

ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL

CLERK'S BRIEFING NOTES

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING ON 6th March 2025

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Agenda Item 9

Correspondence

All correspondence by email

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Agenda Item 10a – APM 23rd April – Draft Agenda

Parish of Aston, Cote, Shifford & Chimney

Annual Parish Meeting

Wednesday 23 April 2025 – 7.30pm

Agenda

Questions relating to the presentations will be taken after each item.

1. Welcome by Parish Council Chairman
2. Present/Apologies for absence
3. Consideration of minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on 23 April 2025
4. Parish Council Report
5. Oxfordshire County Council Report
6. West Oxfordshire District Council Report
7. Matters raised by members of the parish.



Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Agenda Item 10 b) – 6 Monthly Asset Review

ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL

REVIEW OF EXISTENCE AND CONDITION OF PARISH ASSETS – Exterior Assets

Asset	Location	Existence confirmed Y/N	Identification of urgent maintenance where there is potential harm to public *	Identification of non-urgent routine maintenance required
War Memorial, posts & chains	Aston village square			
Bus Shelters				
1	High Street, Aston			
2	Near Cote crossroads, Cote			
3	End of Saxel Close, Cote Road, Aston			
Notice Boards				
General	Corner of Southlands			
Parish Council	Cote Road, corner with Bull Street			
Parish Council	By the allotments in Cote			
Benches & Seats				
Cote				

* Please record the nature of the risk and the potential harm

Completed by: _____ Date: _____

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council**ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL****REVIEW OF EXISTENCE AND CONDITION OF PARISH ASSETS – Exterior Assets**

Asset	Location	Existence confirmed Y/N	Identification of urgent maintenance where there is potential harm to public *	Identification of non-urgent routine maintenance required
Benches & Seats				
War Memorial Green Aston				
VE/VJ Day seat	Playing field, corner next to Cote Road			
Golden Jubilee Bench QE II	Corner of Southlands/Bull Street			
Silver Jubilee Bench GV	Corner of lane running from Bull Street towards Chimney			
Litter & Dog Bins (funded by Parish Council)				
Litter Bin	Cote Allotments			
Litter bin	Bridge on Great Brook Road leading to Ham Lane			
Litter bin	Ham Lane, Aston			
Telephone kiosk				
Red phone box	Cote			
Defibrillators (funded by the Parish Council)				
91001 DefibSafe 2 External Cabinet, Locked, Standard	Village Hall Recreation Ground, Aston			
cPAD Zoll AED 3 Semi Auto Defib+ Defibsafe 2	Telephone Box, Cote			

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Stainless Steel Thermal Bag Unheated Cabinet Box				
cPAD Zoll AED 3 Semi Auto Defib+ Stainless Steel Cabinet No Power c/w Thermal Bag	Chimney - By entrance to BBOWT			
?	Aston Depot, Aston			

* Please record the nature of the risk and the potential harm

Completed by: _____ Date: _____

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL

REVIEW OF EXISTENCE AND CONDITION OF PARISH ASSETS – Office Equipment

Asset	Location	Existence confirmed Y/N	Identification of urgent maintenance where there is potential harm to public *	Identification of non-urgent routine maintenance required
Filing cabinet – 4 drawer	Meeting room cupboard, Village Hall			
Two door metal cabinet	Meeting room cupboard, Village Hall			
HP Laptop with Norton Anti Virus and Microsoft 365 and Windows 10 and HP Laptop with Norton Anti Virus and Microsoft 365 and Windows 10	Stored by Clerk at private address Stored by RFO at private address			Warranty expires – Oct 23 Warranty Expires – Feb 27

Completed by: _____ Date: _____

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Agenda Item 11 - Governance

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 June 2024.
- 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 2024/25 when it is due.

2.0 Financial Regulations

- 2.1 The Financial Regulations document which was adopted by the Parish Council at the meeting in June 2024 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 2024, follows this report.
- 3.2 The Clerk has reviewed the statement and confirms that it continues to reflect actual practice. There have been no amendments made to the Statement since it was last circulated in March 2024.

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
27 February 2025

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL

Prepared by E Anstee, RFO and Parish Clerk

Last reviewed and reapproved at a meeting of the Parish Council on 7 March 2024

<p>Cash Book/Bank reconciliations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cash book (spreadsheet) 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 nominated councillor), 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 June 2023</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"> • 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"> • 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

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	<p>cheques/authorising the BACS payments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invoices paid are numbered and the same number entered on the cheque counterfoil and in the cashbook for cross reference purposes. • 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.
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 monthly 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 using the budget by the deadline set by collecting authority, West Oxfordshire District Council.
Payroll controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Clerk and RFO are paid under PAYE as an employee. • The Clerk's and RFO's salary is set by the Council and a minute is prepared to show the agreed salary. • The salaries are paid by SDO, with the SDO payment authorised by two Councillors and minuted at the start of the year. • The RFO ensures that all the necessary payroll returns are made to HMRC and retains evidence that this has been done.
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.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council**Agenda Item 14
FINANCE REPORT**

- a. *Account balances – see appendix 1 (For Information)*
- b. *Review of the YTD Financial Position -The YTD (11 months to February 2025) and Full Year Forecast are showing that the Parish Council is currently underbudget for day-to-day spending, however, expenditure from reserved funds will result in a year-end cash position around £2k below the year opening figure. Income (YTD & Full Year Forecast) is in line with original budget.*
- c. *To RESOLVE to approve the following payments for the period March 25.*

	NET	VAT	Gross Amount
E Anstee - Overtime	637.40		637.40
E Anstee Printing – 1318 @ 7ppc	92.26		92.26
D Shenton - Overtime	177.78		177.78
D Shenton Printing – 641 Copies	44.87		44.87
HMRC – PAYE on overtime	243.63		243.63
Community First Membership	70.00		70.00
OALC Membership	277.50	55.50	333.00
Total to be decided and approved	£1,543.44	£55.50	£1,598.94
Total of already approved/paid	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Monthly Standing Orders/DDs			
ICO – Annual Fee	47.00		47.00
Clerk's CC – Microsoft £65.88, Print Ready £42, Bank Charge £3	92.90	17.98	110.88
Clerk's Salary including WFH Allowance	225.38		225.38
RFO Salary including WFH Allowance	201.20		201.20
HMRC PAYE	93.40		93.40
Total SDOs	£659.90	£17.98	£677.86
Total	£2,203.34	£73.48	£2,276.80
New So's to replace above from 06/04/2025			
Mrs E Anstee (£209.74 plus £26 WFHA)	235.74		235.74
HMRC PAYE	96.00		96.00

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Appendix 1 – Account Balances

Cash Balances

	£
<i>UNITY TRUST CURRENT ACCOUNT</i>	
Balance B/F at 31 December 2024	39,279.65
Payments January 2025	(2,740.62)
Payments February 2025	(5,107.47)
Income January 2025	0.00
Balance at 28 February 2025	<u>£31,431.56</u>
<i>CCLA INVESTMENT ACCOUNT</i>	
Balance B/F at 30 September 2024	53,500.79
Income October 2024	219.59
November 2024	225.38
December 2024	212.94
January 2025	218.50
Balance at 31 December 2024	<u>£54,377.20</u>
TOTAL CASH HOLDING AT 28 February 2025	<u>£85,808.76</u>

Clerk's Briefing Notes – 6th March 2025
Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

TD (February 2025) & Full Year Forecast Expenditure against budget:

2024-25		A\$AT						
BUDGET	EXPENDITURE	31/01/2025 Month 10	Performance Against Budget	% YTD	Full Year Forecast	% Full Year	Commentary	
£	Staff Costs							
£ 4,015.19	Clerk & RFO Salary - includes potential 3% payrise if PC resolves to follow the NALC/UPAG guidance.	£ 3,966.71	£ 48.48	99%	£ 6,082.82	15.1%	All 24/25 pay changes now actioned	
£ 1,377.33	HMRC	£ 1,224.14	£ 153.19	89%	£ 1,765.16	12.8%	Arrears payment for Nil 23/24 included	
£ 624.00	Clerk & RFO WFH allowance. Currently £18pm = £216pa. Max allowed £26pm. For discussion/resolution if PC wish to update.	£ 504.00	£ 120.00	81%	£ 624.00	100%	Full year includes backdated increase to £26 PM	
£ 500.00	Clerk sickness/Overtime contingency	£ 779.70	£ 279.70	156%	£ 1,000.00	200%	Overtime to be paid to Clerk & RFO in October	
£ 1,500.00	Travel and Training (Includes RFO CILCA & ILCA)	£ 150.00	£ 1,350.00	10%	£ 390.00	26%		
	Office and General Expenses							
£ 430.00	APM and meeting Hall Hire (Includes £7.50ph for Ordish room & £16ph for main hall).	£ 157.50	£ 272.50	37%	£ 430.00	100%	Awaiting invoices from Community Trust	
£ 250.00	Website Costs including domain registration and renewal	£ 247.75	£ 2.25	99%	£ 300.00	120%		
£ 210.00	External Audit	£ 315.00	£ 105.00	150%	£ 315.00	150%	Higher cost due to income for planning appeal	
£ 456.39	Insurance	£ 484.67	£ 28.28	106%	£ 484.67	106%		
£ 72.00	Bank Charges	£ 86.40	£ 14.40	120%	£ 105.00	146%	Now includes monthly fee for CC	
£ 1,101.80	Office running costs (Microsoft & Norton Licences)	£ 773.23	£ 328.37	70%	£ 1,100.00	100%		
£ 150.00	Office Equipment (transfer to reserve if unspent at year end)	£ -	£ 150.00	0%	£ 150.00	100%		
£ 1,000.00	Professional Fees	£ 858.76	£ 141.24	86%	£ 1,000.00	100%	Flooding report & advice on local plan.	
£ 35.00	ICO Fee (DD)	£ -	£ 35.00	0%	£ 35.00	100%		
£ 642.00	Subscriptions (CPRE, CFO, SLCC, OALC)	£ 192.00	£ 450.00	30%	£ 642.00	100%		
£ 80.00	Election Expenses (estimated until WDC issue tax base)	£ -	£ 80.00	0%	£ -	0%	No election likely until after April 2025	
	General and Ground Maintenance							
£ 6,000.00	Grass Cutting - verges & weed killing	£ 4,121.01	£ 1,878.99	69%	£ 4,121.00	69%	Full year depends on weather for next 6 months	
£ 2,500.00	Grass Cutting - playing field and WM	£ 1,125.00	£ 1,375.00	45%	£ 1,775.00	71%	Full year depends on weather for next 6 months	
£ 2,189.26	Dog & Litter Bin Emptying	£ 1,230.39	£ 958.87	56%	£ 1,230.39	56%	Bills received cover period to March 2025	
£ 600.00	Clock Maintenance	£ 372.00	£ 228.00	62%	£ 600.00	100%		
£ 600.00	Bus Shelter Cleaning	£ -	£ 600.00	0%	£ 600.00	100%		
£ 500.00	Defibrillator pads/batteries	£ -	£ 500.00	0%	£ 500.00	100%		
£ 1,500.00	Village maintenance	£ 1,283.33	£ 216.67	86%	£ 1,500.00	100%		
	GRANTS							
£ 1,115.00	Small Grants	£ 810.00	£ 305.00	73%	£ 1,115.00	100%		
£ 5,785.00	General Grants	£ 2,825.00	£ 2,960.00	49%	£ 4,000.00	69%		
£ 33,232.77	TOTAL	£21,506.59	£ 11,726.18	65%	£ 29,865.05	90%	Increase in reserves of £5,706.98	
	INCOME							
£ 30,166.00	Precept	£30,935.00	£ 769.00	103%	£ 30,935.00	103%	Full year precept received	
£ 1,052.17	OCC Grass cutting Grant	£ 1,051.57	£ 0.60	100%	£ 1,051.57	100%		
£ 1,800.00	Interest on CCLA Investment account	£ 2,033.58	£ 233.58	113%	£ 2,500.00	139%	Investment income remains strong	
£ -	OCC Grant for Flood Prevention	£ -	£ -		£ -		To be offset against dataloggers cost	
£ -	Net VAT	£ 119.18	£ -		£ -			
£ 33,018.17	TOTAL	£33,900.97	£ 882.80	103%	£ 34,486.57	104%	Increase in reserves £1,468.40	
	RESERVED FUNDS				Movement	Full Yr Forecast		
£ 5,000.00	General Contingency fund (For example: 3 months running costs/insurance excess)	£ 2,264.91	£ 2,735.09	45%	£ 2,264.91	£ 2,735.09	Dataloggers	
£ 9,215.74	Working Day to Day Balance	£ 585.00	£ 8,630.74	6%	£ 585.00	£ 8,630.74	Bench	
£ 9,679.00	Traffic Calming	£ -	£ 9,679.00	0%	£ -	£ 9,679.00		
£ 3,500.00	Aston History Boards (£1,000 per board)	£ 300.00	£ 3,200.00	9%	£ 300.00	£ 3,200.00	Design & Artwork	
£ 3,800.00	North Farm	£ -	£ 3,800.00	0%	£ -	£ 3,800.00		
£ 752.52	Office Equipment	£ -	£ 752.52	0%	£ -	£ 752.52		
£ 3,145.00	Defibrillator Maintenance	£ 165.00	£ 2,980.00	5%	£ 165.00	£ 2,980.00		
£ 33,476.00	Recreation Reserve	£ -	£ 33,476.00	0%	£ -	£33,476.00		
£ 2,000.00	War Memorial	£ -	£ 2,000.00	0%	£ -	£ 2,000.00		
£ 10,000.00	Community Trust (50% match funding pot)	£ 3,950.00	£ 6,050.00	40%	£ 7,950.00	£ 2,050.00	Fascias/guttering & Electrical works	
£ 5,000.00	Coronation (St James Church Tower Gate)	£ -	£ 5,000.00	0%	£ -	£ 5,000.00		
£ 85,568.26	TOTAL	£ 7,264.91	£ 78,303.35	8%	£ 11,264.91	£74,303.35		