

ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL

CLERK'S BRIEFING NOTES

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING ON 4 November 2021

<i>Page</i>	<i>Contents</i>
2	Correspondence (Agenda Item 10)
3	Governance – Policies for Review (Agenda Item 13)
4	Account Balances at 31 October 2021 (Agenda Item 16a)
5	Bank Reconciliation to 30 September 2021 (Agenda Item 16b)
6	Monthly Financial Position – For Information (Agenda Item 16c)
7-11	Draft Budget Report for 2022-2023 (Agenda Item 16d)
12-25	Volunteer Link Up – Grant Request (Agenda Item 14e)

Prepared by Elaine Anstee
30th October 2021

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Agenda Item 9

Correspondence

All other correspondence by email.

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Agenda Item 13

Protocol on pre application meetings for major developments **Guidance for councillors and developers**

Adopted at a meeting on 5 March 2015

Preamble

Aston, Cote, Shifford & Chimney Parish Council recognises that pre-application discussions play an important role in major planning applications and welcomes the desire of many developers to consult both the council and the public more widely. However, the council is also aware of the importance of public perception in planning and the critical need to avoid any appearance that the council is conducting secretive negotiations or colluding with developers.

Pre-determination

In all meetings with developers' members are reminded of the critical importance of not pre-determining their position on any future application, as this could require them to take no part in the discussion. It is noted however that expressing a pre-disposition, for example of either 'welcome in principle' or 'concerns', is permissible.

Individual members' discussions

Individual members may be approached by developers for informal discussions of possible future applications. Whilst it is left to the individual judgement of members whether to take part in such discussions, based on the nature and likely level of controversy of the application, they are advised:

- i. To carefully consider the public perception of such meetings.
- ii. To avoid any appearance of collusion in applications likely to cause controversy.
- iii. To avoid accepting hospitality in connection with such meetings.
- iv. To advise the Chairman, and where possible the council, of such meetings

Members must not purport to be representing the council at such meetings, unless expressly authorised to do so by the council.

Pre application briefings

The council is, in general, willing to hold meetings with developers prior to public consultation on the following two conditions:

- i. Full public consultation is either already scheduled or firmly planned.
- ii. The meeting is open to the public to attend and has been reasonably advertised.

The policy of the council is not to hold private meetings with developers unless there is a necessary and compelling reason that could be justified to the public (for example a strong commercial sensitivity, where a developer wishes to receive an initial steer before deciding whether to progress).

Pre application public consultations

The council strongly encourages developers to carry out full public consultation before submitting plans for major developments, on the following basis:

- i. An accessible and convenient venue.
- ii. Sufficient publicity to likely interested parties, in good time.
- iii. Appropriate timings to allow as wide a range of people as possible to attend.
- iv. A genuinely open mind and willingness to adapt plans in response to feedback.

In general members are advised not to attend separate private briefings as part of public consultation, but instead to attend with the public.

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council**Agenda Item 16a*****Financial Matters*****Cash Balances**

£

UNITY TRUST CURRENT ACCOUNT

Balance at 30 September August 2021

37,302.65

October payments

(3442.25)

Balance at 30 September 2021**33,860.40***CCLA INVESTMENT ACCOUNT*Balance at 31st August 2021**48,700.84**

Transactions in month of September

00.96

Balance at 30th September 2021**48,701.70****TOTAL CASH HOLDING AT 31st October 2021****£82,562.10****Agenda Item 16b**

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council**Bank Reconciliation to 30 September 2021**

ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL			
BANK RECONCILIATIONS AT		30 September 2021	
	£	£	£
	Receipts	Payments	
<u>Unity Trust Current Account</u>			
<i>Balance per Cash Book:</i>			
Balance b/f at 1/4/21			23,756.71
Total receipts in year	32447.53		
Total expenditure in year		18,901.59	
	32,447.53	18,901.59	13,545.94
<i>Closing balance per Cash Book</i>			<u>37,302.65</u>
RECONCILIATION			
Balance per Bank Statement			37302.65
<i>Reconciling Items</i>			
NONE	0.00	0.00	
	0.00	0.00	0.00
Balance per Cash Book			<u>37,302.65</u>
<u>CCLA</u>			
Balance per Bank Statement (no new statement)			48,701.70
Less: uncleared transactions			
NONE			0.00
Balance per Cash Book			<u>48,701.70</u>
TOTAL CASH BALANCES			<u>86,004.35</u>
Prepared by:	E Anstee	Date:	30.09.2021
Reviewed by:		Date:	

Clerk's Briefing Notes – 4 November 2021
Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Monthly (Year to Date) Financial Report – For Information

	£	As at 31/10/2021	Performance Against Budget	%	Commentary
2021-22 Budget					
RECEIPTS					
Precept	29319	29319	0	0%	Complete
WODC Grant CTSG	0	0	0	0%	No longer paid
OCC grass cutting grant	1049	1049	0	0%	Recieved in Full against Grass Cutting Verges and WM
Interest	100	8	93	93%	CCLA Investment Account
VAT Refund	0	2080	-2080	0%	
INVESTMENTS IN	0	0	0	0%	
Sundry	0	0	0	0%	
Total Receipts	30468	32455	-1987	-7%	
EXPENDITURE					
Clerk's salary	4,073	3075	998	-75%	
Working from home allowance	216	108	108	-50%	
HMRC	967	864	104	-89%	
Bank charges	72	61	11	-85%	£6 per month due quarterly.
Office equipment	250	0	250	0%	
Office running costs	384	481	-97	-125%	Photocopying/Printing/Stamps plus sundries/Norton/Microsoft
Website costs	150	17	133	-11%	Renewed for 2 years in 2020
Insurance	347	347	0	-100%	
Audit	240	200	40	-83%	
Election Costs	0	0	0	0%	
Annual Parish Meeting expenses	40	0	40	0%	
Subscriptions	506	406	100	-80%	
Chairman's Allowance	100	0	100	0%	
Grass Cutting - verges & WS	7607	2813	4794	-37%	
Grass Cutting - playing field & WM	1909	2049	-140	-107%	
Grants paid under statute	4235	2776	1459	-66%	
Dog & Litter Bin Emptying	400	308	92	-77%	
Fete Bins	0	0	0	0%	
Training & Travel	527	50	477	-9%	
Clock Maintenance	229	0	229	0%	New contract with Derby's from March 2020 for 3 years
Bus Shelter Cleaning	747	269	478	-36%	New bus shelter added in Nov 2020
Defibrillator pads/batteries	200	0	0	-100%	
Repairs	500	0	500	0%	
VAT Paid	0	1791	-1791	0%	
Village maintenance (Lengthsman)	1500	0	1500	0%	
Small Grants	1115	870	245	-78%	
Total Expenditure	26314	16485	9829	-63%	
Projects					
Aston History Project (£5K)	1280	500	780	0%	
Traffic Calming Reserve	7210	4077	3133	0%	Section 106 funding received £10k
Defib in Cote Phone Box (3.5K)	550	450	100	0%	Refurb of Telephone box.
VE 75 Bench - 8 May 2020	0	0	0	0%	Funded from Village Maintenance Budget
New Dog Bin - Great Brook Road	0	0	0	0%	Funded from repairs budget Proposed - so funding available to support
New Reserve - North Farm	5000	0	5000	0%	any consultations
New Reserve - Office Equipment	500	0	500	0%	Proposed
New Dog Bin - Ham Lane	287	0	287	0%	Agreed
Chimney Defibrillator	7000	0	7000	0%	Working Balance
Total Project Spend	21827	5027	16800	0%	
Contingency Budget	5000	0	5000	0%	
OVERALL EXPENDITURE	37916	22512	15404	-59%	
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR	-7448	15970	-23418	0%	
Reserves					
Opening at 1 April	72451	0	72451	0%	
Closing at 31 March	44965	0	44965	0%	
Closing reserves analysis:					
Working day to day balance	1363	0	1363	0%	
Contingency reserve	5000	0	5000	0%	
Recreation reserve	34476	1000	33476	-3%	
Traffic Calming Reserve	4126	0	4126	0%	
	44965	1000	43965	-2%	

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD AND CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT BUDGET 2022/23 – VERSION 1

1.0 Overview

- 1.1 A first draft of the budget for 2022/23 is attached. The precept for the year needs to be agreed at the January meeting at the latest as it must be submitted to the District Council shortly thereafter.
- 1.2 The District Council has not yet provided information on the council tax base for 2022/23. The council tax support grant for 2021/22 was zero and the council tax base (the number of households across which the precept is split) was 589.42 in 2021/22. For this version of the budget, it has been assumed that these figures will be unchanged in 2022/23.
- 1.3 The first draft budget shows recurrent expenditure of £32,366 and £5,500 planned one-off (project) expenditure. The total expenditure is reduced to a net of £36,767 when the non-precept income budgeted is offset against it (the grass cutting grant from Oxfordshire County Council and interest on the deposit accounts).
- 1.4 Built into the precept requirement is the usual general contingency sum of £5,000 to cover unexpected expenditure during the year and a working day-to-day balance of cash funds required to carry forward at the end of the year of £9635. Holding a reserve of £10,000 has previously been agreed to be sufficient to give the council financial security, given its limited assets and unavoidable commitments.
- 1.5 In 2015/16 the Parish Council resolved to increase the precept by an additional £6,850 for three years to build up a recreation reserve of £32,000.00. 2017/18 was the last year of that increase. At, 31 March 2018, this reserve totalled £34,476 (having been inflated by the transfer of an excess day-to-day surplus from a previous year). This has been reduced to £33,476 in 20/21 as the Community Trust has started work on the MUGA and requested funds. Other reserves are £4,004 for traffic calming, £5,000 for North Farm, £500 Office Equipment Reserves and £2000 War Memorial Reserve.
- 1.6 In September 2017 the Parish Council carried out a public consultation on whether the precept should be returned to the level prior to the increase referred to in 1.4 above, or whether the precept should be maintained at the higher level, with the surpluses generated to be spent on identified projects in the parish.
- 1.7 Including this increase, the total “traditional” precept (the precept for tax setting purposes combined with the council tax support grant) in 2021/22 was £29,319.

2.0 Reserves

- 2.1 The forecast out-turn for 2021/22 is a deficit of £12,676. This is partially due to the creation of the 3 new reserves in 2021/22.

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

- 2.2 The forecast reserves at 31 March 2022 are £63,223. This is made up of: recreation reserve £33,476, traffic calming reserve £4,004, £5,000 for North Farm, £500 Office Equipment Reserves, £2000 War Memorial Reserve, and general contingency sum of £5,000 and a working day-to-day balance of £9,635. The target working day-to-day balance is £5,000.
- 2.3 These additional reserves have arisen from surpluses in both 2015/16 and 2016/17 and 20/21 plus the £10,000 S106 funding in 2020/21 for traffic calming.
- 2.4 Parish Councils are not permitted to hold reserves above planned basic levels unless they are for a designated purpose. The Parish Council therefore decided in 2018/19 budget cycle to ring-fence for another purpose – to set aside funding for traffic calming to match the funds expected from the housing development(s) so that an effective measure can be installed. In 21/22 revised budget new reserves were established for Office Equipment, North Farm and War Memorial.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 Where expenditure is expected to be subject to an inflationary rise this has been allowed for at between 2% and 4% depending on the nature of the expenditure/supplier.
- 3.2 Explanations for many of the changes made to the budget when compared to the expected out-turn and budget for 2021/22 are provided on the attached spreadsheet.
- 3.3 The areas where greater clarity for the rationale behind the budget is required, or where further decisions by the Parish Council are required are covered below:
- 3.4 Clerk's Salary
Included at the existing level plus 2.5% pay award still under negotiation by JPAG and NALC.
- 3.5 General Grass Cutting
The contract was renewed with WODC is due for renewal in 2021 to 2023. With the extension of the 30 mph signs in Aston and new traffic calming measures there is increase meterage to cut so an indicative sum has been included for grass cutting. The contract covers 14 + 2 extra cuts per year.
- 3.6 Playing Field Grass Cutting
The contract with Des Johnston was renewed for 2021 to 2023. The contract covers a maximum number of cuts of 18 (base of 15 + 3 extra if required). It also includes the War Memorial planting.

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

3.7 Grants paid under statute

This budget was reviewed in detail and updated for 2020/21. The proposed budget of £5,435 has been included at the same level as for 2021/22 and covers the following maximum grants:

Voices	£1000
Aston Community Shop	£1000
Citizens Advice Bureau	£150
Community Trust – playground maintenance	£750
Aston minibus	£750
Grass cutting, Cote Chapel	£600
Grass cutting, St Mary's Shifford	£300
Grass cutting, St James' Aston	£700
Volunteer Link Up	£135
	<hr/>
	£5,435

3.8 Village Maintenance

The budget includes a round sum allowance of £1,500, payable either to a dedicated Lengthsman or for specific individual contracts for pieces of work (such as weed spraying). This continues to be significantly above the actual expenditure in recent years, and is one of the reasons why the current budget leads to a surplus – would the Parish Council like to consider reducing this budget?

3.9 Donations

The Parish Council's approach to the non-statutory donations it gives was reviewed in 2017/18. The total budget of £1,400 includes specific donations to The British Legion (£150) and Cleanslate (£100) in addition to a general donation "pot" for local organisations of £1,115. The success of this "pot" has tested (deadline for applications expires at the end of December. In 20/21, to date, an application from Aston Brownies (£385) is the only one to be granted. For the purposes of this budget, the total has been left at the 2021/22 level.

3.10 Village Hall

The budget does not include any funds to be spent on work at the village hall (beyond the routine playground maintenance grant and the cutting of the playing field).

3.11 One-off Projects

The budget does not include any one-off projects for 2021/22. It would demonstrate good practice in financial management if the Parish Council were to identify and set aside budgets for one-off projects during the budget setting process. Councillors are therefore asked to consider potential projects for 2022/23 before the budget is finalised.

4 **Precept**

4.3 The net expenditure in the budget as presented is £37,866. The Parish Council would need to raise £34,571 from the precept to create a break-even budget. This would equate to £58.65 per Band D household (using the 2021/22 council tax base). This is an increase of £8.91p per annum per Band D household on 2021/22 precept.

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

- 4.4 If the precept is retained at the current level of £29,319, the budget as presented would generate a deficit of £1,948. On the 2021/22 council tax base this would remain at £49.74 per Band D household.
- 4.5 As noted in 2.4 above, Parish Councils are not permitted to hold excess reserves for unplanned purposes.

5 Recommendations

- 5.3 That the Parish Council considers the draft budget as presented, proposing amendments where identified.
- 5.4 Specific areas for discussion
- Village maintenance budget – potential to spend to current budget level of £1,500
 - Identification of one-off projects for 2022/23.
 - Review of specific reserves, with agreed total target reserve(s) and expected timescale for the expenditure.
- 5.5 That the Parish Council discusses the provisional level of the precept for 2022/23.
- 5.6 That the Parish Council resolves to consider a second draft of the budget at the December meeting once the council tax base is confirmed by WODC, delaying a final resolution on the precept for 2022/23 until that meeting at the earliest.

Prepared by: Elaine Anstee, 31 October 2021

Clerk's Briefing Notes – 4 November 2021
Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL
FINANCIAL YEAR 2022/23
Draft BUDGET - 4 November 2021

	Budget 2021/22	Currently expected outturn 2021/22	Budget 2022/23	
RECEIPTS				
Precept	29,319	29,319	29,319	
WODC Grant				
OCC grass cutting grant	1,049	1,049	1,049	
Interest	100	8	50	CCLA
S106 - Traffic Calming/OCC Cllr Priority Fund		0		
Sundry - VAT Refund		2,080		
	<u>30,468</u>	<u>32,456</u>	<u>30,418</u>	
EXPENDITURE				
Recurrent Expenditure				
<u>Ordinary Expenditure</u>				
Clerk's Salary	5,256	6,403	5,387	Clerk payrise and increment budgeted for if passed by council on clerks annual review.
Office equipment	250	0	250	Move to reserve if unspent until reserve = £1k
Office running costs	384	600	600	Additional Domain and Office 365 costs for emails.
Bank charges	72	72	72	£6 per month
Website costs	150	0	150	Based on 2020/21 actuals
Insurance	347	348	364	This year actual + 5%
Audit	240	240	240	New provider, assumed remains as prior
Village Hall Rental/Cost APM	40	0	40	As existing budget
Subscriptions	506	506	506	This year + 5%
Election Expenses	0	0	0	From Precept Cal - WODC
Chairman's Allowance	100	100	100	As existing budget
Grass Cutting - verges	7,607	4,000	7,759	14 cuts - prior actual +4% infl.
Grass Cutting - playing field & WM	1,909	2,100	1,909	18 cuts - prior actual + 4% infl.
Grants paid under statute	5,235	5,235	4,235	See 1 Nov Report
Dog & Litter Bin Emptying	400	400	420	This year + 4% infl.
Training & Travel	527	500	527	For Discussion
Clock Maintenance	229	229	229	1 unplanned call-out. Servicing in long term contract
Bus Shelter Cleaning	747	538	762	3 year contract from Nov 2019
Defibrillator pads/batteries	200	0	200	Due for replacement in 2021/22
Repairs	500	450	500	General round budget
VAT Paid		2,000		
Village maintenance (Lengthsman)	1,500	1,500	1,500	See 1 Nov Report
Small Grants - See Separate Analysis	1,115	1,115	1,115	See 1 Nov Report
Total Recurrent Expenditure	<u>27,314</u>	<u>26,336</u>	<u>26,866</u>	
<u>Projects</u>				
Defib in Cote Phone Box - refurb	550	450		Refurb of telephone box.
Aston History Project (£5K)	1,280	500		Printing Costs
Traffic Calming Reserve	7,210	7,210		Gates/Consultation
North Farm Reserve	5,000	5,000		Move to reserves
Office Equipment Reserve	500	500		Move to reserves
Chimney Defibrillator	7,000	4,500		
Cote Noticeboard	1,000	1,000		
History Boards	1,000	1,000		
War Memorial Reserve	2,000	2,000	500	Move to reserves
Total Project Spend	<u>25,540</u>	<u>22,160</u>	<u>500</u>	
Contingency Budget	5,000	5,000	5,000	
OVERALL EXPENDITURE	<u>57,854</u>	<u>53,496</u>	<u>32,366</u>	
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR	(27,386)	(21,040)	(1,948)	
Reserves				
Opening at 1 April	72,450	45,064	65,171	
Closing at 31 March	<u>45,064</u>	<u>65,171</u>	<u>63,223</u>	
Closing reserves analysis:				
Working day to day balance	(4,984)	22,691	9,635	
Contingency reserve	5,000	5,000	5,000	
North Farm Reserve			5,000	
War Memorial Reserve			2,000	
Office Equipment Reserve			750	
Recreation reserve	34,476	33,476	33,476	
Traffic Calming Reserve	10,572	4,004	7,362	
	<u>45,064</u>	<u>65,171</u>	<u>63,223</u>	

Clerk's Briefing Notes – 4 November 2021
Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Agenda Item 16



Please reply to:
Volunteer Link Up (West Oxfordshire)
Methodist Church Centre,
10 Wesley Walk, Witney,
Oxfordshire OX28 6ZJ
Tel: 01993 776277
Email: mary.boullin@vlu.org.uk

Linking volunteers with local residents and charitable organisations that need their help

28 October 2021

Dear Mrs Anstee,

Volunteer Link Up has continued to offer our services to the residents of West Oxfordshire over the last year. Many of our volunteers were able to support our clients over the difficult winter of 2020, including collecting shopping and prescriptions and befriending over the phone, on the doorstep or from either end of the garden path. As rules have relaxed, demand has increased and we are currently supporting 950 clients with community transport, befriending and practical tasks.

Our volunteer drivers take the elderly and vulnerable to their medical appointments when mobility or other factors mean that they are unable to get there by public transport or can't afford costly taxis. We have also enabled people to visit friends or relatives in care homes or taken them to other non-medical appointments. Our volunteer drivers not only provide transport but also help reduce isolation and offer a friendly ear. We recently received feedback from a client, who said *"only superlatives apply to your service – 5 stars for reliability – courtesy – punctuality – friendliness – comfortable car journey"*.

Our befrienders have been able to restart visiting people in their own homes. This weekly support can sometimes be one of the few times clients get a chance to see a friendly face and enjoy a conversation. As one client said about her volunteer *"(she) is a wonderful lady. So friendly and caring. We talk about all things past and present, keeps my mind going"*. The last year has continued to be isolating for many, especially older and vulnerable people so our befrienders have become even more valued. Volunteers have also helped people enjoy their homes and gardens by mowing lawns, pruning and completing DIY tasks.

Volunteer Link Up continue to support Good Neighbour Schemes across Oxfordshire, increasing our support over the last 18 months when many of the schemes struggled with the demands on their services. We offer regular emails, networking meetings and one-to-one support to help schemes manage their services, get back on their feet after a difficult period and make plans for the future. This includes working closely with the community and mutual aid groups that came into existence because of the pandemic and supporting those that wish to become Good Neighbour Schemes.

Please find attached Volunteer Link Up's annual report for 2020-21.

Please remind the residents of your parish of our transport, befriending and practical task services in case they would like to make use of these services or volunteer with us. More details can be found at www.vlu.org.uk

Should you need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at mary.boullin@vlu.org.uk

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary Boullin", written over a horizontal line.

Mary Boullin
Manager

Charity No. 1133530
Website www.vlu.org.uk

Clerk's Briefing Notes – 4 November 2021
Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Volunteer Link-Up (West Oxfordshire) Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021

Reference and administrative information

Charity registration number:	1133530
Company registration number:	07096574
Registered office and principal address:	10 Wesley Walk, Witney, OX28 6ZJ
Telephone:	01993 776277
e-mail:	office@vlu.org.uk
Website	www.vlu.org.uk
Trustees at 31 March 2021:	David Harding (Chair) Bill Darbon (Vice – Chair) Mike Alexander (Treasurer from 1 April 2021) Keith Blois Richard Donoghue Meryl Smith Richard Stockting (Treasurer up to 31 March 2021) Mark Thomas
Trustee resignations:	Shaun Bennett (28 August 2020) Brenda Churchill (9 February 2021) Richard Dossett Davies (17 September 2020) Carol Frost (8 November 2020) Jim King (9 February 2021)
Company secretary	Mike Alexander
Bankers	National Westminster Bank Charities Official Investment Fund
Independent examiner	Dale Mitchell FCCA, Azets
Management team	Mary Boullin – General Manager Ruth Lapworth – Deputy manager and volunteer co-ordinator Martha Holland- Good neighbour scheme co-ordinator Catherine Sagar – Office administrator and transport co-ordinator

Clerk's Briefing Notes – 4 November 2021
Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Volunteer Link-Up (West Oxfordshire) Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021

Chairman's Report

The twelve months covered by this report have represented many challenges and decisions in the Charity's operation due to COVID-19. Despite everything, throughout the pandemic we have continued to meet all our objectives and our staff sustained support to the community, albeit that for some of the time, they had to operate from home. There was, naturally, a lowering of demand for transport during the lockdown and particularly while hospital appointments were not happening and shops and services were closed. Despite this our staff continued to call our clients and ensure that they were getting the assistance needed.

VLU has risen to the challenge of delivering food parcels on behalf of WODC to people in the community in need and we were able to provide such service due to the dedication of our Volunteers who have generously given their time and being prepared to carry this out despite the possibilities of infection, although every effort was made to make their work safe.

VLU Volunteers continued to provide essential transport. Although PPE equipment and advice to minimise possible infections was provided, it is particularly worthy of mention that some volunteer drivers continued to provide the service despite the very challenging times.

Our Befrienders had particular difficulties in continuing to support people in the community and yet, many continued to receive the support through telephone conversations from their Volunteer supporters. Regrettably those supporting persons within Care Homes could no longer visit them during the pandemic but some were able to support them by telephone.

The changes in VLU's offering has placed extra pressure on VLU's staff. They have shown tremendous commitment to VLU's services and this has meant that these changing demands have been handled in such a manner that our clients have been very satisfied.

VLU's financial position remains satisfactory, and we are most grateful for the financial and other support of, in particular: Age UK; Oxfordshire County Council; WODC; Witney Town Council; and, other local authorities including a number of parish councils. Fundraising activities over the last year have been particularly challenging but many of the grants received denote the work that VLU was doing during the pandemic.

I became Chair in June 2020 and carried out an audit of VLU's procedures and practices and the Trustees agreed to implement a number of changes. Unfortunately, VLU's long standing Manager felt unable to accept the changes and decided to leave. Her position was covered for a period by a well-qualified Charity contractor but a good recruitment process has provided a new Manager for the year starting April 2021.

At the end of the year to March 2021, two of our Trustees decided to stand down and VLU has put into place a recruitment process through social media and Charity websites to encourage new Trustees. We are looking to achieve a different balance amongst the trustees. In particular, we are looking to address Gender, Ethnicity and Age. We are also looking for people who can add to the existing skills base of the Trustee Board.

VLU has successfully weathered the storm of the pandemic and thanks have to be given to our Volunteers; our Staff; and the Trustees in maintaining services and rising to the challenges which COVID-19 has presented. We are now waiting, as are the whole country, to getting back to a new normal and bringing our services for 2021-22 to even greater levels than pre-pandemic.

Clerk's Briefing Notes – 4 November 2021
Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Volunteer Link-Up (West Oxfordshire) Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021

David Harding

Chair of Trustees

Trustees' Report

The trustees (who are directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act) present their report together with financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2021. The financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006, the Memorandum and Articles of Association, and Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued on 16 July 2014.

The reference and administration information set out on page 1 forms part of this report

Structure, governance and management

Volunteer Link-Up (West Oxfordshire) ("VLU" or "Volunteer Link-Up") is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity governed by its memorandum and articles of association. The directors of the charity, who are appointed by the members in general meeting, are its trustees for the purposes of charity law and throughout this report are collectively referred to as the trustees.

Objectives

Volunteer Link-Up is the Volunteer Centre for West Oxfordshire, linking people who have time to spare with opportunities to help local residents and charitable organisations who need their services. Details of how these objectives were fulfilled are set out below. The Trustees take into account the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit and believe that the activities of VLU are in line with that guidance.

Organisational structure

VLU employs four members of staff; a Manager, Office Manager/Volunteer Co-ordinator, Volunteer Transport Coordinator and Good Neighbour Scheme Co-ordinator. The two Volunteer Coordinators match volunteers with opportunities, etc. All are accountable to the Trustee Board which meets at least four times a year. Trustees are elected at the Annual General Meeting. The Trustee Board provides for the administration, management and control of the affairs and property of VLU. A sub-committee of three or four members of the Trustee Board to determine staff remuneration, duties, and conditions of service.

Objectives and activities

VLU is a volunteer centre serving Witney, Carterton, and surrounding areas. It aims to link people who have some time to spare with people who need help in our community.

VLU aims to co-operate and collaborate with voluntary bodies and statutory authorities operating in similar charitable fields and exchange information and advice. VLU responds to requests from Social and Community Services, the Health Authority and NHS Trusts, other statutory services, charities, local voluntary groups, and individuals who need help. The following gives some idea of our activities.

- Transport for those who are unable to use public transport, or for those living in rural areas where it is not available, to hospitals, day centres, health centres, clinics, and other activities.

Clerk's Briefing Notes – 4 November 2021
Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Volunteer Link-Up (West Oxfordshire) Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021

- Visiting and support for elderly people, people with special needs, those suffering with depression, agoraphobia, heart disease, strokes, arthritis, visual impairment, or other difficulties. Taking elderly or disabled people shopping or on outings in their wheelchairs.
- Practical help with garden tidying, lawn mowing, basic decorating for elderly and disabled people on low incomes. Conservation work.
- Befriending work with families, single parents, teenagers with behavioural and emotional problems and children and adults with learning disabilities.
- Regular assistance at Family Centres, day centres and clubs for elderly people and those with special needs, mental health problems or physical disabilities, classes for adult basic education and reading help in schools, riding for disabled people, crèches and sports and leisure activities for those with special needs.
- Support for Good Neighbour Schemes in Oxfordshire
- Committee work and support for local charities

Plans for future periods

The Chairman's report above gives some information about future plans but in addition it can be said that we intend to get our services back to 'normal' as soon as possible once Covid measures are sufficiently relaxed.

We intend to carry out a strategic review of what we do and how we do it to ensure we continue to meet need.

Financial review

VLU is entirely dependent upon its funders for its continuance. Its main sources of funds are grants from Oxfordshire County Council, West Oxfordshire District Council and Age UK. For the second year a small deficit has been incurred. Given that we continued to operate during the Covid 19 pandemic and the fact that a reduction in donations to charities has been widely reported, this is very commendable.

Incoming resources increased by 13% over 2020 to £74,871 due mainly to the timing of receipts from Age UK.

Outgoing resources also increased by 10% to £79,496. The main reason for this was the cost of restructuring which included interim cover when the existing Manager stepped down.

Reserves policy

The essential principle stated in the Reserves Policy agreed by the Trustees is that the reserves should be sufficient to enable the organisation to continue to operate for up to nine months if it were to suffer a significant fall in its funding that could not be replaced from other sources.

Action necessary in order to maintain Reserves at the requisite level:

1 Regular monitoring of the finances of VLU is needed to ensure that any necessary corrective action can be taken promptly if the level of reserves becomes significantly depleted.

2 Attempts should be made to achieve an increase in the level of funding for the activities of VLU which is at least commensurate with the increases in costs which it necessarily incurs. The main costs are likely to continue to be staff salaries.

Clerk's Briefing Notes – 4 November 2021
Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Volunteer Link-Up (West Oxfordshire) Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021

Unrestricted reserves at 31 March 2021 amount to £101,000 which trustees consider to be sufficient to meet this policy

The trustees are satisfied that the charity's assets attributable to each of its individual funds are available and adequate to fulfil its obligations in relation to those funds.

Risk review

The Trustees believe that risks are well managed within the charity's operations. The nature of the operations requires appropriate risk assessments and health and safety policies to cover the range of different activities. The charity has relevant insurance policies providing employers' and public liability cover.

Trustees' responsibilities for the financial statements

The trustees (who are also Directors of VLU for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with general applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom General Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safekeeping the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the charity and financial information included on the charity's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

On behalf of the trustees

D Harding
Trustee

29 July 2021

Clerk's Briefing Notes – 4 November 2021
Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Volunteer Link-Up (West Oxfordshire) Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021

Independent Examiner's report

I report to the trustees of Volunteer Link-Up (West Oxfordshire) on my examination of the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2021, which are set out on pages 7 to 13.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ("the 2006 Act").

Having satisfied myself that the financial statements of the charity are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of the charity's financial statements carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charities Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination given me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- (1) accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
- (2) the financial statements do not accord with those records; or
- (3) the financial statements do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- (4) the financial statements have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached

Dale Mitchell FCCA

Azets Accountants

17 August 2021

9 Thorney Leys Park Witney Oxfordshire OX28 4GE

Clerk's Briefing Notes – 4 November 2021
Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Volunteer Link-Up (West Oxfordshire) Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021

Accounting policies

Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) (as amended for accounting periods commencing from 1 January 2019), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) and the Companies Act 2006.

Volunteer Link-Up (West Oxfordshire) meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

The charity has taken the advantage of the provisions in FRS102 Update Bulletin 1 to not prepare a Statement of Cash Flows.

Incoming and endowments

All incoming resources are included in the statement of financial activities when the charity is entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. The following specific policies are applied to particular categories of income:

- Voluntary income received by way of grants, donations and gifts is included in full in the statement of financial activities when receivable. Grants, where entitlement is conditional on the delivery of a specific performance by the charity, are recognised when the charity becomes unconditionally entitled to the grant.
- Incoming resources from grants, where related to performance and specific deliverables, are accounted for as the charity earns the right to consideration by its performance.
- Donated services and facilities are included at the value to the charity where this can be quantified. The value of services provided by volunteers has not been included in these financial statements.
- Investment income is included when receivable.

Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised on an accruals basis as a liability is incurred, and includes irrecoverable VAT.

- Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.
- Governance costs include those costs associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirements of the charity and include accountancy fees and costs linked to the strategic management of the charity.

Clerk's Briefing Notes – 4 November 2021
Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Volunteer Link-Up (West Oxfordshire) Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021

Pension provision

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme for employees. Contributions are charged in the Statement of Financial Activities as they become payable in accordance with the rules of the scheme.

Tangible Fixed Assets

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost of each asset over its expected useful life. The depreciation rate for all fixed assets held for use by the charity is 25% on the reducing balance method.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are donations and other incoming resources which are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Restricted funds are subject to restrictions on their expenditure imposed by the donor or through the terms of an appeal.

Company status

The charity is a company limited by guarantee. In the event of the charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited to £1 per member of the charity.

Clerk's Briefing Notes – 4 November 2021
Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Volunteer Link-Up (West Oxfordshire) Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES (incorporating an income and expenditure account) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restrict ed funds £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
Income					
Incoming resources					
Income from:					
Grants from WODC		12,000	-	12,000	12,000
Grant from Age UK		25,000	-	25,000	12,500
Grants from Oxfordshire County Council					
Sustainability Fund		4,975		4,975	-
Other		6,000		6,000	5,470
Other grants and donations		26,841	-	26,841	36,057
Investment income - interest		55	-	55	283
Total incoming resources		<u>74,871</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>74,871</u>	<u>66,310</u>
Expenditure					
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities		77,196	1,100	78,296	71,244
Governance costs					
Independent examination fee		1,200	-	1,200	1,200
Total resources expended		<u>78,396</u>	<u>1,100</u>	<u>79,496</u>	<u>72,444</u>
Net outgoing resources		3,525	1,100	4,625	6,134
Funds at 1 April 2020		102,187	9,180	111,367	117,501
Funds at 31 March 2021		<u>98,662</u>	<u>8,080</u>	<u>106,742</u>	<u>111,367</u>

Clerk's Briefing Notes – 4 November 2021
Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Volunteer Link-Up (West Oxfordshire) Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021

BALANCE SHEET AT 31 MARCH 2021

	Note	2021 £	2020 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	5	<u>3,816</u>	<u>2,094</u>
Current assets			
Bank balance		<u>106,606</u>	<u>110,812</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	6	<u>3,680</u>	<u>1,539</u>
Net current assets		102,926	109,273
Net assets		<u>106,742</u>	<u>111,367</u>
Income Funds			
Unrestricted funds		98,662	102,187
Restricted fund	7	<u>8,080</u>	<u>9,180</u>
		<u>106,742</u>	<u>111,367</u>

For the financial year ended 31 March 2021, the charity was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

The members have not required the charity to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year in question in accordance with section 476.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of the financial statements.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies' subject to the small companies' regime.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 29 July 2021.

D Harding Trustee

Clerk's Briefing Notes – 4 November 2021
Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Volunteer Link-Up (West Oxfordshire) Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021

Notes to the financial statements

1. OTHER GRANTS AND DONATIONS

	2021	2020
	£	£
Town and parish councils	3,180	3,450
Burford Golf Club	4,362	-
The Sobell Foundation	5,000	5,000
WODC for delivering food parcels	2,980	-
Richard Early Trust	1,600	-
National Lottery for Covid 19 response	4,500	-
Shanly Foundation	1,000	-
Persimmon Homes	1,000	-
Grace Trust	750	-
Cherwell DC - GNS	-	2,000
Bernard Butler Trust	-	10,000
Other (smaller) donations	2,469	15,607
	<u>26,841</u>	<u>36,057</u>

2 EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	2021		2020	
	£	£	£	£
	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	
Employment costs	51,522	-	51,522	56,591
Interim self-employed manager	12,876	-	12,876	-
Printing, postage and stationery	2,327	-	2,327	3,419
Room hire	2,285	-	2,285	2,009
Telephone	2,205	-	2,205	3,457
Depreciation	177	1,100	1,277	699
Loss on scrapping of fixed assets	1,397	-	1,397	-
Volunteer travel expenses	2,015	-	2,015	2,132
Website and sundry IT costs	732	-	732	132
Subscriptions	726	-	726	-
Good Neighbour Scheme expenses	133	-	133	774
Occupational health assessment	-	-	-	461
Sundry expenses	801	-	801	1,570
	<u>77,196</u>	<u>1,100</u>	<u>78,296</u>	<u>71,244</u>

3. EMPLOYEES

The average number of paid staff for the year was 4 (2020: 4); they worked part-time in administering the charity. The number of employees in terms of full-time equivalents was 2 (2020: 2).

No employee earned £60,000pa or more in 2021 or 2020.

Clerk's Briefing Notes – 4 November 2021
Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Volunteer Link-Up (West Oxfordshire) Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021

4. PAYMENTS TO TRUSTEES AND CONNECTED PERSONS

No trustee or person with a family or business connection with a trustee received remuneration in the year, directly or indirectly, from either the charity or an institution or company controlled by the charity.

5. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Office furniture and equipment £
Cost	
At 1 April 2020	11,867
Additions	4,396
Scrappings	(7,113)
At 31 March 2021	<u>9,150</u>
Depreciation	
At 1 April 2020	9,773
Provided in the year	1,277
On items scrapped	(5,716)
At 31 March 2021	<u>11,050</u>
Net book amount at 31 March 2021	<u>3,816</u>
Net book amount at 31 March 2020	<u>2,094</u>

6. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2021 £	2020 £
Trade creditors	-	339
Grant received in advance	2,480	-
Accruals	1,200	1,200
	<u>3,680</u>	<u>1,539</u>

7. RESTRICTED FUND

This fund relates to a donation from the Bernard Butler given to VLU for the purchase of equipment to further the work of VLU

	2021 £	2020 £
At 1 April 2020	9,180	-
Donation received	-	10,000
Items paid for out of this fund		820
Depreciation	1,100	-
At 31 March 2021	<u>8,080</u>	<u>9,180</u>

Clerk's Briefing Notes – 4 November 2021
Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Volunteer Link-Up (West Oxfordshire) Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2021

8. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Fund £	Total £
Tangible fixed assets	520	3,296	3,816
Current assets	101,822	4,784	106,606
Current liabilities	3,680	-	3,680
	<u>98,662</u>	<u>8,080</u>	<u>106,742</u>

	31 March 2020		Total
	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Fund £	£
Tangible fixed assets	2,094	-	2,094
Current assets	101,632	9,180	110,812
Current liabilities	(1,539)	-	(1,539)
	<u>102,187</u>	<u>9,180</u>	<u>111,367</u>

9. INDEMNITY INSURANCE

The charity holds a trustee indemnity insurance policy at a cost of £529 in the year ended 31 March 2021.