

ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL

CLERK'S BRIEFING NOTES

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING ON 8 December 2022

| <i>Page</i> | <i>Contents</i> |
|-------------|---|
| 2 | Correspondence (Agenda Item 9) |
| 3 | Traffic Calming (Agenda Item 8a) |
| 4-16 | Dignity at Work Policy (Agenda Item 12a) |
| 17-21 | Equality and Diversity Policy (Agenda Item 12b) |
| 22 | Account Balances (Agenda Item 15a) |
| 23 | Year to date Financial Report (Agenda Item 15b) |
| 24-30 | Draft Budget 2023-24 (Agenda Item 15c) |
| 31-32 | Confidential - REDACTED |

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Agenda Item 9

Correspondence

All correspondence by email

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Agenda Item 8(a) – Traffic Calming

The original request that the Parish Council looked at in April 2021, in addition to the white gates, were the following:

Review of 30 mph zones with proposal for a comprehensive piece of work moving the following 30 mph signs in line with the new developments across Aston and to make the roads safer for all users across the wider parish:

- *North Street, Aston – move the current 30 mph limit signs to the beyond the farm gate and St James development.*
- *Bull Street, Aston move the current 30 mph limit signs to beyond the footpath entrance at the end of Bull Street and the furthest corner of the Matthews Homes development.*
- *Cote – move 30 mph to beyond the last house in the village on road to Shifford.*
- *Cote – move the 30mph to beyond the last house/allotments on the B4449 towards Brighthampton.*
- Chimney – to request the implementation of a 30-mph limit from the Great Brook bridge all the way to the hamlet. This is a 'no through road' but has the BBOWT car park at the first corner. There has been increased publication of the area for walking and nature which has seen a significant increase in vehicular traffic, cyclists and walkers all trying to share the same, single-track road. The potential for incident/accident resulting in harm to both people and wildlife on the road which currently has the national speed limit is of great concern to the Parish Council.
- On the B4449 between Aston and Cote to join up the 30 mph to run all the way through.

Those in italics are part of the 20-mph implementation and are on the maps as agreed to go ahead. The last two points have not gone through the process.

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Agenda Item 12 - Governance

a) DIGNITY at WORK POLICY

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council believes that civility and respect are important in the working environment, and expect all Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Councillors, officers, and the public to be polite and courteous when working for, and with the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council.

Purpose

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council is committed to creating a working environment where all Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council employees, Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Councillors, contractors and others who come into contact with us in the course of our work, are treated with dignity, respect and courtesy. We aim to create a workplace where there is zero tolerance for harassment and bullying

We recognise that there is a continuum where unaddressed issues have the potential to escalate and become larger, more complex issues and this policy sets out how concerns will be managed however the emphasis of this policy is on resolution and mediation where appropriate, rather than an adversarial process.

This document:

- explains how we will respond to complaints of bullying or harassment;
- ensures that we respond sensitively and promptly; and,
- supports our employees in ensuring their behaviour does not amount to bullying and/or harassment by giving examples.

Scope

This policy covers bullying and harassment of and by clerk and all employees engaged to work at Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council. Should agency staff, or contractors have a complaint connected to their engagement with Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council this should be raised to their nominated contact, manager, or the Chair of the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council, in the first instance. Should the complaint be about the chair of the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council the complaint should be raised to the deputy chair.

Agency staff, or contractors are equally expected to treat Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council colleagues, and other representatives and stakeholders with dignity and respect, and the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council may terminate the contract, without notice, where there are suspicions of harassment or bullying.

Complaints about other employment matters will be managed under the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council's grievance policy.

It is noted that the management of a situation may differ depending on who the allegations relate to (e.g. employees, contractor, Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Councillor), however, the Aston, Cote,

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Shifford and Chimney Parish Council will take appropriate action if any of its employees are bullied or harassed by employees, Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Councillors, members of the public, suppliers or contractors.

The position on bullying and harassment

All staff and Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council representatives are entitled to dignity, respect and courtesy within the workplace and to not experience any form of discrimination. Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council will not tolerate bullying or harassment in our workplace or at work-related events outside of the workplace, whether the conduct is a one-off act or repeated course of conduct, and whether harm is intended or not. Neither will we tolerate retaliation against, or victimisation of, any person involved in bringing a complaint of harassment or bullying. You should also be aware that, if you have bullied or harassed someone (e.g. physical violence, harassment), in some circumstances the treatment may amount to a crime punishable by a fine or imprisonment.

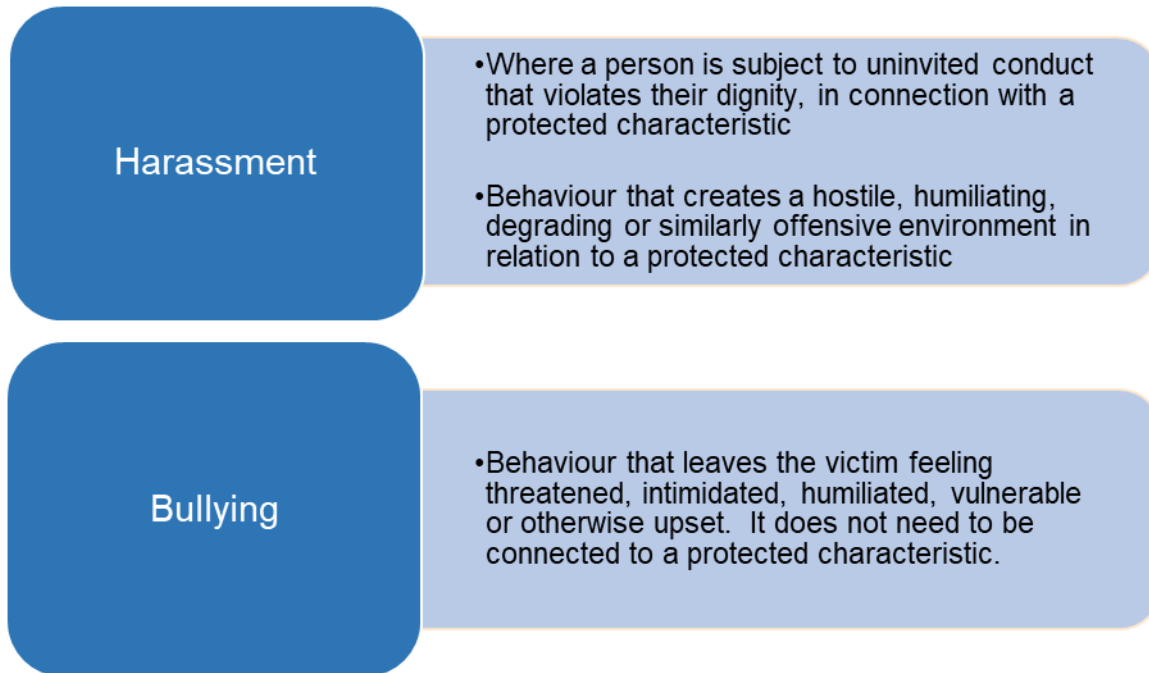
We expect all representatives of the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council to treat each other with respect and uphold the values of the code of conduct, equality opportunities policy, and all other policies and procedures set by the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council.

We expect you to demonstrate respect by listening and paying attention to others, having consideration for other people's feelings, following protocols and rules, showing appreciation and thanks, and being kind.

Allegations of bullying and harassment will be treated seriously. Investigations will be carried out promptly, sensitively and, as far as possible, confidentially. See the grievance policy for further details regarding the process. Employees and others who make allegations of bullying or harassment in good faith will not be treated less favourably as a result.

False accusations of harassment or bullying can have a serious effect on innocent individuals. Staff and others have a responsibility not to make false allegations. While we will assume that all complaints of bullying and harassment are made in good faith, in the event that allegations are found to be malicious or vexatious the person raising the complaint may be subject to action under the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council's disciplinary procedure.

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council



What Type of Treatment amounts to Bullying or Harassment?

'Bullying' or 'harassment' are phrases that apply to treatment from one person (or a group of people) to another that is unwanted and that has the effect of violating that person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment for that person.

Examples of bullying and harassment include:

- Physical conduct ranging from unwelcome touching to serious assault
- Unwelcome sexual advances
- The offer of rewards for going along with sexual advances e.g. promotion, access to training
- Threats for rejecting sexual advances
- Demeaning comments about a person's appearance
- Verbal abuse or offensive comments, including jokes or pranks related to age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion, belief, sex or sexual orientation
- Unwanted nicknames, especially related to a person's age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion, belief, sex or sexual orientation
- Spreading malicious rumours or insulting someone
- Lewd or suggestive comments or gestures
- Deliberate exclusion from conversations, work activities or social activities.
- Withholding information, a person needs in order to do their job
- Practical jokes, initiation ceremonies or inappropriate birthday rituals
- Physical abuse such as hitting, pushing or jostling
- Rifling through, hiding or damaging personal property
- Display of pictures or objects with sexual or racial overtones, even if not directed at any particular person
- Isolation or non-cooperation at work

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

- Subjecting a person to humiliation or ridicule, belittling their efforts, whether directly and / or in front of others
- The use of obscene gestures
- Abusing a position of power

Bullying and harassment can occur through verbal and face to face interactions but can also take place through sharing inappropriate or offensive content in writing or via email and other electronic communications and social media.

It is important to recognise that conduct which one person may find acceptable, another may find totally unacceptable, and behaviour could be harassment when the person had no intention to offend. We all have the right to determine what offends us. Some behaviour will be clear to any reasonable person that it is likely to offend – for example sexual touching. Other examples may be less clear; however, you should be aware that harassment will occur if behaviour continues after the recipient has advised you that the behaviour is unacceptable to them.

Harassment can also occur where the unwanted behaviour relates to a perceived characteristic (such as offensive jokes or comments based on the assumption someone is gay, even if they are not) or due to their association with someone else (such as harassment related to their partner having a disability for example). [See the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council's equality and diversity Policy.](#)

All employees must, therefore, treat their colleagues with respect and appropriate sensitivity and should feel able to challenge behaviour that they find offensive even if it is not directed at them.

It is important to recognise that bullying does not include appropriate criticism of an employee's behaviour or effective, robust performance management. Constructive and fair feedback about your behaviour or performance from your manager or colleagues/Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Councillors is not bullying. It is part of normal employment and management routines and should not be interpreted as anything different.

Victimisation

Victimisation is subjecting a person to a detriment because they have, in good faith, complained (whether formally or otherwise) that someone has been bullying or harassing them or someone else, or supported someone to make a complaint or given evidence in relation to a complaint. This would include isolating someone because they have made a complaint or giving them a heavier or more difficult workload.

Provided that you act in good faith, i.e. you genuinely believe that what you are saying is true, you have a right not to be victimised for making a complaint or doing anything in relation to a complaint of bullying or harassment and the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council will take appropriate action to deal with any alleged victimisation, which may include disciplinary action against anyone found to have victimised you.

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Making a complaint that you know to be untrue, or giving evidence that you know to be untrue, may lead to disciplinary action being taken against you.

Reporting Concerns

What you should do if you feel you are being bullied or harassed by a member of the public or supplier (as opposed to a colleague)

If you are being bullied or harassed by someone with whom you come into contact at work, please raise this with your nominated manager in the first instance or, with the clerk/or a Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Councillor. Any such report will be taken seriously, and we will decide how best to deal with the situation, in consultation with you.

What you should do if you feel you are being bullied or harassed by a Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Councillor: If you are being bullied or harassed by a Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Councillor, please raise this with the clerk/chief officer or the chair of the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council in the first instance. They will then decide how best to deal with the situation, in consultation with you. There are two possible avenues for you, informal or formal. The Informal Resolution is described below. Formal concerns regarding potential breaches of the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Councillors Code of Conduct must be investigated by the Monitoring Officer.

The Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council will consider reasonable measures to protect your health and safety. Such measures may include a temporary change in duties or change of work location, not attending meetings with the person about whom the complaint has been made etc.

What you should do if you witness an incident you believe to harassment or bullying: If you witness such behaviour, you should report the incident in confidence to the clerk/chief officer or a Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Councillor. Such reports will be taken seriously and will be treated in strict confidence as far as it is possible to do so.

What you should do if you are being bullied or harassed by another member of staff: If you are being bullied or harassed by a colleague or contractor, there are two possible avenues for you, informal or formal. These are described below.

Informal resolution

If you are being bullied or harassed, you may be able to resolve the situation yourself by explaining clearly to the perpetrator(s) that their behaviour is unacceptable, contrary to the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council's policy and must stop. Alternatively, you may wish to ask the clerk/chief officer, your nominated manager or a colleague to put this on your behalf or to be with you when confronting the perpetrator(s).

If the above approach does not work or if you do not want to try to resolve the situation in this way, or if you are being bullied by your own nominated manager, you should raise the issue with the chair of the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council. (If your concern relates to the chair, you should raise it

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

with the chair of the personnel/staffing committee). The chair (or another appropriate person) will discuss with you the option of trying to resolve the situation informally by telling the alleged perpetrator, without prejudicing the matter, that:

- there has been a complaint that their behaviour is having an adverse effect on a member of the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council staff
- such behaviour is contrary to our policy
- for employees, the continuation of such behaviour could amount to a serious disciplinary offence

It may be possible for this conversation to take place with the alleged perpetrator without revealing your name, if this is what you want. The person dealing with it will also stress that the conversation is confidential.

In certain circumstances we may be able to involve a neutral third party (a mediator) to facilitate a resolution of the problem. The chair (or another appropriate person) will discuss this with you if it is appropriate.

If your complaint is resolved informally, the alleged perpetrator(s) will not usually be subject to disciplinary sanctions. However, in exceptional circumstances (such as extremely serious allegation or in cases where a problem has happened before) we may decide to investigate further and take more formal action notwithstanding that you raised the matter informally. We will consult with you before taking this step.

Raising a formal complaint

If informal resolution is unsuccessful or inappropriate, you can make a formal complaint about bullying and harassment through the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council's grievance procedure. You should raise your complaint to the clerk/chief officer or the chair of the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council. A formal complaint may ultimately lead to disciplinary action against the perpetrator(s) where they are employed.

The clerk/chief officer or the chair of the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council will appoint someone to investigate your complaint in line with the grievance policy. You will need to co-operate with the investigation and provide the following details (if not already provided):

- The name of the alleged perpetrator(s),
- The nature of the harassment or bullying,
- The dates and times the harassment or bullying occurred,
- The names of any witnesses and
- Any action taken by you to resolve the matter informally.

The alleged perpetrator(s) would normally need to be told your name and the details of your grievance in order for the issue to be investigated properly. However, we will carry out the investigation as confidentially and sensitively as possible. Where you and the alleged perpetrator(s) work in proximity to

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

each other, we will consider whether it is appropriate to make temporary adjustments to working arrangements whilst the matter is being investigated.

Where your complaint relates to potential breaches of the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Councillors Code of Conduct, these will need to be investigated by the Monitoring Officer. The Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council will consider any adjustments to support you in your work and to manage the relationship with the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Councillor the allegations relate to, while the investigation proceeds.

Investigations will be carried out promptly (without unreasonable delay), sensitively and, as far as possible, confidentially. When carrying out any investigations, we will ensure that individuals' personal data is handled in accordance with the data protection policy.

The Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council will consider how to protect your health and wellbeing whilst the investigation is taking place and discuss this with you. Depending on the nature of the allegations, the Investigator may want to meet with you to understand better your complaint (see the grievance policy for further information, and details of your right to be accompanied).

After the investigation, a panel will meet with you to consider the complaint and the findings of the investigation in accordance with the grievance procedure. At the meeting you may be accompanied by a fellow worker or a trade union official.

Following the conclusion of the hearing the panel will write to you to inform you of the decision and to notify you of your right to appeal if you are dissatisfied with the outcome. You should put your appeal in writing explaining the reasons why you are dissatisfied with the decision. Your appeal will be heard under the appeal process that is described in the grievance procedure.

The use of the Disciplinary Procedure

If at any stage from the point at which a complaint is raised, we believe there is a case to answer and a disciplinary offence might have been committed, we will instigate our disciplinary procedure. We will keep you informed of the outcome.

This is a non-contractual policy and procedure which will be reviewed from time to time.

GUIDANCE FOR USING THE DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY

This is an example of an employment policy designed for a Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council adhering to statutory minimum requirements and does not constitute legal advice. As with all policies it should be consistent with your terms and conditions of employment.

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

This guidance is provided to support understanding of the policy, and its application, as well as where local adaptations may be required. The guidance is not part of the policy and should be removed from the policy adopted and shared with Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council employees.

The Dignity at Work Policy will replace a previous 'Bullying and Harassment' Policy, to create a policy that is focussed on encompassing behaviours beyond simply bullying and harassment, and zero tolerance with the aim of dealing with concerns before they escalate. It is important that any commitment made in the policy is applied in practice.

Wording has been suggested to demonstrate a Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council's commitment to promoting dignity and respect where they have signed up to the NALC, SLCC and OVW Civility and Respect Pledge. Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council's that have not signed up to this are requested to consider making this pledge which is based on basic behaviours and expectations of all Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council representatives to create workplaces that allow people to maintain their dignity at all times. If your Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council has not agreed to the pledge this wording should be removed.

The policy is drafted with consideration of employment language and terminology that is reflective of a modern working environment, setting a tone that is engaging, collaborative and inclusive. A Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council may want to update references where relevant to reflect local terminology and structure, however should be considerate of equality, diversity and inclusion.

The examples of bullying and harassment are just that – examples. This should not be considered an exhaustive list.

Notes:

Protected Characteristics

A 'protected characteristic' is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and marriage and civil partnership. It is unlawful to discriminate against an individual because of any of the protected characteristics.

Discrimination includes treating people differently because of a protected characteristic. Employees can complain of harassment even if the behaviour in question is not directed at them. This is because the complainant does not actually need to possess the relevant protected characteristic. An employee can complain of unlawful harassment if they are related someone with a protected characteristic, or because a colleague believes they have a protected characteristic.

Examples of harassment related to a protected characteristic could include;

- Making assumptions about someone's ability due to their **age**, or denying development opportunities to someone based on their age. This could also include assumptions about their lifestyle or making inappropriate jokes related to age.

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

- Making fun or mimicking impairments related to a health condition, or using inappropriate language about disabilities. Constantly selecting social activities that make it impossible for a colleague with a **disability** to participate in.
- Refusing to treat a person as their new gender, or disclosing information about their gender identity could be harassment on the grounds of **gender reassignment**.
- **Pregnancy/Maternity** harassment could include refusing opportunities due to pregnancy or maternity leave, or inappropriate touching and invasion of personal space such as unwanted touching of a pregnant person's stomach.
- Harassment based on **race** could include derogatory nicknames, or stereotyping based on ethnicity. It could include racist comments or jokes, or assumptions about someone's lifestyle based on their ethnicity.
- **Gender** harassment could include not considering people for a job based on gender stereotyping roles, or implementing practices that disadvantage one gender over another. Rude, explicit jokes, even if not directed at an individual, or comments on individuals' dress or appearance.
- Regularly arranging team meals over periods of fasting or religious occasions or failing to adjust a dress code to accommodate religious dress could be examples of harassment based on **religion/belief**.
- Excluding same sex partners from social events could be both **sexual orientation** and **marriage/civil partnership** discrimination, as could not offering the same work-related benefits.

A person does not need to be employed or have 2 years qualifying service to make a discrimination claim at a tribunal.

- Job applicants who believe they have not been appointed because of a 'protected characteristic' can make a claim.
- New or established employees who are dismissed, or treated unreasonably because of a health condition can make a discrimination claim.
- An employee subjected to harassment can make a discrimination claim at a tribunal.
- An employee asked to retire can make a discrimination claim at a tribunal.

Legal risks

Successful unfair dismissal claims are limited to a compensation cap, whereas those for unlawful discrimination have no cap.

A positive employment culture, and swift action if conduct falls beneath acceptable standards will help mitigate the risks. An unhealthy culture will make it difficult to defend claims.

The time to defend and the cost of defending tribunal claims can be significant, irrespective of the outcome.

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Culture and behaviour

We work in eclectic communities and working environments, and a positive culture within the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council enables employees with different backgrounds and beliefs to share ideas and shape how the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council achieves its objectives for their community.

It is important to recognise that different individuals may find different behaviours bullying or harassing so while there is not always intent to offend or cause harm, that does not mean that the effect of the behaviour has not caused harm or offence.

It can take people a period of time to decide to raise their concerns, as they worry about consequences (perhaps from peers by complaining about a colleague who is popular, or they fear victimisation from the perpetrator or others). The Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council should consider whether there are opportunities (such as 121s to offer opportunity to reflect on relationships/morale) to identify issues earlier and address negative behaviours. Individuals can often mention concerns they are experiencing but not want to take it further. The Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council should remind the complainant that it has a zero tolerance to bullying and harassment and remind them of the policy in place to address concerns. If the allegations mentioned are significant, the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council may want to suggest that it will need to investigate further, even if a 'grievance' is not raised, so as to ensure that any concerns and risks are managed, and the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council is meeting its responsibilities and duty of care as an employer.

Whilst both staff and Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Councillors jointly determine the working culture, Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Councillors are key in demonstrating what is and isn't acceptable behaviour. This is apparent from how Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Councillors behave with each other in Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council meetings and also in how standards of behaviour are applied through the use of informal discussion and formal policies.

Scope

All Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council representatives are expected to uphold the values of the Dignity at Work Policy, however this policy sets out how allegations from employees will be managed. As indicated in the policy, concerns from a contractor, agency worker etc. should be raised to the identified person, and an appropriate approach will be considered based on the situation and relationship of the complainant with the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council.

Likewise, concerns raised about the behaviour of a contractor or agency worker would not generally be managed via the full process (such as the disciplinary process) but appropriate action would be considered based on the situation. To treat people (such as contractors, or a casual worker) engaged by the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council the same as an employee could blur the status of the employment relationship, so consider seeking professional advice if needed.

Managers

Recognising that Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Councils are of varying sizes, where the term manager/nominated manager is used it is recognised this could be the clerk/chief officer, another

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

employee of the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council, or a Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Councillor depending on the situation. It is good practice to have a clearly identified person who is the responsible 'line manager' or equivalent contact for an employee so that there is clarity on how the employee should report concerns to, who they notify if they are sick or to request leave etc. More often for Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council employees this may be the clerk/chief officer, and for the clerk/chief officer this could be the chair/deputy Chair, or possibly chair of a staffing/personnel committee.

Bullying and harassment & performance management

The policy sets out that bullying and harassment does not include appropriate criticism of an employee's behaviour or effective, robust performance management. It is not uncommon for an employee, when receiving critical feedback, to claim that this is bullying and/or harassing. It is the role of the nominated manager to provide effective and constructive feedback to encourage performance at the required standard.

Even when the feedback is not positive it should be fair, communicated in a professional and reasonable manner and shared with the objective of aiding understanding and achieving an improvement to overcome the shortfalls. There is no absolute definition of when the feedback may not be appropriate. Often it will be for the person/panel hearing the dignity at work complaint/grievance to determine whether the performance management has upheld the standards expected in terms of respect and civility and any feedback has been shared in a fair and professional way.

Responsibilities

All staff and representatives of the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council are responsible for their own behaviour in the workplace and for taking steps to revise unacceptable behaviour and appropriately challenge that of others.

Leaders – Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Councillors, clerks, chief officers, managers - are responsible for ensuring that these standards of treating people with civility, respect and courtesy are upheld, both through their own example, and by communicating and promoting these expectations to all employees. They are also responsible for ensuring that concerns raised are treated seriously and addressed in line with this policy in a timely manner.

During the investigation

Employers have a duty of care to provide a safe place of work. If a complaint is made, discuss how to manage working relationships whilst the allegation is being investigated and until the outcome is disclosed. This is as much for the protection of the alleged perpetrator as for the aggrieved.

Consider whether a neutral person should be offered as a 'listening ear' for both parties in the investigation. This could be a Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Councillor or nominated manager who is not involved in the investigation or allegations and can be a point of check in as raising, or being subject to allegations can be stressful.

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Offer other support that may be appropriate to the situation such as signposting to support groups, time off for counselling etc. If you have suspended a staff member, your duty of care continues and it is important to consider their wellbeing and mental health.

Ensure that you communicate regularly with both parties.

The investigation and any subsequent hearing should be completed in accordance with the grievance policy which sets out a process for dealing with concerns. You should ensure that the grievance policy adopted adheres to any local policies and procedures, with consideration of any timescales and escalation routes in your locally adopted policy.

Confidentiality

It may be possible for concerns to be raised with the perpetrator without disclosing the name of the complainant however in a small Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council it is likely that it will be clear that the accused will know where the accusation has come from. The Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council representative (clerk/chief officer/Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Councillor) speaking to the alleged perpetrator must be clear that the discussion is confidential and the individual would be at risk of formal disciplinary action if there is any sort of victimisation or retaliation for the individual raising their concern.

During any formal investigation it may be necessary to disclose the nature of the allegations and where they came from to ensure a fair and balanced investigation and process. This should be discussed with the person raising the concerns to understand any issues and how they may be mitigated. In some situations it may be appropriate to provide anonymised witness statements however this would be a last resort, and could compromise the fairness of the process. Where there is a genuine fear of consequences and this may need to be considered, it is recommended that professional advice is sought. For the same reason it can be difficult for a Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council to consider an anonymous complaint, however if the concerns are significant and compromise the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council in their duty of care to employees, then consideration of how the deal with the matter may be required.

Victimisation

All employees have the right to raise genuine concerns without the fear of reprisals. If the aggrieved (or a witness) is treated differently / less favourably because they have raised a complaint, then this is victimisation. This would include isolating someone because they have made a complaint, cancelling a planned training event, or giving them a heavier or more difficult workload. Victimisation can lead to a claim to an employment tribunal.

False allegations

If an employee makes an allegation that they know to be untrue, or gives evidence that they know to be untrue, the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council should consider the matter under the disciplinary procedure. Such an allegation would be potentially be gross misconduct.

Complaints against Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Councillors

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Following the Ledbury case, the law is clear that any formal complaint about a Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Councillor regarding a breach of the code of conduct must be referred to the Monitoring Officer for investigation (either by the complainant, or the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council with agreement of the complainant). During the investigation, it is critical to ensure that where an employee of the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council has made the complaint, that the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council agrees reasonable measures with the employee to protect their health and safety. Such measures may include a temporary change in duties, change of work location, not attending meetings with the person about whom the complaint has been made etc.

Careful consideration is required where a grievance is raised against the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council as a whole due to lack of support related to Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Councillor behaviours. The specific allegations will need to be considered to determine whether the allegations can be addressed by the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council, or require exploration of the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Councillors behaviour in order to respond, in which case the Monitoring Officer may be required to investigate the alleged behaviours of a/any Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Councillors where this may relate to the code of conduct. It is a matter of fact whether the complaint is against the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council and can therefore be dealt with by the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council's grievance procedure or against a Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Councillor and can only be dealt with by the Monitoring Officer.

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

b) Equality and Diversity

ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD and CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Our commitment | 2 |
| The law | 2 |
| Types of unlawful discrimination | 2 |
| Equal opportunities in employment | 3 |
| Dignity at work | 4 |
| People not employed by the council | 4 |
| Training | 4 |
| Your responsibilities | 5 |
| Grievances | 5 |
| Monitoring and review | 5 |

Our commitment

The council is committed to providing equal opportunities in employment and to avoiding unlawful discrimination.

This policy is intended to assist the council to put this commitment into practice. Compliance with this policy should also ensure that employees do not commit unlawful acts of discrimination.

Striving to ensure that the work environment is free of harassment and bullying and that everyone is treated with dignity and respect is an important aspect of ensuring equal opportunities in employment.

The law

It is unlawful to discriminate directly or indirectly in recruitment or employment because of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality, caste and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership. These are known as "protected characteristics".

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Discrimination after employment may also be unlawful, e.g. refusing to give a reference for a reason related to one of the protected characteristics.

The council will not discriminate against or harass a member of the public in the provision of services or goods. It is unlawful to fail to make reasonable adjustments to overcome barriers to using services caused by disability. The duty to make reasonable adjustments includes the removal, adaptation or alteration of physical features, if the physical features make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people to make use of services. In addition, service providers have an obligation to think ahead and address any barriers that may impede disabled people from accessing a service.

Types of unlawful discrimination

Direct discrimination is where a person is treated less favourably than another because of a protected characteristic.

In limited circumstances, employers can directly discriminate against an individual for a reason related to any of the protected characteristics where there is an occupational requirement. The occupational requirement must be crucial to the post and a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Indirect discrimination is where a provision, criterion or practice is applied that is discriminatory in relation to individuals who have a relevant protected characteristic such that it would be to the detriment of people who share that protected characteristic compared

with people who do not, and it cannot be shown to be a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Harassment is where there is unwanted conduct, related to one of the protected characteristics (other than marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity) that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity; or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. It does not matter whether or not this effect was intended by the person responsible for the conduct.

Associative discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed for association with another individual who has a protected characteristic.

Perceptive discrimination is where an individual is directly discriminated against or harassed based on a perception that he/she has a particular protected characteristic when he/she does not, in fact, have that protected characteristic.

Third-party harassment occurs where an employee is harassed and the harassment is related to a protected characteristic, by third parties.

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Victimisation occurs where an employee is subjected to a detriment, such as being denied a training opportunity or a promotion because he/she made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act 2010, or because he/she is suspected of doing so. However, an employee is not protected from victimisation if he/she acted maliciously or made or supported an untrue complaint.

Failure to make reasonable adjustments is where a physical feature or a provision, criterion or practice puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared with someone who does not have that protected characteristic and the employer has failed to make reasonable adjustments to enable the disabled person to overcome the disadvantage.

Equal opportunities in employment

The council will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy.

Recruitment

Person and job specifications will be limited to those requirements that are necessary for the effective performance of the job. Candidates for employment or promotion will be assessed objectively against the requirements for the job, taking account of any reasonable adjustments that may be required for candidates with a disability. Disability and personal or home commitments will not form the basis of employment decisions except where necessary.

Working practices

The council will consider any possible indirectly discriminatory effect of its standard working practices, including the number of hours to be worked, the times at which these are to be worked and the place at which work is to be done, when considering requests for variations to these standard working practices and will refuse such requests only if the council considers it has good reasons, unrelated to any protected characteristic, for doing so. The council will comply with its obligations in relation to statutory requests for contract variations. The council will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability.

Equal opportunities monitoring

The council will monitor the ethnic, gender and age composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promotion), and the number of people with disabilities within these groups, and will consider and take any appropriate action to address any problems that may be identified as a result of the monitoring process.

The council treats personal data collected for reviewing equality and diversity in accordance with the data protection policy. Information about how data is used and the basis for processing is provided in the council's privacy notices.

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Dignity at work

The council has a separate dignity at work policy concerning issues of bullying and harassment on any ground, and how complaints of this type will be dealt with.

People not employed by the council

The council will not discriminate unlawfully against those using or seeking to use the services provided by the council.

You should report any bullying or harassment by suppliers, visitors or others to the council who will take appropriate action.

Training

The council will raise awareness of equal opportunities to those likely to be involved in recruitment or other decision making where equal opportunities issues are likely to arise.

The council will raise awareness of all staff engaged to work at the council to help them understand their rights and responsibilities under the dignity at work policy and what they can do to help create a working environment free of bullying and harassment.

Your responsibilities

Every employee is required to assist the council to meet its commitment to provide equal opportunities in employment and avoid unlawful discrimination. Employees can be held personally liable as well as, or instead of, the council for any act of unlawful discrimination. Employees who commit serious acts of harassment may be guilty of a criminal offence.

Acts of discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation against employees or customers are disciplinary offences and will be dealt with under the council's disciplinary procedure.

Discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation may constitute gross misconduct and could lead to dismissal without notice.

Grievances

If you consider that you may have been unlawfully discriminated against, you should use the council's grievance procedure to make a complaint. If your complaint involves bullying or harassment, the grievance procedure is modified as set out in the dignity at work policy.

The council will take any complaint seriously and will seek to resolve any grievance that it upholds. You will not be penalised for raising a grievance, even if your grievance is not upheld, unless your complaint is both untrue and made in bad faith.

Monitoring and review

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

This policy will be monitored periodically by the council to judge its effectiveness and will be updated in accordance with changes in the law. [In particular, the council will monitor the ethnic and gender composition of the existing workforce and of applicants for jobs (including promotion), and the number of people with disabilities within these groups, and will review its equal opportunities policy in accordance with the results shown by the monitoring. If changes are required, the council will implement them.

Information provided by job applicants and employees for monitoring purposes will be used only for these purposes and will be dealt with in accordance with relevant data protection legislation.]

This is a non-contractual procedure which will be reviewed from time to time.

Date of policy: December 2022

Approving: Full Council

Date of committee meeting: 8 December 2022

Policy effective from: 8 December 2022

Date for next review: December 2024

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council**Agenda Item 15a*****Financial Matters*****Cash Balances**

£

UNITY TRUST CURRENT ACCOUNT

| | |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| Balance at 31 October 2022 | 40,094.62 |
| November payments | (2,851.90) |

| | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Balance at 30 November 2022 | <u>£37,242.72</u> |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|

CCLA INVESTMENT ACCOUNT

| | |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Balance at 30 September 2022 | 48,957.90 |
| Transactions in month of October | 70.35 |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Balance at 31 October 2022 | <u>49,028.25</u> |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| TOTAL CASH HOLDING AT 30 November 2022 | <u>£86,270.97</u> |
|---|--------------------------|

Clerk's Briefing Notes – 8 December 2022
Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Agenda Item 15b Monthly (Year to Date) Financial Report

| 2022-23 Budget | £ | 30/11/2022 | Performance Against Budget | % | Commentary |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|----------------------------|-------------|--|
| RECEIPTS | | | | | |
| Precept | 29715 | 29715 | 0 | 0% | Complete |
| WODC Grant CTSG | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% | No longer paid |
| OCC grass cutting grant | 1049 | 1049 | 0 | 0% | Received in Full against Grass Cutting Verges and WM |
| Interest | 50 | 300 | -250 | -500% | CCLA Investment Account |
| VAT Refund | 0 | 1538 | -1538 | 0% | |
| INVESTMENTS IN | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% | |
| Sundry | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% | |
| Total Receipts | 30814 | 32602 | -1788 | -6% | |
| EXPENDITURE | | | | | |
| Clerk's salary | 4,404 | 3690 | 714 | -84% | Add Hours Paid in May |
| Working from home allowance | 216 | 144 | 72 | -67% | |
| HMRC | 1,155 | 997 | 158 | -86% | Add Hours Paid in May |
| Bank charges | 72 | 36 | 36 | -50% | £6 per month due quarterly. |
| Office equipment | 150 | 0 | 150 | 0% | |
| Office running costs | 650 | 464 | 186 | -71% | Photocopying/Printing/Stamps plus sundries/Norton/Microsoft |
| Website costs | 150 | 190 | -40 | -127% | Renewal due for 2 years in 2022 |
| Insurance | 364 | 341 | 23 | -94% | |
| Audit | 240 | 200 | 40 | -83% | |
| Election Costs | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% | |
| Annual Parish Meeting expenses | 40 | 0 | 40 | 0% | |
| Subscriptions | 506 | 70 | 436 | -14% | |
| Chairman's Allowance | 100 | 15 | 85 | -15% | |
| Grass Cutting - verges & WS | 5000 | 2332 | 2668 | -47% | |
| Grass Cutting - playing field & WM | 3000 | 1748 | 1252 | -58% | |
| Grants paid under statute | 5435 | 2059 | 3376 | -38% | |
| Dog & Litter Bin Emptying | 420 | 265 | 155 | -63% | |
| Fete Bins | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% | |
| Training & Travel | 527 | 552 | -25 | -105% | |
| Clock Maintenance | 229 | 0 | 229 | 0% | New contract with Derby's from March 2020 for 3 years |
| Bus Shelter Cleaning | 550 | 425 | 125 | -77% | Bus Shelter cleaning due for Renewal - Nov 202 |
| Defibrillator pads/batteries | 200 | 0 | 200 | 0% | |
| Repairs | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% | Included in VMB |
| VAT Paid | 0 | 1775 | -1775 | 0% | |
| Village maintenance (Lengthsman) | 1500 | 987 | 513 | -66% | |
| Small Grants | 1115 | 750 | 365 | -67% | |
| Total Expenditure | 26023 | 17042 | 8981 | -65% | |
| Projects | | | | | |
| Aston History Project (£5K) | 1000 | 0 | 1000 | 0% | History Boards |
| Cote Noticeboard | 1000 | 910 | 90 | 0% | |
| New Reserve - North Farm | 3800 | 0 | 3800 | 0% | |
| New Reserve - Office Equipment | 1000 | 0 | 1000 | 0% | |
| Chimney Defibrillator | 6105 | 2960 | 3145 | 0% | |
| Total Project Spend | 12905 | 910 | 11995 | 0% | |
| Contingency Budget | 5000 | 0 | 5000 | 0% | |
| | | | 0 | | |
| OVERALL EXPENDITURE | 37916 | 20912 | 17004 | -55% | |
| SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR | -7102 | 15561 | -22663 | 0% | |
| Reserves | | | | | |
| Opening at 1 April | 74580 | 0 | 74580 | 0% | |
| Closing at 31 March | 67478 | 0 | 67478 | 0% | |
| Closing reserves analysis: | | | | | |
| Working day to day balance | 18323 | 0 | 18323 | 0% | |
| Contingency reserve | 5000 | 0 | 5000 | 0% | |
| Recreation Reserve | 33476 | 0 | 33476 | 0% | |
| Traffic Calming | 4876 | 0 | 4876 | 0% | |
| Defibrillator Maintenance | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0% | To be populated with remaining from Chimney Defib project once complete. |
| Office Equipment | 1000 | 0 | 1000 | 0% | |
| | 62675 | 0 | 62675 | 0% | |

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Agenda Item 15c -Draft Budget 2023-24

ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD AND CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL
DRAFT BUDGET 2023/24 – VERSION 2

1.0 Overview

1.1 The final draft of the budget for 2023/24 is below. 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. This draft budget is in a new format at the request of Council to make it more transparent.

1.2 The District Council has provided information on the council tax base for 2023/24. The council tax base (the number of households across which the precept is split) was 597.45 in 2022/23. For 2023/24 is 606.48 which is an increase of 9.03 or 1.5%.

1.3 This draft budget shows expenditure of £31,308.00. The total expenditure is reduced to a net of £27,358.00 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 a revised general contingency sum of £8,500 to cover 3 months running costs, insurance excess and unexpected expenditure. A working day-to-day balance of cash funds required to carry forward at the end of the year of £3,091.00. Holding a reserve of up to £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. It is expected that this reserve will be drawn down by the Community Trust in 2023.

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 The “traditional” precept (the precept for tax setting purposes) in 2022/23 was £29,715.

2.0 Reserves

2.1 The forecast out-turn for 2022/23 is a deficit of £3,158.00. This is due to the creation of the 3 new reserves in 2021/22.

2.2 The forecast reserves at 31 March 2023 are £83,163.00.

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

| RESERVED FUNDS | |
|---|--------------------|
| General Contingency fund (For example: 3 months running costs/insurance excess) | £ 8,500.00 |
| Working Day to Day Balance | £ 3,091.00 |
| Traffic Calming | £ 7,901.00 |
| Cote Noticeboard | £ - |
| Aston History Boards (£1,000 per board) | £ 3,500.00 |
| North Farm | £ 3,800.00 |
| Office Equipment (Colour Printer/Laptop replacement 2024) | £ 1,250.00 |
| Defibrillator Maintenance | £ 2,145.00 |
| Recreation Reserve | £ 33,476.00 |
| War Memorial | £ 2,000.00 |
| <i>Community Trust (50% match funding pot)</i> | <i>£ 10,000.00</i> |
| <i>Allotments (Legal Fees for review of ownership)</i> | <i>£ 2,500.00</i> |
| <i>Coronation (St James Church Tower Gate/Celebrations/Footpath)</i> | <i>£ 5,000.00</i> |
| TOTAL | £ 83,163.00 |

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 purposes –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. With the new budget format project spend has been moved under reserves.

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 2023/24 are provided on the below sheet.

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 3% as 2023-24 pay award still under negotiation by JPAG and NALC.

3.5 General Grass Cutting

The contract was renewed with WODC in 2021 and runs to 2023. With the extension of the speed limits 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.

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

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.

3.7 Grants/Small Grant Pot and Subscriptions

The main grant budget was reviewed in detail and updated for 2020/21. Since then, the Aston Minibus has ceased. The proposed budget of £5,435 has been included at the same level as for 2022/23 and covers the following maximum grants:

| | | |
|--|----------|-----------------|
| Grants | | |
| CAB | £ | 150.00 |
| Voices | £ | 1,250.00 |
| Community Trust - playground maintenance | £ | 750.00 |
| Aston Community Shop | £ | 700.00 |
| Aston Fete (Insurance/Toilets) | £ | 500.00 |
| British Legion | £ | 150.00 |
| Volunteer Link-up | £ | 135.00 |
| Cleanslate | £ | 100.00 |
| MyVision Oxfordshire | £ | 100.00 |
| | | |
| <u>Churchyard Maintenance</u> | | |
| Cote Chapel | £ | 600.00 |
| St Mary's, Shifford | £ | 300.00 |
| St James', Aston | £ | 700.00 |
| | | |
| TOTAL BUDGETED GRANTS | £ | 5,435.00 |
| | | |
| Small Grants | £ | 1,115.00 |
| | | |
| SUBSCRIPTIONS | | |
| CPRE | £ | 38.00 |
| CFO | £ | 73.00 |
| OALC | £ | 212.00 |
| Community First Oxford | £ | 70.00 |
| Other - SLCC - Clerk Membership | £ | 92.00 |
| ICO | £ | 35.00 |
| TOTAL SUBS | £ | 520.00 |
| | | |
| Total Small Grants and Subs | £ | 1,635.00 |
| | | |
| TOTAL GRANT BUDGET | £ | 7,070.00 |

The grants highlighted in red are suggested based on previous years requests.

The Section 137(4)(a) LGA 1972 for local councils in England for 2022/23 was £8.82 per elector. The parish has an electoral base of 1134 as of May 2022 and this would give a S137 amount of £10,001.88.

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Though the Parish Council has the General Power of Competence and therefore does not use the S137 power for grants the amount given under this calculation is a good benchmark for grants and donations.

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). In 2022-23 this was used for the Jubilee trees and Christmas Tree.

3.9 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). There are some significant projects, solar panels and guttering to name two, that are being put together. This budget a new reserve of £10,000 is being suggested so that the Parish Council has funds set aside to support the Community Trust with matched funding for any grant applications.

3.11 One-off Projects – Has changed to Reserved funds

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. However, to make the budget more transparent the clerk is suggesting that this is done under 'Reserved Funds'. The clerk has included some possible options for specific activities in 2023/24 and these are highlighted in red. Councillors are therefore asked to consider potential projects for 2022/23 before the budget is finalised.

4 Precept

4.1 The net expenditure in the budget as presented is £31,308.00. The Parish Council would need to raise £30,166.00 from the precept to create a break-even budget. This would equate to £49.74 per Band D household (using the 2023/24 council tax base). This keeps the precept at the same level as 2022/23.

5 Recommendations

5.1 That the Parish Council considers the draft budget as presented, considers the format and reviews the proposed changes highlighted.

5.2 Specific areas for RESOLUTION:

- Format of budget – to adopt with effect from 2023.
- Grants, Small Grants and Subscriptions.
- Review of specific reserves, with agreed total target reserve(s) and expected timescale for the expenditure.
- To put in place a strategy for the next 3 years for frame-working the reserves.

5.3 That the Parish Council RESOLVES the level of the precept for 2023/24.

5.4 That the Parish Council RESOLVES to adopt the budget as detailed or defer to the January meeting if amendments are requested.

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Prepared by: Elaine Anstee, 27 November 2022

| ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL | | |
|---|---|--------------------|
| Budget 2023-24 | | |
| 2022-23 | | 2023-24 |
| Forecast Spend | | Budget |
| | EXPENDITURE | |
| | Staff Costs | |
| £ 5,961.79 | Clerk's Salary - includes potential 3% payrise if PC resolves to follow the NALC/JPAG guidance. | £ 4,872.86 |
| £ 216.00 | 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. | £ 312.00 |
| £ 154.38 | HMRC | £ 1,218.27 |
| £ - | <i>Clerk sickness/Overtime contingency</i> | £ 500.00 |
| £ 552.00 | Travel and Training (Review for Clerk and Councillor training - industry standard 2.5% budget (£742.87)) | £ 742.87 |
| | | |
| | Office and General Expenses | |
| £ - | APM and meeting Hall Hire | £ 100.00 |
| £ 189.79 | Website Costs including domain registration and renewal | £ 190.00 |
| £ 200.00 | External Audit | £ 200.00 |
| £ 341.40 | Insurance | £ 369.00 |
| £ 72.00 | Bank Charges | £ 72.00 |
| £ 726.99 | Office running costs | £ 650.00 |
| £ - | Office Equipment (transfer to reserve if unspent at year end) | £ 150.00 |
| £ - | <i>Professional Fees</i> | £ 1,000.00 |
| £ 35.00 | ICO Fee (DD) | £ 35.00 |
| £ 506.00 | Subscriptions (CPRE, CFO, SLCC, OALC) | £ 515.00 |
| £ - | Election Expenses (estimated until WODC issue tax base. | £ 80.00 |
| | | |
| | General and Ground Maintenance | |
| £ 2,332.27 | Grass Cutting - verges & weed killing | £ 5,000.00 |
| £ 1,747.70 | Grass Cutting - playing field and WM | £ 1,500.00 |
| £ 420.00 | Dog & Litter Bin Emptying | £ 2,171.00 |
| £ - | Clock Maintenance | £ 229.00 |
| £ 560.00 | Bus Shelter Cleaning | £ 600.00 |
| £ - | Defibrillator pads/batteries | £ 200.00 |
| £ 1,087.43 | Village maintenance | £ 1,500.00 |
| | | |
| | GRANTS | |
| £ 1,115.00 | Small Grants | £ 1,115.00 |
| £ 5,435.00 | General Grants | £ 5,435.00 |
| | | |
| £ 2,116.57 | VAT Paid | £ 2,551.00 |
| | | |
| £ 23,769.32 | TOTAL | £ 31,308.00 |

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

| ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL | | |
|---|---|--------------------|
| Budget 2023-24 | | |
| 2022-23 | | 2023-24 |
| Forecast Spend | | Budget |
| | INCOME | |
| £ 29,715.00 | Precept | £ 29,715.00 |
| £ 1,049.00 | OCC Grass cutting Grant | £ 1,049.00 |
| £ 300.00 | Interest on CCLA Investment account | £ 350.00 |
| £ 2,000.00 | VAT reclaimed | £ 2,551.00 |
| £ 33,064.00 | TOTAL | £ 33,665.00 |
| | RESERVED FUNDS | |
| | General Contingency fund (For example: 3 months running costs/insurance excess) | £ 8,500.00 |
| | Working Day to Day Balance | £ 3,091.00 |
| | Traffic Calming | £ 7,901.00 |
| £ 910.00 | Cote Noticeboard | £ - |
| | Aston History Boards (£1,000 per board) | £ 3,500.00 |
| | North Farm | £ 3,800.00 |
| | Office Equipment (Colour Printer/Laptop replacement 2024) | £ 1,250.00 |
| £ 2,960.00 | Defibrillator Maintenance | £ 2,145.00 |
| | Recreation Reserve | £ 33,476.00 |
| | War Memorial | £ 2,000.00 |
| | <i>Community Trust (50% match funding pot)</i> | £ 10,000.00 |
| | <i>Allotments (Legal Fees for review of ownership)</i> | £ 2,500.00 |
| | <i>Coronation (St James Church Tower Gate/Celebrations/Footpath)</i> | £ 5,000.00 |
| £ 3,870.00 | TOTAL | £ 83,163.00 |
| | Forecast Current Account Balance as at 31 March | £ 31,276.87 |
| | Forecast CCLA Investment account balance as at 31 March | £ 49,078.13 |
| | Forecast Total in bank accounts at year end 31 March | £ 80,355.00 |
| | Forecast Total left after Reserves are taken into account | -£ 2,808.00 |
| | Total expected income (not Precept) | £ 3,950.00 |
| | Total left including expected income | £ 1,142.00 |
| | Total in proposed budget | £ 31,308.00 |
| | Total Precept needed | £ 30,166.00 |

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council**ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL****FINANCIAL YEAR 2023/24****Draft - Dec 22****CALCULATION OF PRECEPT REQUIREMENT**

| | Ref | Calculation | |
|---|-----|-------------|---------------|
| Recurrent Expenditure | A | A | 31,308 |
| Special Projects | B | B | <u>0</u> |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURE | C | A + B | 31,308 |
| Other Income | D | | <u>3,950</u> |
| NET EXPENDITURE | E | C-D | 27,358 |
| Contingency Sum | F | | 8,500 |
| Working Day to Day Balance | G | | 3,091 |
| Less: Expected balance at 1 April 2023 | H | | (80,355) |
| Add back: All reserves at 1/4/2023 | I | | 71,572 |
| Add: Precept increase for traffic calming reserve | | | 0 |
| INCOME REQUIRED | K | E+F+G+H+I+J | <u>30,166</u> |
| 2022/23 COUNCIL TAX GRANT | L | | |
| 2022/23 PRECEPT | M | K-L | <u>30,166</u> |
| 2022/23 TOTAL TRADITIONAL PRECEPT | N | L+M | <u>30,166</u> |
| Council Tax Base (2022 base) | O | | 606.48 |
| Precept per Band D property | P | M/O | £49.74 |
| 2021/22 Precept per Band D Property | Q | | £49.74 |
| Increase in Precept £ per annum | R | P-Q | £0.00 |
| Increase in Precept £ per month | S | R/12 | £0.00 |
| Increase in Precept £ per week | T | R/52 | £0.00 |
| Increase in Precept % | U | R/Q | 0.0% |