

**MINUTES OF ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON  
Thursday 2 March 2023 at the Village Hall, Aston, at 7.30 pm**

**Members** J Ordish (Meeting Chair)

**Present:** G Ball

B Lings

P Sparrowhawk

A Chapman

**In Attendance:** Elaine Anstee – Clerk

R La Forte (via TEAMS)

Cllr D Levy (OCC)

Cllr L Nicholls (WODC)

11 members of the public

At 7pm, Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Parish Council and public present were briefed by PC Turnham, Thames Valley Police Speedwatch Coordinator on the process, training available and potential outcomes of the revised scheme.

In the absence of the Chair J Ordish was asked to chair the meeting with all in agreement. It will be a different councillor's responsibility to chair any future meeting where the chair is absent.

- 1. Apologies from Members:** There was an apology from R Anstee.
- 2. Minutes of the previous meeting** of the Parish Council on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023 were agreed as a true record and it was RESOLVED as proposed by P Sparrowhawk and seconded by A Chapman, 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 13 as a trustee of the Community Trust and agenda item 11b as his wife is a member of the Aston and Cote Day Centre.
- 4. Meeting Open for Public Participation**

A member of the public raised their concerns about the 20 mph along Cote Road. They had provided detailed information in relation to this to councillors prior to the meeting. Questions raised included:

Q: What prompted the Parish Council to initiate the reduced speed limit?

A: The 20 mph for North Street, Back Lane and Bull Street were part of the original consultation process initiated by the Parish Council which was swept up into the OCC project. The Parish Council understood it would have final say on implementation which in the event it did not.

Q: Why didn't Aston Parish Council actively consult at a local level?

A: The traffic calming investigations that the Parish Council have been doing over the last few years have been detailed at the Annual Parish Meetings and reported on in Voices

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 2 March 2023

during that period actively encouraging residents to get in touch with the Parish Council for feedback.

Q: Does the Parish Council agree that OCC disregarded the views of the 63 respondents to their consultation?

A: Insufficient information to comment.

Q: Does it also consider this was too small a sample to draw firm conclusions from? Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 2 March 2023. 1743

A: OCC follow the process as laid down in the law and as such the Parish Council has no comment.

Q: What outcomes are the Parish Council looking for?

A: Safer roads and footpaths for all.

## 5. WODC/OCC Matters

Cllr D Levy (OCC) had sent a written update at Appendix 1.

Cllr C Maynard (WODC) – reported that he continues to work on the issues with Thames Water and his full briefing is at Appendix 2.

## 6. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

### a) *Traffic calming update and other traffic issues.*

- 20 mph – Cote
- National speed limit between Cote and Aston on B4449

These two items were taken together. The potential letter to OCC Highways to challenge the lack of consultation with the Parish Council prior to the 20mph installation, the ignoring of the request to join up the speed limit between Cote and Aston which was in the original application and to feedback on perceived issues with the new limits was discussed. It was agreed to leave this until after the Annual Parish Meeting (18<sup>th</sup> April 2023) and March edition of Voices, to allow residents the opportunity, should they wish it, to give comment.

- The Square, Aston – still with OCC and no action
- West and Wales gas upgrade to pipes – corner at end of Bull Street – Clerk to write to OCC to clarify position. The Parish Council felt that a single prolonged closure was preferable to repeated short term works causing disruption.
- Bridges at Beddles Turn and over Great Brook – clerk has written to OCC highlighting the concerns of the Parish Council and those raised by residents.
- Parking areas in Foxwood – the clerk has requested a meeting onsite with OCC and Cottsway. J Ordish offered to attend if available. Date TBC.
- North Street – missing gate – this is being followed up by OCC.

### b) *Footpaths and Treescapes.*

A Chapman reported that there has been an initial meeting of the working party and they will be working on hedging and the possibility of a community orchard. Work will also be done on mapping the riparian landowners and the potential for creating an official footpath from Bulls Street to Ham Lane.

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 2 March 2023

c) *Half yearly review of external Parish Council assets*

J Ordish reported that the list had been checked and the chains on the war memorial need cleaning. The shredder held by the clerk is now unserviceable. The clerk to ask contractor to clean chains and source a new shredder.

d) *Anti-Social Behaviour*

None reported.

## 7. Planning

### New planning applications - None

#### Update on ongoing planning matters:

- a) **North Farm** – covered under item 5 (Appendix 1).
- b) **Hawthorns** – WODC Planning Enforcement visited the site on 13 February 2023 and was disappointed to see that no action had been taken in respect of the enforcement notice for the fence. They have gone back to Matthew Homes.
- c) **Marsh Furlong** – Lighting at front of development is not working and has been reported by the clerk.
- d) **Terra** – An appeal by Terra is anticipated. The Chairman has yet to write to OCC highways to challenge their non-objection to the Terra development, specifically the Traffic Management Plan. The requested point of contact for the letter is still awaited.
- e) **Children's Home** – Progressing though the plan of works requested has not been forthcoming.

#### Update on Previous Planning Applications - None

## 8. New Business

a) *Coronation 6<sup>th</sup> May 2023*

The Parish Council is awaiting the design and quote for the replacement gate at the tower end of St James Churchyard.

Other ideas include the footpath (Badgers Way), 'Music in the Square' event, Coronation footbridge from Pound Field Road to the footpath leading to the recreation ground/Bull Street, and more trees on the recreation field to finish off the line already planted for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022.

b) *Aston and Cote Day Centre Grant Application*

A grant of £200 was RESOLVED, in principle, upon receipt of accounts as proposed by G Ball, seconded by B Lings, with all in agreement.

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 2 March 2023

*c) Youth Football Club and Pitch Maintenance*

The intended pitch improvements by Aston Football Club were noted though the Parish Council requested reassurance on the chemicals to be used in the work.

The current grounds maintenance contract arranged by the Parish Council expires in October this year, it is up to the Community Trust to decide if they wish this arrangement to continue. The Council felt that current arrangements provided an assured long-term and cost-effective service to the local community. The Council's overriding concern is the continued access to the entire recreation field by all residents without restrictions in favour of one user group.

*d) Allotments*

The clerk attended training from the National Allotment Society and organised through the OALC on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023. There is a wealth of information available through both these organisations and most allotments are run by associations even if the parish owns the land. The clerk will attend the next allotment meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023. The current chair will be standing down and the Parish Council will have to appoint a new, non-allotment holding, trustee. In due course, the Council needed to take a view on the most effective governance structure for the allotments.

*e) WODC Climate and Nature Event – 8 March 2023*

Event to be held at the Council Offices, Woodgreen Witney on the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2023 from 6pm to 7.30pm. no one is available to attend.

*f) ICO Renewal*

It was RESOLVED a proposed by P Sparrowhawk, seconded by J Ordish, with all in agreement, to process the ICO renewal as a DD on its renewal date, 15 March 2023.

*g) St James Church – Clock Annual Servicing*

It was RESOLVED as proposed by P Sparrowhawk, seconded by J Ordish, to pay the Invoice for annual service (£310 plus VAT) and call out for battery replacement (£152 plus VAT) for the maintenance of St James Clock in January 2023.

## **9. Governance**

It was RESOLVED as proposed by P Sparrowhawk and seconded by B Lings, with all in agreement, to adopt the Loans and Investment Policy and Annual Investment Strategy 2023-24.

## **10. Community Trust**

Work continues in relation to preparations for the fete, waste collection bins for green waste and normal waste, the football club proposals and MUGA.

## **11. Parish Infrastructure**

*a) Village maintenance*

No new reports for village maintenance.

**12. FINANCE**

a) *Account Balances – noted.*

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

c) *Annual review of Effectiveness of Internal Control/Financial Regulations*

It was RESOLVED as proposed by P Sparrowhawk and seconded by A Chapman, with all in agreement, to approve the Annual Review of Effectiveness of Internal Controls.

d) *Renewal of Community First Oxon Membership*

It was RESOLVED as proposed by B Lings, seconded by G Ball, with all in agreement to pay the membership renewal of £70 for Community First Oxon 2023-24.

e) *Renewal of membership of CPRE*

It was RESOLVED as proposed by A Chapman, seconded by J Ordish, with all in agreement to pay £36 for the 2023-24 CPRE membership.

f) *Microsoft Office Renewal and Increase in Charges*

It was RESOLVED as proposed by J Ordish, seconded by B Lings, with all in agreement to renew the Microsoft 365 Business Basic packages for the 7 councillors at a total of £31.50 plus VAT per month. The Microsoft 365 Business standard package used by the clerk has not increased.

g) It was RESOLVED as proposed by B Lings and seconded by J Ordish with all in agreement to approve the following payments for the period March 2023.

	NET	VAT	Gross Amount
Clerk's expenses 324 x 7p/Microsoft Office £49.08/	63.58	8.18	71.76
Smiths of Derby invoice 0000126536	462.00	92.40	554.40
WODC Invoice 33506650 – Dog Bin Emptying	20.17	4.03	24.20
<b>Total to be decided and approved</b>	<b>£545.75</b>	<b>£104.61</b>	<b>£650.36</b>
Cote Chapel Grass Cutting Grant (Approved Aug 22)	500.00		500.00
Voices Grant (Approved Feb 22)	1,250.00		1,250.00
<b>Total of previously decided but to paid in March</b>	<b>£1,750.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>£1,750.00</b>
<b>Monthly Standing Orders/DDs</b>			
Clerk's Salary including WFH Allowance	387.16		387.16
HMRC PAYE	92.20		92.20
ICO (Annual DD due 15.3.2023)	35.00		35.00
<b>Total SDOs</b>	<b>£514.36</b>	<b>£0.00</b>	<b>£514.36</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,810.11</b>	<b>£104.61</b>	<b>£2,914.72</b>

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 2 March 2023

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

P Sparrowhawk attended the Bampton Flood meeting on 23 February 2023 and has emailed the minutes to councillors.

J Ordish attended the Parish Transport Representatives meeting on the 21 February 2023.

Items covered included Oxon4Buses, Hookey Car Club and Community Transport Update.

R La Forte attended the 'State of Our Rivers' presentation in Bampton, hosted by WASP, on 22 February and has reported to councillors separately.

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

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

The next meeting is due for the 6<sup>th</sup> April which is Maundy Thursday. It was decided to move the meeting to Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2023 and focus on finance, planning and APM agenda. The monthly meeting for April will be on the 20<sup>th</sup>, two days after the APM.

**15. Date of next meeting:**

**Wednesday 29th March 2023 at 7.30pm** –Monthly meeting of Parish Council

Meeting closed at 21.55pm.

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

## Appendix 1

County Councillor report.  
2 Mar 2023 Aston

The budget measures mentioned in the report were approved by the County Council.

Dan has met with the new head of Estates, who has responsibility for property developments. He has provided assurance that the County Council and WODC are talking to each other about North Farm, and he expects output within the next month or so. Dan reminded him how important it is that any development is designed to meet the requirements of Aston residents.

Dan is in discussion with the head of the team that produces County Council Highways responses to planning applications. The issues relating to Marsh Furlong are evidence of some of the areas we need to improve.

"Network Rail has had detailed discussions with the government and Oxfordshire County Council and is now working to a new approved project timeline:

- **11 April 2023 to the end of October 2023:** Botley Road closure for through traffic for utility diversion work.
- **March 2024 - October 2024:** Botley Road closed to through traffic for highway work.

Network Rail originally planned for a 12-month closure starting in January 2023, but this had to be amended due to the complexities involved."

Trains will continue to run apart from two brief periods. So, the quickest way into the city centre will often be by train. Buses will continue to run, and the plan is that the current stop by Frideswide Church on Botley Road will be the final stop for inbound buses.

There will be access for pedestrians, cyclists, people with mobility aids, etc, under the railway.

As ever, please get in touch with any queries, issues, or comments.

Dan Levy

[Dan.levy@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Dan.levy@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

## Appendix 2

WODC Cllr Carlie Maynard

2 March 2023

**Sewage** - I'm meeting with Thames Water tomorrow to discuss capacities of sewage treatment works around the district. All of the largest nine in the district are currently under capacity, as per Thames Water's own data. The good news is that Bampton's sewage treatment works ("STW"), which also serves Aston, will be upgraded from 23l/s to 36l/s by December 2024. I believe there are three issues to concentrate on from here:

- Currently there are no plans to strip out phosphorus at the STW, a process which has been installed at other sites around the district.
- As per TW's data, 46% of the flow into the STW is because of infiltration. Given how low-lying Aston and Bampton are, reducing this infiltration should be a high priority. Key works includes sealing pipes and manhole covers. We're seeking input from TW as to what their plans are
- The capacity calculations that TW use are optimistic, applying low per capita consumption assumptions and applying a multiplier below the EA's recommended 3.0x. This means that by 2025 Bampton's STW will very likely be under capacity again

**Upper Thames Hydro** - David Jeffcoat, a Standlake resident, and I have just launched Upper Thames Hydro, a project to extract hydropower from the weirs on the Upper Thames. Please see [www.upperthameshydro.com](http://www.upperthameshydro.com) for more details on the project including a feasibility study report by Renewables First. Our goal is that this would be a community project, like those community hydro power projects successfully set up further downstream at Osney, Sandford and Reading. The weirs at Shifford, Rushey, Radcot and Buscot look most promising. If you would like to stay in touch on the project or help, please register on the website. We'd love your help.

**Voter ID** - at May's local elections the government will be implementing Voter ID for in-person voting but not for postal voting. There have been no cases of electoral fraud in West Oxfordshire in the last five years as per WODC's Democratic Services and as per the Electoral Commission there were no convictions last year for electoral fraud nationally. As per the Cabinet Office's assessment this will cost around £100m to implement. Aston residents can rest easy as there are no local elections taking place in Aston this year. Here's a link as to how to apply for photo ID - <https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate>