

ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL

CLERK'S BRIEFING NOTES

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING ON 5 March 2020

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Correspondence sent since 6 February 2020

1. Ltr – 1st Aston Brownies – 9 Feb 2020
2. All other correspondence by email.

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Agenda Item 8a

Traffic Calming Project for 2019/20

Traffic Calming Project 2019-20							
	Parish Council	S106 - Mears Homes		County Councillor Priority Fund	OCC 50% Match Funding	Possible Total Funding	
Budget	£ 4,126.00	£ 10,000.00		£ 500.00	£7,063.00	£21,689.00	
				Potential Funding			
	Actions/Responsibilities	Cost to Parish Council - Net	Contingency of 25%	County Councillor Priority Fund	OCC	S106	Notes
1. Re instating the painted 30mph hours signs and putting in new ones at the entrances they are currently not situated.	This will be added to the OCC line maintenance schedule in the new financial year - April 2020						
2. Gates on the road edges at all entrances with the 'Aston' sign on and 'Please drive carefully' to highlight them. This is being done at several local villages and the recommended supplier is Glasdon's who supplies a variety of sizes/shapes in recycled plastic which are long wearing. OCC will install is parish council purchases. This would also be 'nice' to do for Cote though S106 is not available for this. Cost £365.00 plus VAT More info at https://uk.glasdon.com/road-safety/gateway/glasdon-gateway .	Clerk to get a quote from Glasdon's for 9 small gates and 1 large. Once received to contact OCC to arrange installation.	£ 4,500.00	£ 1,125.00	£ -	£ -	£ 5,625.00	OCC should be in a position to progress this from April 2020
3. Automating the existing school 20 mph lights which are currently not used.	OCC to carryout work as the only permitted supplier because these are highways responsibilities.	£ 1,890.00	£ 472.50	£ 500.00	£ 945.00	£ 917.50	
4. Humps/Bumps - cushion type - not a popular option as they are expensive and require ongoing maintenance.	<i>Not being progressed</i>						
5. A crossing place/small chicane on the Aston side of the village hall - this will be expensive and will require a consultation (fees £1800) but this is managed by OCC and it will also need to go through committee at OCC.	1. Chairman's report in March 2020 edition of Voices and informal consultation. 2. Quote from OCC 3. May 2020 PC meeting decision on whether to go for formal consultation. 4. OCC committee decision once formal consultation completed. 5. Commission work if	£ 1,800.00	£ 450.00	£ -	£ -	£ 2,250.00	As at 28 Feb 20 - only potential consultation cost known but should be able to get 50% OCC funding if project goes ahead.
6. Zebra crossing at school – OCC officer thought this was already agreed and will chase up to find out the position. A pelican (traffic lights) crossing is £60k - £70k so not really an appropriate option.	<i>Not being progressed</i>						
7. Signage - Please drive carefully and re-siting of village signs	Request costs from WODC		£ -				
Total Net Cost		£ 8,190.00	£ 2,047.50	£ 500.00	£ 945.00	£ 8,792.50	

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Agenda Item 10i

INSURANCE RENEWAL 2020

1. The Parish Council's insurance is currently with BHIB (underwritten by Aviva Insurance Ltd).
2. The insurance period runs from 1 June.
3. A renewal notice will be due in May 2020 however the agreement was for three years and should be requested in this financial year. The premium for 2019/20 was £343.47 including 12% insurance tax, a decrease of £20.08 (5.3%) compared to the prior year.
4. The current insurance company is BHIB Ltd and previously alternative quotations have been obtained from Zurich Municipal, AON and Came & Company who are one of the main operators in the council insurance sector.

5. **Insured Details**

Insured Item	Sum Insured - Aon	Sum Insured – Zurich (2016 levels)
<i>Mandatory covers:</i>		
Public Liability	£10 million	£12 million
Employers Liability	£10 million	£10 million
Money	Varies by type	Varies by type
Fidelity Guarantee	£250,000	£250,000
<i>Optional Covers</i>		
Property Damage: Cote Road Noticeboard 2 bus shelters + Saxel Close 5 benches + VE75 Bench War Memorial	Block street furniture cover: £72,000 £56,317)) £14,673) £48,581
Officials' Indemnity	£500,000	£12 million
Legal expenses	£250,000	£100,000
Libel & Slander	£250,000	£250,000
Personal Accident	£100,000	£50,000
Property damage excess	£125	£250

6. **Recommendations**

- 6.1. That the Parish Council reviews and decides whether the current level of cover remains appropriate to the Parish Council's needs.
- 6.2. That the Parish Council decides which insurers to approach for quotes with the recommendation to use the quote from the existing insurers, BHIB Ltd as one of the options.
- 6.3. If the Parish Council decides whether to request a three year quote, a one year quote or both.

Prepared by Elaine Anstee, Clerk & RFO
28 February 2020

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Agenda Item 10g

Clean Slate Grant Request

Dear Parish Clerk or Chair Person

The purpose of Clean Slate is to provide long term emotional support for survivors of abuse in Oxfordshire. We aim to encourage individuals to explore their own mental health needs and adopt coping strategies for long term recovery.

Firstly, I would like to thank the following Parish and Town Councils for supporting us.

Banbury Town Council	Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor Parish Council	Launton Parish Council
Bampton Parish Council	Aston Cote Shifford and Chimney Parish Council	Appleton-with-Eaton Parish Council
Bladon Parish Council	Steeple Barton Parish Council	Tackley Parish Council
Carterton Town Council	Forest Hill with Shotover Parish Council	Binfield Heath Parish Council
Bletchington Parish Council	Harwell Parish Council	Witney Town Council
Chalgrove Parish Council	Baldons Parish Council	Woodstock Town Council
Kidlington Parish Council	Crowmarsh Parish Council	Wheatley Parish Council

Last year we wrote to 318 Parish and Town councils requesting support. You helped us raise £3552. This money was used to provide 88 hours of counselling and support.

We are asking you to contribute £100.00 towards the continuation of this service. This doesn't sound like a lot these days but if each Town Council and Parish Council make this contribution then this will definitely change people's lives for the better.

Why support us?

- We provide long-term emotional support which makes us different to other organisations working in this field.
- In rural communities' victims can very often feel that they do not get access to as many services as in the city, so it is important that we continue to provide local services.
- We are not statutory funded and rely on small grants, donations and personal giving to continue this vital service.

Achievements and performance

- This year we have provided 3 x Freedom programmes which has benefited 36 clients.
- On an average we have provided 26 hours a week of 1-1 support to male and female victims of abuse.
- Last year we raised £12,850.72 through fundraising and donations.
- We have 22 volunteers contributing their time each week which equates to £58,116.00 contribution in kind per annum. This means the overall running costs of this service has remained low.
- 232 people accessed the service for support

We would be happy to come and talk to your group or you can visit our website www.cleanslate.org.uk
We would be hugely grateful if you could consider our proposal. I have tried to keep the summary of the project as succinct as possible so if you require further information or details please don't hesitate to ask. I have enclosed a brief overview of the Charity's work and then more specific details about the proposed project. If you require any further information, please feel free to contact us.

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Information about the Charity

Mission

The purpose of Clean Slate is to provide long term emotional support for survivors of abuse in Oxfordshire. We aim to encourage individuals to explore their own mental health needs and adopt coping strategies for long term recovery.

Needs

Sexual, domestic and emotional abuse tends to hide in the shadows of our communities. The NSPCC reported 57,000 children requiring protection in 2015. Last year, in Oxfordshire alone there were 4312 reports of sexual violence, and over 46,000 cases of domestic abuse. The abuse can vary in duration, but the emotional scarring tends to last a lifetime and many problems don't surface until later on in life. These problems arise in many forms such as mental health issues; unemployment; difficulty forming relationships, and drug and alcohol abuse. In effect, these people can easily drop out of our communities. We have been providing this service for 9 years in Oxfordshire and the service has developed as it had become more apparent that it is the individual's mental health that is the worst effected as a result of the abuse. We see in excess of 150 clients a year (with a 70/30 split between women and men) and this is growing due to the need for long-term support.

Issues

These psychological problems are often deeply ingrained. Every week, 1 in 6 adults experiences a common mental health problem, such as anxiety or depression and 1 in 5 adults has considered taking their own life at some point. Currently the NHS will offer a set number of free counselling appointments and these often only scratch the surface. There is a huge demand for free longer-term support.

Dealing with the mental health side of the problem is vital.

Overall Aims

Improved health & wellbeing

1. Improvement in mental health
2. Reduction of suicidal thoughts
3. Reduction of drug and alcohol intake and admissions to rehab
4. Reduction in domestic violence incidents / anger management
5. Able to deal with shame, guilt, fear reducing anxiety and depression and insomnia.
6. Able to cope better with everyday life
7. Owning their experience and not comparing the affects with that of others

Integration

1. Volunteering as appropriate – so giving back
2. Socialising
3. Return to work
4. Engaging with life again – hence reducing isolation
5. Feeling understood and valued – no longer feeling alone

Increased safety and perception of safety

1. Engaging in social set-ups without fear
2. Comfortable in their own communities
3. Ability to rationalise haunting thought
4. Trusting others often for the first time
5. More articulate and able to express themselves in social settings
6. Reduction or abstinence of drugs and alcohol increases sense of personal safety and ability to experience reality
7. Able to recognise risks and minimize anxiety when out

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Approach

At Clean Slate we aim to provide an eclectic approach. (*Different approaches appropriate to the client's needs. This is based on the theory that there is no proof that any one theoretical approach works better than all others for a specific problem*)

Each client has an initial assessment. A personal pathway is drawn up, which sets achievable goals, and this is then continually assessed throughout the process.

Experience

Our team has been working with victims of abuse now for over 10 years. Due to our narrow line of work we have become very experienced in dealing with the aftermath of abuse. The team is hugely dedicated, many having suffered abuse personally and being able to draw on that experience. Continued professional development is a core part to keeping the team up to date and moving forward.

Outcomes

Progress is often slow with such complex emotional issues and takes time for results to be seen. We saw over 232 people last year who all received support and counselling. We helped 9 people get back into paid work and another 9 start volunteering posts. 32 women left abusive relationships and 24 completed a confidence-building course. Many of our achievements are hard to box into a simple statistic. Small steps like the relief given by being believed should never be underestimated on the road to progress.

Value for Money

The majority of our support comes from in-kind work carried out by our volunteers which equates to about £58,116.00 per year time given freely to provide a professional service and we only pay a peppercorn rent of £900 to cover accommodation, gas and electric. This means the overall cost to run this service has remained low.

Summary

Clean Slate has a huge passion for empowering people who have suffered at the hands of abusers. We believe these individuals deserve support and not to be shunned by society into the corner. Mental health is everyone's business. We all have times when we feel down or stressed or frightened. Most of the time those feelings pass. But sometimes they develop into a more serious problem and that could happen to any one of us.

Kind regards

Tracy Finch

Funding Administrator

www.cleanslate.org.uk

<https://wonderful.org/charity/cleanslate>

Agenda Item 15a

Financial Matters

1. Cash Balances (Forecast)

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UNITY TRUST CURRENT ACCOUNT

Balance at 31 January 2020	10,958.13
January payments	(611.55)

VAT Refund	1766.96
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Balance at 28 February 2020	<u>12,113.54</u>
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CCLA INVESTMENT ACCOUNT

Balance at 31 January 2020	48,511.36
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Transactions in month of January	30.48
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Balance at 28 February 2020	<u>48,541.84</u>
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TOTAL CASH HOLDING AT 28 February 2020	<u>£60, 655.38</u>
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Agenda Item 14c

ANNUAL REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL CONTROLS

1.0 Overview

- 1.1 The Parish Council is required to confirm in its Annual Return to the External Auditor that it has “maintained an adequate system of internal control... and reviewed its effectiveness.”
- 1.2 The Parish Council has two documents covering the management of its financial affairs – a set of Financial Regulations and a Statement of Internal Control. The Parish Council's Financial Regulations were comprehensively reviewed and updated in October 2015.
- 1.3 The Parish Council now needs to review the system of internal control again so that it can properly sign the Annual Return for 2017/18 when it is due.

2.0 Financial Regulations

- 2.1 The Financial Regulations document which was adopted by the Parish Council at the meeting on 1 October 2015 was circulated in that month's papers. It can be recirculated to Councillors if requested.

3.0 Statement of Internal Control

- 3.1 This statement, originally prepared by the Clerk in 2009 and last circulated to Councillors in March 2017, follows this report.
- 3.2 The Clerk has reviewed the statement and confirms that it continues to reflect actual practice. No amendments have been made to the Statement since it was last circulated in March 2017.

4.0 Recommendation

- 4.1 That the Parish Council reviews the Statement of Internal Control to consider whether the controls currently in place are effective.

Prepared by: E Anstee, Clerk and RFO
28 February 2020

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STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL

Prepared by E Anstee, RFO

Last reviewed and reapproved at a meeting of the Parish Council on 7 March 2019

<p>Cash Book/Bank reconciliations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cash book is kept up to date from original documents (paying-in books, invoices, cheque stubs, BACS transactions) • The cash book is reconciled to the bank statement on a quarterly basis • The bank reconciliation is reviewed and approved by a member of the Parish Council (usually the Chairman), with reference to the underlying records (cash book and bank statements) • The bank reconciliation is reported to the full Parish Council and minuted as such • The latest financial position and movements on the Parish Council's cash balances are reported at each council meeting and can be traced back to the expenditure approved in the previous meeting via the minutes
<p>Financial Regulations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A document listing the Parish Council's financial regulations, based on the model version prepared by NALC/SLCC is maintained. The regulations are reviewed for continued relevance and amended where necessary by the Responsible Financial Officer with any proposed amendments subject to approval by the Parish Council <i>(this was reviewed and adopted in October 2019)</i>
<p>Order/Tender controls</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Financial Regulations list the number of estimates, quotes or full tenders that must be invited depending on the value and nature of the work. • Official orders/letters are sent to suppliers for services which are not regular in nature
<p>Legal Powers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A proper legal power is identified in advance of any expenditure. The legal power for expenditure is shown on the agenda and minutes for payments made • General power of competence was adopted on 7 November 2019 under minute number 13b on page 1533.
<p>Payment controls</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depending on the nature of the supply, the RFO signs the purchase invoice to indicate that the supply has been received, that the supply has not previously been paid and that the invoice calculations are correct. • Purchase orders/letters ordering the work are matched to purchase invoices where applicable • All invoices for payment are listed on the meeting agenda where the cheques are to be signed/BACS payments approved • Payments made are listed in the minutes of the meeting • Original invoices are provided to the Councillors signing the cheques/authorising the BACS payments • Invoices paid are numbered and the same number entered on the cheque counterfoil and in the cashbook for cross reference purposes

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The cheque number used to settle an invoice and the date it was signed are entered on the invoice for cross reference purposes. For BACS payments, the BACS payment date is entered on the invoice for cross reference purposes.
<p>s137</p> <p>This is no longer permissible as the General Power of Competence is the greater power and S137 does not apply.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A separate s137 account is maintained The RFO calculates the maximum amount of s137 expenditure able to be made each year and ensures that it is not exceeded – confirmed to the Parish Council when expenditure is considered either by reference to a specific budget for that payment or to the amount of unspent s137 money available Where requests for expenditure from s137 are made this is made clear on the meeting agendas where the payment is to be approved The proper minute authorising expenditure from s137 is prepared on each occasion
VAT repayment claims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RFO ensures that all invoices are addressed to the Parish Council. RFO ensures that proper VAT invoices are received where VAT is payable RFO maintains a VAT account to show that the correct amount of VAT is reclaimed in the year
Income controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RFO ensures that amount of the precept received is correct in accordance with the precept request sent to the District Council RFO ensures that the precept instalments are received when due RFO ensures that other receipts (deposit interest, grass cutting grant) are received when due and correctly calculated Income is banked promptly
Financial reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A receipts & payments account, comparing actual expenditure to the budget and the prior year is prepared on a quarterly basis, presented to the Parish Council and minuted as such
Budgetary controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The budget is prepared in consultation with the Parish Council, as evidenced by reports and minutes in advance of the start of the year The precept is set on the basis of the budget by the deadline set by the District Council
Payroll controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Clerk is paid under PAYE as an employee The Clerk's salary is set by the Council and a minute is prepared to show the agreed salary The salary is paid by BACS, with the BACS payment authorised by two Councillors The RFO ensures that all the necessary payroll returns are made to HMRC and retains evidence that this has been done

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Asset Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The RFO maintains a full asset register• The existence and condition of assets is checked on a six monthly basis by a member of the Parish Council• The adequacy of insurance of the Parish Council's assets is considered annually in advance of the insurance renewal
Internal Audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A suitably experienced independent internal auditor is appointed by the Parish Council• An internal audit of the Council's accounting records and financial and other procedures is carried out once a year• The internal auditor prepares a report addressed to the Parish Council which is considered at the next meeting• The Parish Council ensures that it is satisfied that the internal audit is effective before making arrangements for the new annual internal audit