Election Costs	0	0	0	0%	
Annual Parish Meeting expenses	40	0	40	0%	
Subscriptions	482	92	390	-19%	
Chairman's Allowance	100	0	100	0%	
Grass Cutting - verges & WM	6339	3691	2648	-58%	Ubico - Renewal due 2021
Grass Cutting - playing field	1591	1190	401	-75%	DJ - renewal due 2021
Grants paid under statute	4235	4921	-686	-116%	
Dog & Litter Bin Emptying	249	360	-111	-145%	WODC - plus new bin from Feb 2020
Fete Bins		0	0	0%	
Training & Travel	527	450	77	-85%	
Clock Maintenance	229	150	79	-66%	New contract with Derby's from March 2020 for 3 years
Bus Shelter Cleaning	732	384	348	-52%	New bus shelter added in Nov 2020
Defibrillator pads/batteries	100	0	0	-100%	
Repairs	500	0	500	0%	
VAT Paid	0	2860	-2860	0%	
Village maintenance (Lengthsman)	1500	345	1155	-23%	VE/VJ Bench Installation
Small Grants	1115	500	615	-45%	
Total Expenditure	25702	21897	3806	-85%	
Projects					
Aston History Project (£5K)	2950	0	2950	0%	
Traffic Calming Reserve	764	5206	-4442	0%	
Defib in Cote Phone Box (3.5K)	3500		3500	0%	
VE 75 Bench - 8 May 2020	0	946	-946	0%	
New Dog Bin - Great Brook Road	0	224	-224	0%	
Total Project Spend	7214	0	7214	0%	
Contingency Budget	5000	0	5000	0%	
OVERALL EXPENDITURE	37916	30862	7054	-81%	
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR	-7083	22491	-29574	0%	
Reserves					
Opening at 1 April	52048	0	52048	0%	
Closing at 31 March	44965	-6059	51024	13%	
Closing reserves analysis:					
Working day to day balance	1363	0	1363	0%	
Contingency reserve	5000	0	5000	0%	
Recreation reserve	34476	0	34476	0%	
Traffic Calming Reserve	4126	-6058	10184	147%	
	44965	-6058	51024	13%	