

**MINUTES OF ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON  
Thursday 1 February 2024 at the Village Hall, Aston, at 7.30pm**

**Members** R La Forte (Chair)

**Present:** J Ordish  
G Ball  
P Sparrowhawk  
A Chapman

**In Attendance:** Elaine Anstee – Clerk  
9 members of the public  
Cllr C Maynard (WODC)

1. **Apologies from Members:** There were apologies from R Anstee and B Lings.
2. **Minutes of the previous meetings** of the Parish Council on 4<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024 were agreed and it was RESOLVED as proposed by P Sparrowhawk, seconded by J Ordish, with all in agreement, that the Chair signs them.
3. **Parish Councillors - Disclosure of interests on agenda items** – R La Forte declared a nonpecuniary interest in Agenda Item 11 as he is a trustee.
4. **Meeting Open for Public Participation**  
Marsh Furlong resident challenged what could be done following the report that a temporary planning officer signed off on the conditions for Thames Water and they should not have. It has been confirmed that these conditions were signed off without the WODC planning officers doing proper background research but there is no way to change this.
5. **WODC/OCC Matters**  
OCC Cllr D Levy – Report attached at Appendix 1.  
WODC Cllr C Maynard – As the Executive member for planning at WODC he recognises there is lots to improve - telephone numbers for officers to start. He had a long meeting last Friday with Thames Water and overall, less and less comfortable that they know what their systems can cope with. Measuring with flow meters patchy so identifying problems and scale of work is a tiny fraction of what is required. He will be meeting the new head teacher at Aston and Cote Primary School tomorrow. WODC giving a balanced budget and the detail about the redecoration and public space the WODC offices to be made available.
6. **Matters Arising from Previous Meetings**
  - a) *Quick updates:*
    - *Neighbourhood Plan – no news.*
    - *Electronic Speed Signs – chased 18th January 2024.*
    - *Cote Chapel – No update.*
    - *Gate at St James Church – no update.*

b) *Traffic calming update and other traffic issues.*

It was RESOLVED as proposed by G Ball, seconded by P Sparrowhawk, with all in agreement, to consult with residents, via Voices (March Edition) on putting traffic calming measures (buildouts) at the following locations, in order of priority:

1. North Street by 30 mph/white gate
2. Bampton Road by Kingsway Cottages
3. Aston Village Hall (between welcome gate and hall car park entrance)
4. Cote - on B4449 by the white welcome gate/allotments

The clerk to produce an article for Voices and circulate to councillors for approval.

c) *Footpaths/Treescapes*

A Chapman noted that OCC now have a Tree Officer and they are keen for any opportunity to plant trees so to keep in mind for when the Parish Council has anywhere to plant trees.

d) *Back Lane – road surface – For Information*

This has been reported on Fix My Street, direct to OCC Highways, to OCC Cllr D Levy and by the FMS Super User direct to the FMS team leader at OCC.

e) *Thames Water meeting – for information*

The clerk and available councillors will be meeting with Thames Water officers on the 9<sup>th</sup> February.

f) *Oxfordshire Councils Charter – Draft and Consultation*

Consultation was launched on 3<sup>rd</sup> January for comments on the draft 'Oxfordshire Councils Charter'. This followed the previous consultation that the Parish Council fed into in Autumn 2023. It was decided for the Clerk to reiterate the comments made in the original consultation including that the significant parts of the charter are already covered by the code of conduct and standing orders.

g) *Anti-Social Behaviour*

The lorries for the highways work, done week commencing 29<sup>th</sup> January on the road from the end of Bull Street to the Great Brook bridge, were parked at the end of Woodbridge Close and have further damaged the areas around the existing potholes. Clerk to follow up with the FMS Super user and OCC Highways.

## 7. Planning

### New planning applications –

**Reference** **23/03425/CLP**  
 Alternative Reference PP-12688832  
 Application Validated Thu 25 Jan 2024  
 Address Farm Building North of Chimney Farmhouse Chimney  
 Proposal Certificate of Lawfulness to ascertain commencement of development and therefore, confirm planning permission 19/03222/FUL (Building operations and introduction of windows and door openings to facilitate the residential use of the modern farm building following the change of use from storage (use class B8) to a self-contained residential dwelling (use class C3) by prior notification 19/01114/PN56) is extant.  
 Status Under consideration

**Reference** **23/03215/LBC**  
 Alternative Reference PP-12480702  
 Application Validated Mon 29 Jan 2024  
 Address The Old Chapel North Street Aston OX18 2DJ.  
 Proposal Internal and external works to include replacement of six windows and replacement of existing plastic guttering with cast iron guttering.  
 Status Under consideration

**Reference** **23/03214/HHD**  
 Alternative Reference PP-12480702  
 Application Validated Mon 29 Jan 2024  
 Address The Old Chapel North Street Aston Oxfordshire OX18 2DJ  
 Proposal Replacement of six windows and replacement of existing plastic guttering with cast iron guttering  
 Status Under consideration

### Update on Ongoing Planning Applications – For Information

- a) Terra – As of agenda the Harris fencing is up, and work has commenced. Water levels have gone down since early January.
  1. The conditions set for the Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) have already been breached and demonstrate poor performance by contractors already. They need to be held to account. They are failing and the root cause is they have not put a banks man on the entrance to Marsh Furlong instead they are at the site. The developer, residents’ association and housing association are communicating. Communications with developer on a regular basis is ideal and does help nip small issues in the bud. Parish Council to contact WODC enforcement officers with a list of what should be happening to what is happening and that it would be good to create a working relationship with site manager.

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2. Head of Planning at WODC letter – unapologetic, cites budget restricts ability to defend all the appeals and as there were no technical reasons to not approve, we were seeking to defend the indefensible. What do we do with this now? CM commented that in his role as executive member for planning he was attending a ‘development control meeting’ with both the Lowlands and Uplands planning committees where the Head of Planning would be ‘educating’ councillors on how the planning system actually works. He also advised that the Parish Council is not required to be consulted on, and will not be, changes to conditions. The Parish Council to write a constructive letter to the Head of WODC Executive and copying in Head of Planning. Secondly a letter to OCC about the consultation and conditions for their statutory responsibilities with A Gantt (OCC member for highways) and Environment Agency copied in.
  - b) Marsh Furlong – water pumping station transfer to Thames Water is being progressed. To be discussed on 9th February with Thames Water.
  - c) St Joseph’s Court – Surface water and drainage. To be discussed with Thames Water on 9th February.

### Update on Previous Planning Applications

<b>Reference</b>	<b>23/03102/FUL</b>
Alternative Reference	PP-12573870
Application Validated	Tue 21 Nov 2023
Address	Aston Repair Depot the Square Aston OX18 2DL.
Proposal	Demolition of existing garage and erection of 2 semi-detached dwellings
Status	Decided
Decision	Approve
Decision Issued Date	Wed 17 Jan 2024

<b>Reference</b>	<b>23/02963/HHD</b>
Alternative Reference	PP-12582204
Application Validated	Mon 27 Nov 2023
Address	Western View Cottage Back Lane Aston OX18 2DQ.
Proposal	Proposed porch extension.
Status	Decided
Decision	Approve
Decision Issued Date	Thu 25 Jan 2024

### 8. New Business

- a) *To carry out the annual review of the Parish Council’s risk assessment (not open spaces)*

It was RESOLVED as proposed by J Ordish, seconded by P Sparrowhawk, with all in agreement, to accept the risk assessment as presented and reviewed.

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*b) Community Fund Application – TVP – For Information*

Bid for £6,000 towards the build out for North Street, Aston submitted on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024. If the Parish Council intends to do these sorts of applications again, they will need to be well into the project with costings, other funding options, matched funding evidence and a statement of the Parish Council’s vision.

*c) 80th Anniversary of the D-Day Landing*

Advertise the ‘lamp light of peace’ in windows and gardens.

**9. Governance – Policies for Review – None**

**10. Community Trust**

MUGA – tying down location now – resubmitting planning application following a pre application with WODC Biodiversity officer and OCC Highways.

**11. Parish Infrastructure**

*a) Village maintenance*

To identify any current maintenance work required. Budget remaining for 2023/24 is £1385.

*b) Cote Turn – waste bin – awaiting pricing from WODC/Publica*

*c) BBOWT Car Park – awaiting response from BBOWT.*

*d) Specification for general maintenance across the parish with areas agreed to be discussed with contractor.*

**12. FINANCE**

*a) Account balances – noted.*

*b) Review of the Year-to-Date Financial Report – noted.*

*c) Bank Reconciliation to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023*

It was RESOLVED to agree the bank reconciliation to the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023, as presented, as proposed by G Ball, seconded by P Sparrowhawk, with all in agreement.

*d) Appointment of Internal Auditor for 23-24.*

It was agreed to ask N Hoskins if he would be available to do the internal audit for 2023-24. For the 2024-25 year to appoint the internal audit by September, in time for the budget. Additional requirements for Internal Auditors from External Audit are expected to be implemented which will require a written report and more focus on governance.

*e) Microsoft Price Change*

With effect from 28<sup>th</sup> January 2024 the cost for the Microsoft Business Basi will change. The current price is 31.50 (incl VAT) and will rise to £34.30 (incl VAT). This is the cost for the 7 councillor emails.

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- f) It was RESOLVED to approve the following payments for the period February 24 as proposed by J Ordish, seconded by P Sparrowhawk, with all in agreement.

	NET	VAT	Gross Amount
Clerk's expenses 406 x 7p/Microsoft £50.16	70.22	8.36	78.58
RFO LaptopCase/Warrantee (Payable to Clerk)	397.48	79.50	476.98
Fellowship Room Hire – RFO interview	10.00		10.00
Community Heartbeat Trust (Yr 4) Annual Support Cost Inv 19767	165.00	33.00	198.00
Clerk's overtime YTD 50 hours	853.10		853.10
HMRC for Clerk's overtime hours	213.78		213.78
<b>Total to be decided and approved</b>	<b>£1,709.58</b>	<b>£120.86</b>	<b>£1,830.44</b>
<b>Total of already approved/paid</b>	<b>£0.00</b>	<b>£0.00</b>	<b>£0.00</b>
<b>Monthly Standing Orders/DDs</b>			
Clerk's Salary including WFH Allowance	412.41		412.41
HMRC PAYE	98.40		98.40
<b>Total SDOs</b>	<b>£510.81</b>	<b>£0.00</b>	<b>£510.81</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,220.39</b>	<b>£120.86</b>	<b>£2,341.25</b>

**13. To discuss WODC Planning email to Chair dated 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024.**

Covered under Planning.

**14. CONFIDENTIAL ITEM to be discussed in closed session.**

To resolve to exclude the press and the public in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

**15. Clerk's additional hours worked for 2023-24 GB/JO**

REDACTED

**16. North Farm – Update.**

REDACTED

**17. Parish Councillors' and clerk's reports from meetings attended since last meeting.**

G Ball reported that she attended the Bampton Exhibition Trust meeting and funding for two Aston students to go to Yenworthy and £500 for books have been made by the trust. A Chapman reported he had had a meeting with Duncan Enright (WODC Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Economic Development) to talk about campaigning for better bus routes/especially getting local people more involvement which is currently at feasibility stage.

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

**Matters which Councillors may wish to raise for inclusion on next agenda.**

**(For discussion only)**

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**19. Date of next meeting: Thursday 7th March 2024, 7.30pm**  
the monthly meeting of Parish Council.

Meeting closed at 21.53pm.

Signed.....Dated.....

## Appendix 1

Aston Parish Council County Council report, 1 February 2024.

Key activity at County Hall has been handling the floods, preparing the budget, and continuing the transformation of the service provided to children with special educational needs.

In my role as Cabinet Member for finance, I have been coping with the failure of central government to provide the levels of funding it claimed it was providing, which meant that we had an even larger set of challenges than we had expected. We followed this by identifying savings and efficiencies we could make. The government then, last week, announced more money would be available, which is nice, but it would be better to have a system of funding that enabled sensible planning. The current methodology is shambolic, and councils of all political persuasions have been pointing this out.

**Flooding.** Although the Eynsham Division was mostly unscathed by the recent floods, with the exception of a few areas, other parts of the county were less fortunate. It is a wakeup call about building in places that can't be kept dry. The response in West Oxfordshire was better than in some other places, in part because WODC takes a more active role working with Oxfordshire than other districts. There will be a cross-agency process to improve on our flood preparedness and responses.

**A40 update.** Homes England, who are the source or the bulk of the funding for the A40 scheme, are still in discussions with the County Council about the level and timing of that funding, and hence the project appearing to be making no progress. I share the frustration, not least because the Park and Ride is making such rapid progress. The whole scheme was over-ambitious, and it is a regret that when the current administration came into office it took over those plans rather than starting again from scratch.

**Botley Road.** We are in continual discussion with Network Rail. We are told that the works are still on schedule to permit the reopening of Botley Road to motor vehicles in October.

**Fix my Street.** It is very likely that the recent wet weather and the current cold spell will lead to an increase in the number and size of holes. Please use Fix my Street to report these. As mentioned frequently, we estimate that it would take around £45m per annum to keep the roads in a decent state. The government provides £20m. The Fix my Street website has been improved to make it easier to use.

**North Farm.** My understanding is that there is progress being made in putting together a scheme that will work for residents, for the County Council as landowner and for WODC. I would welcome feedback from the parish council and hope we can get agreement soon. The cooperation of the village in getting the children's home in Back Lane built was much appreciated.

As ever, please contact me on [dan.levy@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:dan.levy@oxfordshire.gov.uk)