

**MINUTES OF ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL  
MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 5<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2014 IN THE  
MEETING ROOM, VILLAGE HALL, ASTON AT 7.30 PM**

**1. Members Present:** Jane Everex  
Richard Haines  
Ben Lings  
John Ordish  
Paul Sparrowhawk  
Phil West

**In Attendance:** Helen Sandhu – Clerk  
Roy Williams, outgoing Parish Council Chairman  
Hilary Fenton, West Oxfordshire District Councillor  
1 member of the public

**Apologies:** Jane West

**2. Annual Meeting of Parish Council**

*a) Election of Chairman*

Roy Williams, the outgoing Parish Council Chairman undertook, the role of Chairman for this part of the meeting.

Richard Haines was proposed, seconded and unanimously elected as the new Chairman of the Parish Council.

Members expressed their grateful thanks to Roy Williams for his work on the Parish Council over the past 12 years.

Richard Haines chaired the meeting from this point.

*b) Vice Chairperson*

It was resolved to defer the election of a Vice Chairperson to a future meeting when all members would be present.

*c) Parish Transport Representative (PTR)*

It was resolved that the Parish Council would not appoint a member as a Transport Representative; a representative of the Parish Council will be nominated to attend PTR meetings organised by the County Council where there are specific issues of local relevance to be discussed.

*d) Community Trust Representative*

John Ordish was proposed, seconded and unanimously elected to continue in his role as the Parish Council's representative on the Committee of Aston & Cote Community Trust.

**3. Minutes of previous meeting** – on 1 May 2014 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Proposed by Paul Sparrowhawk, seconded by John Ordish.

**4. Parish Councillors – Disclosure of interests on agenda items**

None.

## **5. Open session for public debate**

The member of the public present complimented the Parish Council on the newly painted noticeboard at the entrance to Southlands. She expressed concern about the amount of litter in the village. Richard Haines said that this issue could be mentioned on the Parish Council's twitter feed and in a future edition of Voices, particularly if the Voices team receives a letter from a member of the public raising concerns about litter.

Concerns were expressed about dog mess in the parish. Richard Haines again suggested that this issue could be raised in Voices, possibly by the publication of a letter from a member of the public.

The vehicle activated speed sign (VAS) in North Street is becoming obstructed by the hedge. The Clerk will contact Thames Water to request that they cut back the hedge and will also trim the trees at the entrance to Saxel Close which are obscuring the VAS there.

## **6. OCC/WODC Items**

Hilary Fenton told the Parish Council that she is suggesting that every parish in the ward she is responsible for considers submitting a freedom of information request to Thames Water asking them how many houses the pumping station and pipe network serving the parish can cope with and how many new houses could be built which could be accommodated by the existing network (for both waste water and fresh water). Mrs Fenton informed the Parish Council that James Mills, Chairman of West Oxfordshire District Council's Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, is keen to address the widespread issues across the District about foul water disposal and fresh water supply. He is encouraging any members of the public who have concerns or have experienced problems in relation to the services provided by Thames Water to attend the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings, requesting permission to make representations if they so wish.

The Parish Council asked the Clerk to submit a freedom of information request to ask for information on the issues referred to above.

## **7. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings**

### *a) Aston website*

Ben Lings told the Parish council that all the relevant data from the old site has been put on the new one. He outlined his plans for ongoing improvements to the new site. There was a discussion about the possibility of giving village organisations access rights to edit their own information, and the potential problems that could arise from this. Mr Lings said that he would find out whether people could be given access rights to edit data, with the final step to publish the amendments being the responsibility of the Parish Council.

The Clerk was asked to contact as many village organisations as possible to inform them of the new site and to ask them to supply up-to-date information to be put on the site.

### *b) Annual Parish Meeting*

To take place on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> June at 7.45pm.  
The running order for the speakers was agreed.

**Matters Arising from Previous Meetings (continued)**

*c) Community defibrillators – grant offer from WODC*

The Clerk informed the Parish Council that the District Council has approved the Parish Council's application for a 50% grant towards the cost of a new defibrillator and cabinet. Paul Sparrowhawk informed the Parish Council that the company who supplied the defibrillator which has been installed at Aston garage has sent him a second unsolicited unit. Mr Sparrowhawk said that he has been in contact with the company on two occasions to ask why the unit was sent and to find out if and how it should be returned, and that the company do not seem to want the unit back. Mr Sparrowhawk was asked to write to the company to confirm that they definitely do not want it back and that they are not intending to raise an invoice for its acquisition. If this confirmation is received, the Parish Council may be able to install it at the village hall, with only the cost of a new cabinet and the installation to pay.

John Ordish agreed to formally ask the Community Trust if a defibrillator could be installed on an external wall at the village hall, to ask if the caretaker could carry out the brief daily check required, and to ascertain the best installation point (preferably in a position which would be covered by the CCTV equipment).

*d) Bench maintenance*

Phil West volunteered to stain the VE/VJ bench on the recreation field.

*e) Anti-social behaviour*

It was noted that two adults are still camping on the recreation field. John Ordish told the Parish Council that the Community Trust has resolved that they should be asked to move. The Clerk said that she has spoken to Thames Valley Police about this issue this week; the Police are aware and have been out on several occasions to speak to the individuals involved, without success. The officer from Thames Valley Police had said that she thinks that they are going to be offered housing by WODC imminently.

The Clerk told the Parish Council that she has observed several young people (below the age of 16) driving around Bull Street on mini-motorbikes/scrambler bikes. She has already informed Thames Valley Police. Richard Haines said that this issue could possibly be raised in a future edition of Voices.

**8. Correspondence sent**

Listed in the Clerk's Briefing Notes previously circulated to all Councillors.

**9. Parish Council Twitter account**

The Clerk now has access to publish tweets.

Ben Lings was asked to publish tweets about the election of Richard Haines as the new Parish Council Chairman and the upcoming Annual Parish Meeting.

**10. New Business**

*a) Grant request – St Mary's Church, Shifford*

John Ordish declared an interest in this item, as Church Warden.

It was resolved to give a grant of £210 towards the cost of grass cutting at the church. Proposed by Jane Everex, seconded by Paul Sparrowhawk.

**New Business (continued)**

*b) Aston Post Office service*

The Clerk informed the Parish Council that she has been contacted by an officer from the Post Office who has advised that the current Post Office is likely to close around 31 July.

The Post Office is actively investigating the possibility of opening an “outreach” postal service in Aston. This service would be likely to provide 3 weekly sessions of 3 hours each and would be located in a publicly accessible building in Aston. If the proposal is successful, the service would be likely to open around the end of August/September. There will be a formal public consultation prior to the new service opening.

*c) Central Aston post box*

An officer from Royal Mail has requested a site meeting with the Parish Council to consider a possible new location for the post box which is currently outside the Post Office. John Ordish and Richard Haines volunteered to attend this meeting – Clerk to obtain suggested dates and times.

*d) SLCC Central Regional Conference – 2 July 2014*

It was resolved that the Clerk would attend this conference. Proposed by John Ordish, seconded by Jane Everex.

*e) Cote Chapel – a new local volunteer support group*

It was noted that The Historic Chapels Trust had arranged a public meeting at the chapel on 29 May to discuss the establishment of a new local volunteer support group. None of the Councillors present had been able to attend the meeting. John Ordish volunteered to contact the new local Historic Chapels Trust link person to obtain information about the outcome of this meeting.

*f) OALC training courses*

It was resolved that Richard Haines would attend the Chairmanship course on 15 October.

**11. Community Trust**

The issue of people camping on the field without permission had been discussed earlier in the meeting.

John Ordish reminded the Parish Council that the village fete is due to take place on Saturday 12 July, with the general funds raised to go to Aston Community Minibus.

Ben Lings said that he had been contacted by some residents of Saxel Close who were disturbed by the fireworks at the village hall at a recent wedding celebration. John Ordish advised that permission for the fireworks had been given by the Community Trust. It was noted that the display hadn't taken place particularly late in the evening and hadn't lasted long.

**12. Parish Infrastructure**

*a) Weedkilling*

The Clerk was asked to obtain a quotation for weedkilling and clearance of the dead weeds through the main roads of the centre of Aston, one area of Woodbridge Close and the entrance to Saxel Close from Des Johnston.

It was resolved that the Clerk be given delegated permission to place the order provided it is less than £350.

**Parish Infrastructure (continued)**

*b) Block work and kerbing around the war memorial*

- It was noted that there has still been no response from Southern Construction to the Parish Council's letter advising that a two year warranty is required by Oxfordshire Highways.
- Both the Clerk and Richard Haines had attempted to contact Gordon Hill & Sons Ltd to request that they carry out an urgent temporary repair on the damaged area, but without success.
- The Clerk has now been in contact with Oxfordshire Highways who will be arranging for a temporary repair to be carried out as soon as possible.
- The Clerk is continuing to chase Oxfordshire Highways to request that they provide a suggested specification for final remedial work at the site and associated quotation.

*c) Cote village information sign*

The signs have been ordered; delivery awaited.

*d) Road closure signs (for flooding) Great Brook Road*

The Clerk informed the Parish Council that Oxfordshire County Council is suggesting that the only signs which could be installed would be of the "flip to reveal" style. Someone locally would need to go out to change the sign when the road is flooded and again once the flooding has cleared. It was resolved that if these are the only signs which could be installed, it would not be worthwhile. Clerk to contact OCC.

**13. PLANNING**

**Planning applications granted**

14/0366/P/FP Shifford Manor Farmhouse, Old Shifford  
Erection of porch to rear entrance and new dormer window to south elevation

**New planning applications**

14/0615/P/FP North Street Farm, North Street, Aston  
Creation of new field access

It was resolved that the Parish Council would request that the issues raised by Oxfordshire Highways in relation to the required visual splay and the position of the gate be resolved before permission is granted.

14/0619/P/FP Home Farm House, Bampton Road, Aston  
Erection of single storey rear extension (retrospective)  
*No comments*

14/0682/P/FP 12 Bull Street, Aston  
Modernisation to include removal of existing single storey extension and erection of new two storey rear extension. Insertion of velux roof lights in existing rear roof slope and construction of front entrance porch

It was resolved that the Parish Council would object to the front porch as it could restrict the footway and be detrimental to the safety of pedestrians.

**PLANNING (continued)**

**New planning applications**

14/0685/P/FP 10 Bull Street, Aston  
 Modernisation to include removal of existing single storey extension and erection of new two storey and single storey rear extension. Insertion of velux roof lights in existing rear roof slope  
*No comments*

**Follow up to previous applications**

14/0519/P/FP 3 High Street, Aston  
 Erection of two storey extension to existing dwelling and erection of attached dwelling with associated parking

*The Clerk informed the Parish Council that the applicant is proposing to address the concerns raised by Oxfordshire Highways by installing a turntable. The Clerk was asked to raise concerns about the viability of this proposed solution.*

**14. Finance**

a) *Account Balances – circulated in the Clerk’s Briefing Notes*

Balance on Current Account at 31 May 2014	£10,549.84
Balance on Deposit Account at 31 May 2014	£16,680.70

b) *Internal audit for 2013/14*

A copy of the report from the internal auditor had been included in the Clerk’s Briefing Notes. It was noted that the internal auditor had not identified any issues to notify to the Parish Council.

c) *Annual Return for 2013/14*

The Clerk informed the Parish Council that she had made a minor error in transferring figures between the cash book and the Annual Return (overstating the precept by £80 and understating other income by £80). It was resolved that the Annual Return should be amended. Proposed by John Ordish, seconded by Paul Sparrowhawk.

d) *Change to bank signatories*

It was resolved that Paul Sparrowhawk would replace Roy Williams as a signatory to the Parish Council’s bank accounts.

e) *May invoices presented for approval and payment*

		Statute
Clerk’s salary and working from home allowance	355.80	LGA 1972, s112
Clerk’s expenses – printing – 85 sheets @ 5p	4.25	LGA 1972 s111
A J Mitchell – bus shelter clean in May	25.00	LG(MP)A 1953, s4
Margaret Johnson Ltd – printing & stationery	11.96	LGA 1972 s111
West Oxfordshire District Council – grass cuts of verges and war memorial in September and October 2013	1067.04	HA 1980, s116
West Oxfordshire District Council – three cuts of verges and war memorial in March & April 2014	1093.72	HA 1980, s116
Ben Lings – reimbursement for payment to Weebly for 2 years hosting of new website	97.82	LGA 1972 s111
West Oxfordshire District Council – emptying of dog bin	20.40	Litter Act 1983
St Mary’s Church, Shifford – grass cutting grant	210.00	LGA 1972, s214
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,885.99</b>	

It was resolved to make the above payments, proposed by Paul Sparrowhawk, seconded by Jane Everex. The cheques were signed by Richard Haines and John Ordish.

**15. Parish Councillors' reports from meetings attended since last meeting**

Richard Haines informed the Parish Council that he had attended the Local Working Group meeting at RAF Brize Norton on 27 May. The meeting had included visits to various key sites at the base, including Air Traffic Control and the on-site fire service, and speaking to the operational personnel had been very informative. The Hercules aircraft will continue to operate from RAF Brize Norton until 2022. The RAF is still looking into the cost effectiveness of building a hangar for engine testing. Information obtained at the meeting was put in the folder for circulation between the members.

Mr Haines told the Parish Council that he had also attended the formal annual reception at RAF Brize Norton on 4 June.

Paul Sparrowhawk informed the Parish Council that he had attended meetings of the working group looking into the creation of a new sports and social club during the month. The questionnaires have been completed and the results are being compiled.

**16. Matters arising since publication of agenda/**

**Matters which Councillors wish to raise for inclusion on next agenda  
(for discussion only)**

It was agreed that the Clerk would write to various households in Aston requesting that they attend to overgrown hedges and other boundary issues.

**17. Dates of next meetings: Tuesday 17 June 2014, 7.45pm**  
Annual Parish Meeting

**Thursday 3 July 2014, 7.30pm**  
Monthly Parish Council Meeting

Signed .....dated.....