

**MINUTES OF ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
Thursday 1 June 2023 at the Village Hall, Aston, at 7.30pm**

Members R La Forte (Chair)

Present: J Ordish

B Lings

P Sparrowhawk

A Chapman

R Anstee

In Attendance: Elaine Anstee – Clerk

Cllr L Nicholls WODC

Cllr C Maynard WODC

5 members of the public

1. **Apologies from Members:** An apology was received from G Ball.
2. **Minutes of the previous meeting** of the Parish Council on 4th May 2023 were agreed it was RESOLVED as proposed by R La Forte, seconded by P Sparrowhawk, with all in agreement, that the Chair signs them.
3. **Parish Councillors - Disclosure of interests on agenda items** – R La Forte declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 13 as a Community Trust Trustee. P Sparrowhawk and J Ordish declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 8d as allotment holders.
4. **Meeting Open for Public Participation – none.**
5. **WODC/OCC Matters**

OCC Cllr D Levy was not in attendance, but a brief report had been submitted by email and is attached at appendix 1.

WODC Cllr C Maynard reported on the current work being done with Thames Water and confirmed that a new interactive map showing planned works in the sewage system ([EDM Map | Storm discharge data | River health | Thames Water](#)). He also commented on the Carterton to Oxford rail link as he is the Chair of the Witney Oxford Transport group ([Witney Oxford Transport Group – Sustainable Transport in West Oxfordshire](#)). The proposal has been passed as feasible, but the funding is work in progress.

WODC Cllr L Nicholls reported that the 'emerging local plan' would be out for the second round of consultation in the summer and would encourage everyone to take part.

6. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

a) *Planning Appeal 22/00986/FUL and APP/D3125/W/23/3317512*

The Chair updated the meeting on the appeal actions to date. Councillors have been briefed in full by email during this process.

22 May 2023 the Case Management conference online and chaired by the appeal Inspector.

30 May 2023 the proofs of evidence were submitted with two witness statements. Areas for focus are Flooding including sewage and drainage, transport, sustainability and affordable housing. Cllr D Levy and Cllr C Maynard have agreed to provide witness statements for presentation at the appeal hearing on 20 June 2023.

It was RESOLVED to confirm payment of £450 (incl VAT) to Landmark Chambers for counsel representation at the Case Management Conference as proposed by J Ordish, seconded by R Anstee, with all in agreement.

It was RESOLVED to confirm payment of £600 (incl VAT) to Landmark Chambers for review of proofs of evidence as proposed by R Anstee, seconded by B Lings, with all in agreement.

It was RESOLVED as proposed by R Anstee, seconded by J Ordish, with all in agreement to commit an additional £1,250 for the purchase of a 5th day of counsel time for the appeal hearing.

The Parish Council wanted to take this opportunity to thank J Smith and C Smith for all their support and experience in the process.

b) *Traffic Calming Update and other traffic issues*

- 20 mph – The clerk to expedite the Parish Council requests for changes to be sent by letter to OCC and a separate letter to Cllr A Gant in regards the issues with the implementation of the scheme.
- The Square, Aston – Clerk has asked for OCC Highways officers to visit.
- West and Wales gas upgrade to pipes – corner at end of Bull Street – there has been no response to enquiries to OCC Highways and the road has now been resurfaced.
- Bridges at Beddles Turn and over Great Brook – the bridge over the Great Brook is due remedial work in the 2023-24 season but no news on Beddles Turn.
- Parking areas in Foxwood – the clerk's request for a meeting with OCC and Cottsway has not been responded to. The clerk will keep requesting.
- Water pooling on the road (B4449) outside St Josphe's Court has been looked at by Thames Water, OCC and no action has been taken. WODC Cllr L Nicholls will look into this.

c) *Footpaths/Treescaping*

The meeting was briefed by A Chapman and though there had appeared to be some appetite for 'ago forestry' this was not successful. The group continues to look at options.

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d) *Allotments*

It was RESOLVED to appoint Sam Watson as a trustee for the Allotments as proposed by R La Forte, seconded by Ben Lings, with all in agreement.

J Ordish and P Sparrowhawk had declared an interest and did not vote.

e) *Grounds Maintenance contracts 2024 onwards*

Deferred to July meeting and draft documents sent to P Sparrowhawk and R Anstee for review on 21st May 2023.

f) *Anti-Social Behaviour*

There has been another theft at Paradise Farm, Aston. There are contact details for the police posted on both noticeboards and the website. Clerk was tasked with confirming who the designated PCSO is for the parish and getting their direct contact details.

7. Planning

New planning applications

Reference	23/00948/FUL
Alternative Reference	PP-12061580
Application Validated	Tue 02 May 2023
Address	Playing Field Cote Road Aston OX18 2DU
Proposal	Proposed floodlit Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) on land adjacent to an existing basketball practice area at the Aston and Cote Recreation Ground
Status	Under consideration
This application is fully supported by the Parish Council.	

Update on Ongoing Planning Applications – For Information

- a) **North Farm** – Cllr Levy reported discussions have been happening between the County Council as owner and WODC as planning authority about how best to bring the saga of North Farm to a conclusion that works for both parties and for existing Aston Residents.
- b) **Hawthorns** – The new post and rail fence has been installed though there is no gate to permit access. The concrete plinth is yet to be removed and hedging is due for planting by 8th June.
- c) **Marsh Furlong** – No news on the adoption of the pumping station by Thames Water.
- d) **Terra** – moved to agenda item 6a.
- e) **Children's Home** – completion on target for end of October 2023.
- f) **St Joseph's Court** – Surface water and drainage. The clerk emailed the Project officer at Thames Water who had looked at this originally but at time of meeting had received no response. This issue has been picked up by WODC Cllr Nicholls.

Update on Previous Planning Applications

Reference	23/00715/HHD
Alternative Reference	PP-12002249
Application Validated	Wed 22 Mar 2023
Address	25 Foxwood Aston Bampton Oxfordshire OX18 2DZ
Proposal	Erection of a single storey side and two storey rear extensions.
Insertion of upper floor side window.	
Status	Decided
Decision	Refuse
Decision Issued Date	Wed 17 May 2023

Reference	23/00659/HHD
Alternative Reference	PP-11983099
Application Validated	Mon 20 Mar 2023
Address	5 The Paddocks Aston Bampton Oxfordshire OX18 2UX
Proposal	Erection of a detached garden room
Status	Decided
Decision	Approve
Decision Issued Date	Tue 02 May 2023

8. New Business

a) *Electronic Speed Signs*

The clerk reported that there is over £9k in the traffic calming reserve which includes some S106 funding left from the £10k received from the Marsh Furlong development. The OCC councillor has also indicated that there may be funding from his allowance in 23-24.

The clerk has canvassed Oxfordshire SLCC branch clerks to identify a recommended supplier, and this is Elan City ([Elan City - Traffic management and urban communication solutions](#)). They offer electronic signage, and this can incorporate recording traffic usage statistics.

The clerk had also asked OCC who their recommended supplier is and it was confirmed that the County Council has agreed in principle to replace all existing VAS signs which are no longer operable due to the reduced speed limit. They are currently trying to identify staff resources to undertake this extensive task around the county so unfortunately, cannot provide a likely date. They normally use Westcotec signs

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(Westcotec | Speed Indicator Device - Westcotec) as they appear to be the best signs and excellent after-sales service.

The council confirmed that it would wait for OCC to replace the now redundant/missing electronic signage on:

- on North Street with a new, fixed, reactive 20 mph sign.
- on Cote Road by Marsh Furlong with a new fixed reactive 20mph sign.

Additionally, the clerk is to research, with OCC, the installation of a new unit on the Bampton Road. The Parish Council will pay for this.

b) Volunteer Link-Up 40th Anniversary Celebration

The Trustees of Volunteer Link Up on Tuesday 20th June at 4pm, will celebrate the 40th Anniversary of local Charity, Volunteer Link Up. No councillors were available to attend.

c) Oxfordshire County Council Day

On the 27th June 2023 there will be an open forum hosted by OCC at County Hall, Oxford for parish and town councils to hear from Highways, Gypsy and Traveller Services, Archives, Emergency Planning and Countryside teams. The clerk has booked a space and will attend some of the day around work commitments.

d) OALC – Executive Committee seeking nominations.

OALC (Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils) has an Executive Committee which oversees the work it does. The Executive Committee has a four-year term of office which is coming to an end; they are seeking nominations from anyone interested in becoming a member of it. No councillors could commit to this.

9. Governance – Policies for Review

- It was RESOLVED as proposed by J Ordish, seconded by P Sparrowhawk, with all in agreement to agree the revised Standing Orders.
- It was RESOLVED as proposed by R Anstee, seconded by P Sparrowhawk, with all in agreement to agree the revised Standing Orders.

10. Community Trust – The AGM will be held on the 21st June 2023 at 7.30pm in the Ordish Room at the Village Hall.

11. Parish Infrastructure

The ground's maintenance team are not clearing the road/paths of the grass cuttings so the clerk to remind the supervisor that this should be done.

12. FINANCE

a) Account balances – noted

b) CCLA Changes to Accounts – noted

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c) *Unity Trust Debit Card*

It was RESOLVED as proposed by R Anstee, seconded by A Chapman, with all in agreement for the clerk to be assigned a bank card with a limit of £500 per spend in line with the Financial Regulations.

The clerk to arrange the paperwork for authorisation.

d) *Budget 2023-24 – Revised*

It was RESOLVED as proposed by R La Forte, seconded by J Ordish, with all in agreement to adopt the revised budget as proposed.

e) *It was RESOLVE as proposed by R La Forte, seconded by J Ordish, with all in agreement to approve the following payments for the period June 23.*

	NET	VAT	Gross Amount
Clerk's expenses 779 x 7p/	54.53		54.53
D Johnson – Grass cutting and WM Maintenance – Invoice -	240.00		240.00
WODC – Grounds Maintenance Inv 33523446	369.01	73.80	442.81
Total to be decided and approved	£663.54	£73.80	£737.34
Cleanslate Grant (Approved 4/5/2023)	100.00		100.00
Total of previously decided	£100.00	0.00	£100.00
Already Paid under Minute Number 6a P1755 20/04/23			
<i>Landmark Business Account – CMC attendance – already paid -</i>	375.00	75.00	450.00
<i>Landmark Business Account – Counsel Fees – Review Proofs of Evidence</i>	500.00	100.00	600.00
Total of already paid	£875.00	£175.00	£1,050.00
Monthly Standing Orders/DDs			
Clerk's Salary including WFH Allowance	412.41		412.41
HMRC PAYE	98.40		98.40
Total SDOs	£510.81	£0.00	£510.81
Total	£2,149.35	£248.80	£2,398.15

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13. Parish Councillors' reports from meetings attended since last meeting.

P Sparrowhawk reported on the Bampton Flood Meeting on 1 June 2023.

For this year, Shill Brook up to Great Brook is scheduled for Nov. It was clarified that this work included cutting back vegetation and any damaged trees encroaching into the channel, balancing need and flood risk vs habitat.

EA mentioned that letters to riparian owners were ready to be sent out (next week); these tended to be to landowners where issues had been drawn to EA attention. This is a riparian responsibility, and they should follow EA guidance "Owning a Watercourse". Unfortunately, if letters are ignored, there is limited follow up given resource constraints. Typically, routine maintenance requires no permission, but any hard changes to the waterway do require permission, including a Flood Risk Activity Permit.

Westfield House development, Aston: absence of adequate surface water drainage provision with some discharge to the foul sewer as well as local flooding. Continue to push TW to resolve the current situation as well as follow up with Planning Compliance Officer.

OCC: WB reported that a new Flood Risk Manager is in place (Clare Mills) but there is a need to build a team. Resource constraints remain an issue which limits responses.

14. Matters arising since publication of agenda/

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

(For discussion only)

15. Date of next meeting: Thursday 6th July 2023, 7.30pm

the monthly meeting of Parish Council

Meeting closed at 21.24pm.

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

Appendix 1

June 1st 2023

County Councillor report.

Aston, Cote, Chimney and Shifford PC.

Carterton to Oxford Railway

The County Council commissioned a report on the feasibility of a railway from Carterton to Oxford via Witney and Eynsham. A line would greatly help those of us living to the west of Oxford, and make the A40 more bearable. The report has said that the line would be technically and financially feasible. There is clearly a huge amount of work ahead to turn this aspiration into reality. There is an interesting article in the Oxford Mail on the topic, featuring WODC councillor Charlie Maynard, who is the Chair of the Witney-Oxford Transport Group. Witney campaigner says rail link 'urgent' as 1000s of homes planned | Oxford Mail I very much share the aspirations for the railway.

Roads and Transport update.

The road in the centre of Aston has been resurfaced. It is unfortunate that there is not the resource to resurface all roads. Please keep reporting potholes and other issues in Fix my Street. **Botley Road remains closed at the Railway bridge.**

Can I remind everyone that trains continue to run into Oxford, and that many buses are terminating at Osney, with a pedestrian underpass into the city. Other buses, including the rerouted S1, are going down Woodstock Road. Predicted chaos hasn't happened! Network Rail report that the repairs to Nuneham viaduct, which have closed the line between Radley and Didcot, are on target for a line reopening before the end of this month.

Planning matters.

I understand that discussions have been happening between the County Council as owner and WODC as planning authority about how best to bring the saga of North Farm to a conclusion that works for both parties and for existing Aston Residents. I will ensure that Aston's interests are to the fore. The appeal relating to the development at Marsh Furlong is scheduled to commence on June 24 in Witney. It is of course a public procedure, should anyone be interested to attend. There are facilities for it to be streamed, but it will be up to the inspector to determine if that will happen. (as an aside, the same is now true for all meetings at WODC – and about time too. It was a disgrace that the previous regime at WODC prevented remote access). Many people, including me, were disappointed by OCC's response to this planning applications and to others. So I have ensured that a new approach will be taken to major applications, and I hope we will see more accurate responses by OCC as Highways Authority to district planning matters in the future.

Please do get in touch with comments, issues and concerns. Dan.levy@oxfordshire.gov.uk