

ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL

CLERK'S BRIEFING NOTES

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING ON 3 August 2023

<i>Page</i>	<i>Contents</i>
2	Correspondence (Agenda Item 9)
3-9	Governance (Agenda Item 12)
10	Account Balances – for information (Agenda Item 15a)
11	Review of the year to date for 23-24 (Agenda Item 15b)
12	SLCC Membership Renewal 23-24 (Agenda Item 12d)

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Agenda Item 9

Correspondence

All correspondence by email

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Agenda Item 12 – Governance – Policies for review

Health and Safety Policy including Safeguarding.

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council recognises and accepts its responsibility for providing a safe and healthy environment for its members; staff; volunteers; visitors; and for anyone affected by its activities.

The Council maintains this policy for the management of health and safety as its top priority and will do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure effective organisation and planning are established and maintained. The Council will also ensure that appropriate and effective audit and review mechanisms are used to inform the work of the Council, which undertakes to commit appropriate resources to manage health and safety.

Our statement of general policy, below, is based upon that required by virtue of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. Although the Council has less than 15 employees, the principles of the Act and its underpinning Regulations as later published are taken by the Council as a minimum requirement for the safe and effective management of the Council and its activities.

Our statement of general policy is:

- to provide adequate control of the health and safety risks arising from our activities;
 - to consult with our staff on matters affecting their health and safety;
 - to provide and maintain safe equipment;
 - to **provide** sufficient information, instruction, and supervision of staff, volunteers and visitors as far as is reasonably practicable;
 - to ensure all staff and volunteers are competent in their Council-related activities, and to provide adequate training as far as is reasonably practicable;
 - to prevent accidents and activity-related ill health as far as is reasonably practicable;
- and
- to maintain safe and healthy conditions for conducting the Council's business and the public facilities it provides.

Safeguarding

Everyone has a duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults. This policy promotes good practice in safeguarding for those using Parish Council facilities.

The Parish Council will review it annually.

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Definitions

Children and young people:

Anyone under the age of 18 years

Vulnerable Adult:

Anyone over 18 who is:

- Unable to care for themselves
- Unable to protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation
- Or may be in need of community care services

To whom this policy applies:

This policy applies to anyone working for or on behalf of the Parish Council whether in a paid, voluntary or commissioned capacity, for example contracted to do a piece of work.

It also applies to any individual hiring, leasing or using the Parish Council facilities for the purpose of delivering any service to children, young people or vulnerable adults.

Promoting a safe environment

In order to promote a safe environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults, the Parish Council will:

- Provide safe facilities and do regular safety assessments.
- Ensure that employees, Councillors and leaders of activities in the parish or in/on parish facilities, are aware of the safeguarding expectations.
- Members of staff and volunteers who have regular unsupervised contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults during the course of their duties

MUST undergo appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service ("DBS") checks BEFORE commencement of such duties.

- Display on Parish Council notice boards in the village & in the Village Hall the relevant safeguarding contacts for advice and help. A copy will also be made available on the Parish Council website.

Expectations of behaviour

All users of Parish Council facilities, organisers of parish events and volunteers should:

- Ensure that communications, behaviour and interaction is appropriate and professional.
- Treat each other with respect and show consideration for other groups using the Parish Council facilities.

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

- Refrain from any behaviour that involves racism, sexism, homophobia, and bullying and in addition, report any instances of such behaviour to the Chair of the Parish Council, Parish Clerk or parents/carers, as appropriate.

Allegations against staff and volunteers

The Parish Council should follow the procedures for managing allegations against staff/volunteers on the SBC Safeguarding website. No attempt should be made to investigate or take action before consultation with Oxfordshire County Council Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). See contact details below.

LADO Office 01865 810603 or email LADO@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Whistleblowing

All Parish Councillors, staff and volunteers should be aware of their duty to raise concerns about the attitude or actions of colleagues and appropriate advice will be sought from the LADO or Safeguarding Team as to how to handle such allegations.

The Parish Council must not make a judgement on whether the allegations have merit for further investigation, this decision must be for the LADO team.

What should be a cause for concern Staff and volunteers should be concerned by any action or inaction, which significantly harms the physical and/or emotional development of a child. Abuse falls into four main categories and can include child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation, referred to as FGM. The categories are as follows:

1. Physical Abuse
2. Emotional Abuse
3. Sexual Abuse
4. Neglect
5. Financial Abuse/Manipulation

The Parish Council are committed to ensuring the safety of all users of our services and facilities and take our responsibilities seriously. We regularly work with other agencies and Oxfordshire County Council to ensure compliance with changing laws and guidelines in relation to safeguarding.

The Parish Council confirm this safeguarding policy will be updated as and when such legislative/best practice changes take place or at least annually.

Adopted 2023

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Aston, Cote, Shifford & Chimney Parish Council

Data Retention Policy

The Parish Council recognises that the efficient management of its records is necessary to comply with its legal and regulatory obligations and to contribute to the effective overall management of the Parish Council.

This policy applies to all records created, received or maintained by the Parish Council in the course of carrying out its functions. Records are defined as all those documents which facilitate the business carried out by the Parish Council and which are thereafter retained (for a prescribed period in accordance with this policy) to provide evidence of its transactions or activities. These records may be created, received or maintained in hard copy or electronically.

A small percentage of the Parish Council's records will be selected for permanent preservation as part of the Council's archives and for historical research.

Responsibilities

The Parish Council has a corporate responsibility to maintain its records and record management systems in accordance with the regulatory environment. The person with the overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy is the Clerk to the Parish Council and the Clerk is required to manage the Council's records in such a way as to promote compliance with this policy so that information will be retrieved easily, appropriate and in a timely manner.

Retention Periods

Document	Retention Period	Reason
Minute Books – physical signed document	In perpetuity	Archive – legal requirement under the Local Government Act 1972
Minute Books of Annual Parish Meeting – physical signed document	In perpetuity	Archive – legal requirement under the Local Government Act 1972
Draft Minutes/Clerk's notes of meeting used to prepare minutes	Until the Minutes are approved	Management
Meeting Agendas and Supporting Papers	4 years	Management
Leases	Indefinite	Audit
Title Deeds	Indefinite	Audit
Asset registers	Indefinite	Audit
Byelaws and orders	Indefinite	Management/Archive
Policies and Procedures	6 years after superseded	Management/Archive
Risk Assessments	7 years	Management/Insurance
Financial Records		

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Annual Accounts (AGAR)	Indefinite	Archive
Annual Returns (AGAR)	Indefinite	Archive
Annual Budget	7 years	Audit/HMRC
Precept Demands	7 years	Audit/HMRC
Bank Statements	7 years	Audit/HMRC/management
Cheque book stubs	7 years	Audit/HMRC
Paying in books	7 years	Audit/HMRC
Paid invoices	7 years	Audit/HMRC
Receipt books	7 years	Audit/HMRC
VAT records	7 years	Audit/HMRC
Tax & NI records	7 years	Audit/HMRC
Salary records	7 years	Audit/HMRC
Quotations and tenders (successful)	12 years	Statute of Limitation
Quotations and tenders (unsuccessful)	2 years	Audit/Management/Legal challenges
Contracts	12 years	Statute of Limitation
Accident Books/reports	3 years or if a child/young adult, until that person reaches the age of 21	RIDDOR (SI.1995/3163)
Insurance		
Insurance policy	Whilst valid	Audit/legal
Certificate of employer's liability	40 years from date of which insurance commenced or was renewed	The Employer's Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Regulations 1998 (SI.2753)
Certificate of public liability	21 years	Legal
Planning applications		
Minor applications with no strategic relevance	Until decided by the Planning Authority	Management
Significant/controversial applications or those with strategic relevance	Indefinite	Management/archive
Councillor information		
Declarations of acceptance	Term of Office + 1 year	Management/legal
Declarations of Interest	Term of Office + 1 year	Management/legal
Correspondence and other information		
Complaints	1 year	Management
Routine correspondence & emails with private individuals to which the Parish Council/Clerk provided a response	6 months	Management
Correspondence & emails with the County Council and District Council	Until issue is no longer of ongoing relevance	Management

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Trivial correspondence/emails/circulars/ not requiring a decision/response from the Parish Council	Not retained	Not required
Human Resources		
Personnel files	6 years after ceasing employment	Management/references
Recruitment information (not appointed)	6 months	Management/for claims of unfair process
Disciplinary records	Period of employment	Management

Website		
Information relating to local organisations independent from the Council	Annual confirmation sought from each organisation that data remains accurate	Management
Completed contact forms (general)	Automatically transferred to Clerk's Parish Council email address. Copy on website deleted within one month of receipt	Management
Completed contact forms (sewerage problems)	6 years	Management – for purposes of having a record of local sewerage issues
Parish Council information – agendas, meeting papers,	4 years	Guidance from Information Commissioner
Parish Council Information – minutes and financial information (audit and budget)	In perpetuity	Transparency Act 2015/Accounting and Audit Regulations (Smaller Authorities) 2015

Records not in the Retention Schedule

The Clerk will be responsible for reviewing any records not specifically covered by the retention schedule and for deciding when they can be destroyed or whether they should be archived for indefinite preservation.

Requests made under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and Environmental Information Regulations (EIR)

As a matter of good practice, and as recommended by the Information Commissioner's Office, any requested information will be kept for at least 6 months after the date of the last communications about the request, to allow for appeals to the Information Commissioner.

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Anonymous Communications

Any communication received anonymously will be reported to the Council or a relevant Committee and action taken, if appropriate. Any anonymous letter or email received will then be destroyed.

Significant Local Events and Issues

Sometimes documents are of such local significance that they are worth preserving for archive purposes even though they would normally have a shorter retention in accordance with the above retention policy. Before any records are disposed of the Clerk should consider whether they are of such local significance that they should be preserved. The Clerk will bring such records to the attention of the Parish Council in order that councillors can decide whether the records should be retained for archive purposes.

Disposal of Documents

The Parish Council is corporately responsible for ensuring that records which are no longer required are disposed of in a timely manner. The Clerk is responsible for ensuring that this disposal policy is complied with.

Unless the records contain data on an individual/s or personal data, they will be disposed of by recycling. Any records that contain data on individual/s or personal data must be disposed of by shredding (with a cross-cutting shredder).

Councillor Responsibilities

The Clerk is responsible for storing the records of the Parish Council in accordance with this Policy. Councillors are provided with agendas, supporting papers for meetings (the Clerk's Briefing Notes) and minutes. These documents must be treated as confidential - whilst much of the information on these documents are in the public domain, certain elements, relating in particular to employees and commercial decisions may not be in the public domain and should be retained securely and disposed of at the earliest opportunity.

After a councillor has left office, they must either securely dispose of all Parish Council records that they hold by shredding them (with a crosscut shredder) or must return them to the Clerk for disposal. All electronic files must similarly be securely deleted. Councillors may be required to provide formal written confirmation that the records they have held have been securely destroyed.

Archive

The Parish Council archive is held by the Aston History Group. The Clerk maintains a record of the documentation held by the History Group. These documents remain the property of the Parish Council and the Parish Council can request that they are returned at any time.

Date Policy adopted: 7 June 2018 and reviewed on 10 June 2021. For review – 3 August 2023

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council**Financial Matters****Cash Balances**

£

UNITY TRUST CURRENT ACCOUNT

Balance at 30 June 2023	31,650.30
Payments July	(2,504.69)
Receipts July (Terra/VAT)	6,637.37
Balance at 31 July 2023	<u>£35,782.98</u>

CCLA INVESTMENT ACCOUNT

Balance at 31 May 2023	49,971.73
Transactions in month of June	197.12
Balance at 30 June 2023	<u>50,168.90</u>

TOTAL CASH HOLDING AT 31 July 2023	<u>£85,951.88</u>
---	--------------------------

Clerk's Briefing Notes – 3 August 2023
Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

2023-24		AS AT		
BUDGET	EXPENDITURE	31/07/2023	Performance Against Budget	%
£	Staff Costs			
£ 4,872.86	Clerk's Salary - includes potential 3% payrise if PC resolves to follow the NALC/JPAG guidance.	£ 1,552.19	£ 3,320.67	47%
£ 1,218.27	HMRC	£ 72.00	£ 1,146.27	6%
£ 312.00	Working from home allowance. Currently being £18 per month = £216. Maximum that can be claimed is £312. For discussion and resolution if PC wish to update.	£ 388.00	-£ 76.00	-511%
£ 500.00	Clerk sickness/Overtime contingency	£ -	£ 500.00	0%
£ 742.87	Travel and Training (Review for Clerk and Councillor training - industry standard 2.5% budget (£742.87))	£ 30.00	£ 712.87	4%
	Office and General Expenses			
£ 100.00	APM and meeting Hall Hire	£ 14.32	£ 85.68	17%
£ 190.00	Website Costs including domain registration and renewal	£ -	£ 190.00	0%
£ 200.00	External Audit	£ -	£ 200.00	0%
£ 369.00	Insurance	£ 434.66	-£ 65.66	-662%
£ 72.00	Bank Charges	£ 18.00	£ 54.00	33%
£ 650.00	Office running costs	£ 496.91	£ 153.09	325%
£ 150.00	Office Equipment (transfer to reserve if unspent at year end	£ -	£ 150.00	0%
£ 1,000.00	Professional Fees	£ -	£ 1,000.00	0%
£ 35.00	ICO Fee (DD)	£ -	£ 35.00	0%
£ 515.00	Subscriptions (CPRE, CFO, SLCC, OALC)	£ 357.77	£ 157.23	228%
£ 80.00	Election Expenses (estimated until WODC issue tax base)	£ -	£ 80.00	0%
	General and Ground Maintenance			
£ 5,000.00	Grass Cutting - verges & weed killing	£ 1,159.01	£ 3,840.99	30%
£ 1,500.00	Grass Cutting - playing field and WM	£ 1,001.45	£ 498.55	201%
£ 2,171.00	Dog & Litter Bin Emptying	£ 107.66	£ 2,063.34	5%
£ 229.00	Clock Maintenance	£ 150.00	£ 79.00	190%
£ 600.00	Bus Shelter Cleaning	£ 105.00	£ 495.00	21%
£ 200.00	Defibrillator pads/batteries	£ 165.00	£ 35.00	471%
£ 1,500.00	Village maintenance	£ -	£ 1,500.00	0%
	GRANTS			
£ 1,115.00	Small Grants	£ 500.00	£ 615.00	81%
£ 5,435.00	General Grants	£ 600.00	£ 4,835.00	12%
£ 2,551.00	VAT Paid	£ 4,137.36	-£ 1,586.36	-261%
£ 31,308.00	TOTAL	£11,289.33	£ 20,018.67	56%
	INCOME			
£ 30,166.00	Precept	£15,083.00	£ 15,083.00	100%
£ 1,049.00	OCC Grass cutting Grant	£ 1,048.60	£ 0.40	262150%
£ 350.00	Interest on CCLA Investment account	£ 524.81	-£ 174.81	-300%
£ 2,551.00	VAT reclaimed	£ 4,286.21	-£ 1,735.21	-247%
£ -	TERRA Planning Appeal	£12,379.00	-£ 12,379.00	-100%
£ 34,116.00	TOTAL	£33,321.62	£ 794.38	4195%
	RESERVED FUNDS			
£ 5,000.00	General Contingency fund (For example: 3 months running costs/insurance excess)	£ -	£ 5,000.00	0%
£ 1,122.54	Working Day to Day Balance	£ -	£ 1,122.54	0%
£ 9,679.00	Traffic Calming	£ -	£ 9,679.00	0%
£ -	Cote Noticeboard	£ -	£ -	
£ 5,000.00	TERRA Planning Appeal	£18,545.95	-£ 13,545.95	-137%
£ 3,500.00	Aston History Boards (£1,000 per board)	£ -	£ 3,500.00	0%
£ 3,800.00	North Farm	£ -	£ 3,800.00	0%
£ 1,000.00	Office Equipment (Colour Printer/Laptop replacement 2024)	£ -	£ 1,000.00	0%
£ 3,145.00	Defibrillator Maintenance	£ -	£ 3,145.00	0%
£ 33,476.00	Recreation Reserve	£ -	£ 33,476.00	0%
£ 2,000.00	War Memorial	£ -	£ 2,000.00	0%
£ 10,000.00	Community Trust (50% match funding pot)	£ -	£ 10,000.00	0%
£ 5,000.00	Coronation (St James Church Tower Gate/Celebrations/Footpath)	£ -	£ 5,000.00	0%
£ 82,722.54	TOTAL	£18,545.95	£ 64,176.59	29%

Clerk's Briefing Notes – 3 August 2023
Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Agenda Item 15d – SLCC Membership 23-24

Dear Elaine,

Your membership to the Society of Local Council Clerks is due for renewal on the 1st September 2023.

Firstly, we would like to thank you for your valued support and commitment over the past year. We hope that your membership has provided you with training, guidance, advice and support so that you can develop the professional skills, knowledge and experience necessary to best serve your council(s) and community.

Your membership has enabled us to accomplish so much in 2022, some of the highlights include:

- SLCC's 50th anniversary celebration held at our November Conference – held as a hybrid event to provide the option to attend in person or virtually.
- Over 700 documents in our advice library covering a variety of topics.
- Six editions of The Clerk magazine – now available to read in The Clerk magazine on app store or Google play store.
- SLCC Podcasts – a new feature giving you a chance to listen to stories and relevant insights from sector experts, fellow clerks, and other inspiring guests at your convenience.
- A new 'Student' Level of the Professional Development Scheme (PDS) providing a first step on your professional learning pathway and career. Available to members with 12 CPD points.

Renew instantly - to renew your membership online, please follow these steps:

1. Visit www.slcc.co.uk and login using your existing SLCC login details.
2. Once on your 'My Account' page, on the menu to the right click 'Membership'
3. Click the button 'Click here to renew'
4. This will show the membership that is due for renewal and click the button 'Click here to renew'
5. This will take you to the form that needs to be completed, the membership can be paid via cheque, bank transfer, credit or debit card.
6. Once the form has been submitted an email confirmation will be sent to you with your invoice attached

****Please ensure that you complete this online renewal form before sending payment****

Please note our recent change of address: SLCC, Collar Factory, Suite 2.01, 112 St Augustine Street, Taunton, Somerset, TA1 1QN

We hope that you continue to find your membership beneficial to your role, and look forward to hearing from you soon.

If you are no longer working for the council, please let us know so we can update our records.

Kind regards