

**MINUTES OF ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL
MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 2ND OCTOBER 2014 IN THE
MEETING ROOM, VILLAGE HALL, ASTON AT 7.30 PM**

- 1. Members Present:** Jane West (Vice Chair, chairing the meeting)
Jane Everex
Ben Lings
John Ordish
Paul Sparrowhawk
Phil West

In Attendance: Helen Sandhu – Clerk
Hilary Fenton, West Oxfordshire District Councillor
Steve Good, West Oxfordshire District Councillor
Charles Mathew, Oxfordshire County Councillor
11 members of the public

Apologies: Richard Haines

- 2. Minutes of previous meeting** – on 4 September 2014 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
Proposed by John Ordish, seconded by Paul Sparrowhawk.

3. Parish Councillors – Disclosure of interests on agenda items

John Ordish, as a trustee of Aston & Community Trust, the donation request at minute 8d.

4. Open session for public debate

A neighbour of The Old Chapel, North Street, gave a presentation on his objections to the planning application for The Old Chapel. He informed the Parish Council that many neighbours of the property (10 of whom were present at the meeting) are objecting to the application. He started by saying that the outline plan has been inaccurately drawn, as it shows the adjoining property (The Retreat) to be positioned much further away from The Old Chapel than is in fact the case.

He then outlined his detailed objections, covering the following:

- Loss of privacy, exacerbated by the fact that the land on which the new dwellings are proposed to be built is higher than the properties fronting North Street, which would significantly increase the sense of overlooking;
- Increased potential flooding risk – green field replaced with hard surfaces;
- Increased on-street parking on the narrowest point of North Street, one of the main entrances into Aston, where there are already issues caused by on-street parking
- Danger to pedestrians as new road will cut through the only footway at this point of the road, and the existing amount of on-street parking (including vehicles which are often parked over the footway) already hinders sightlines significantly;
- Adverse impact on two neighbouring Grade II listed buildings – Aston House and The Old Chapel. The rural setting of these two buildings will be compromised, and The Old Chapel will lose its entire garden, including two large trees, which are not shown on the plans;
- Loss of wildlife habitat;
- Detrimental impact on the centre of Aston; the loss of a central green space, and a danger that once the access towards Back Lane has been obtained, the whole

green area between North Street and Back Lane will be at risk of being built upon, which would change the nature and character of the Conservation Area.

The member of the public then read from an email received from a resident of Bovington's Yard in which that resident had raised similar concerns about loss of privacy. The email also stated that as the outline application directly refers to the potential for the new access road to be used to enable the barns at Home Farm to be developed, then objections to the development of that land, which would impact on even more people than the three dwellings covered by the current application, could be included in any objection to this application.

One of the other members of the public present informed the Parish Council that a similar application had been refused in 1994, including by the planning inspector at appeal. She passed the Council a copy of the appeal decision.

A further member of the public and neighbour of The Old Chapel echoed the concerns already raised around the loss of the private garden of a listed building; the safety of pedestrians and users of the highway which could be detrimentally impacted by more on-street parking, and the creation of a new access onto North Street.

5. PLANNING

New Planning Applications

14/1282/P/FP

The Old Chapel, North Street, Aston

Erection of three detached dwellings with associated garages and erection of garage to serve The Old Chapel

The members of the Parish Council discussed the application which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, and made reference to the concerns which had earlier been raised by members of the public in attendance.

The Parish Council resolved to object to the application on the following grounds:

- Poor visual splay for access road, affecting highway safety;
- If the access road is ultimately to be used much more intensively (to access properties on the land at the rear of the application site) then the highway safety would be compromised even more significantly;
- Sewerage – Aston has pre-existing capacity issues - the properties should have their own self-contained waste water disposal system and not be connected to the mains network. WODC to be requested to ensure that they consult Thames Water;
- Loss of trees and green space – environmental impact;
- Over-development – too many properties with too little open space around them;
- Potential increase in on-street parking, detrimental to highway safety;
- Impact on listed buildings;
- Suggestion that a site meeting by the Lowlands Committee would be helpful

Charles Mathew suggested that the Parish Council should consider contacting OCC Highways direct with the highway safety concerns, and it was resolved to do so.

PLANNING (continued)

New Planning Applications

14/1229/P/FP North Street Farm, North Street, Aston
Residential development to erect six new dwellings and extend existing dwelling, with associated works

The Parish Council resolved to object to the application on the following grounds:

- Highway safety – additional access onto North Street sited on a bend which would have poor sightlines;
- Sewerage – Aston has pre-existing capacity issues. Applicant has suggested in a letter to the Parish Council that the site could have its own treatment plant, not being connected to the mains if Thames Water requires this. This would be the Parish Council preference. WODC to be asked to ensure that Thames Water is consulted;
- Lack of any provision (financial or physical) for affordable housing. The applicant states that this would not be financially viable; Parish Council does not think that this is an acceptable argument;
- Inadequate parking for the two semi-detached units which would be likely to increase on-street parking on the bend, compromising highway safety;
- Ownership of some of the open spaces not clear (not clearly falling within individual property curtilages);
- Query on units 1 & 2 – stated as having four bedrooms, but each unit also has two large separate attic rooms, suggesting that they are in fact six bedroom properties – does this affect the planning assessment?

6. OCC/WODC Items

Hilary Fenton told the Parish Council that she had been at a meeting at which Superintendent Kath Lowe and Chief Inspector Helen Roberts of Thames Valley Police had also been present. Mrs Fenton said that she had used the opportunity to express concern about the ongoing unauthorised occupation of Aston recreation field. WODC officer Ron Spurs has since provided Mrs Fenton with detailed information on the new legislation which will come into force in October 2014 dealing with anti-social crimes (Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014) which will provide new powers for dealing with this type of situation. She gave some information on the new Act to John Ordish, as a trustee of Aston & Cote Community Trust.

Steve Good provided an update on the WODC Licence Hearing on 29 September, at which the premises licence for Aston Pottery had been approved. He advised that since The Live Music Act 2012 came into effect on 14 June 2014, premises which are licenced for the sale of alcohol or which are places of work can host events for up to 200 people at which amplified music is played, inside or outside, without a licence. This means that the Licence Panel could not refuse the Aston Pottery premises licence application. However, in order to use the premises in the way requested, the Pottery has been informed that they will have to submit a planning application for change of use. The Parish Council and members of the public will be able to comment on this application when it has been submitted.

7. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

a) *Second community defibrillator*

Paul Sparrowhawk told the Parish Council that the box for the defibrillator should be received soon. John Ordish said that Richard Haines has been given a quote from the electrician for the electrical installation (approximately £100).

b) *Central Aston post box*

C/f – no updates yet from Royal Mail.

c) *Replacement post office service in Aston*

Following the public consultation, the Post Office has written to confirm that the new service will continue in its current form.

d) *Aston Pottery premises licence application*

See minute 6.

8. New Business

a) *Amendment to Standing Orders*

It was resolved to adopt the following standing order to replace former standing order 3l which had been suspended at the September meeting:

“A person may not orally report or comment about a meeting as it takes place if he is present at the meeting of a parish council or its committees but otherwise may:

- a) film, photograph or make an audio recording of a meeting;
- b) use any other means for enabling persons not present to see or hear proceedings at a meeting as it takes place or later;
- c) report or comment on the proceedings in writing during or after a meeting or orally report or comment after the meeting.”

b) *100th birthday of Aston resident*

It was resolved that the Parish Council would send flowers and a card.

c) *Donation request – Voices*

It was resolved that the Parish Council would give a donation of £750. Proposed by Paul Sparrowhawk, seconded by John Ordish.

d) *Donation request – Aston & Cote Community Trust – for replacement waste water pump*

John Ordish (a trustee for the Community Trust) explained the problems that had occurred which had necessitated the replacement of the pump. He said that the Trust hopes that a better solution to the waste water disposal at the site will be achieved when/if the new pavilion is built.

Having earlier declared an interest in this item, John Ordish left the meeting.

It was resolved that the Parish Council would give a donation of £250. Paul Sparrowhawk said that he/a contact of his would be prepared to look at the design of the current system with a view to identifying improvements which could be made.

John Ordish rejoined the meeting and agreed to liaise with Paul Sparrowhawk as suggested.

9. Community Trust

The continued unauthorised occupation of the field had been discussed earlier in the meeting. John Ordish confirmed that the Community Trust is continuing to seek a means for resolving this issue.

10. Parish Infrastructure

a) *Village maintenance*

It appears that the contractor may have missed some of the verges on Back Lane during a recent grass cut – the Clerk will follow up.

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

- Highways has provided a quotation to “break out 18m² of granite paving and set aside for reuse, replace sub base with lean mix and relay paving and grout in joints” in the sum of £5,099.14.
- Following a query by the Clerk about whether this will be fit for purpose and what the future maintenance of the area will be if Highways takes it back over, Highways advises:
“Oxfordshire County Council will continue to maintain the area of the War Memorial and repair any defects that may occur that meet the Oxfordshire County Council policy for Highway Safety Inspections. However as it is at public expense, then it will be repaired in the cheapest method currently available. This may not be aesthetically pleasing but will be practical (ie., a cracked slab may be removed and tarmac put in its place to remove the safety hazard). Any additional decorative work would have to be funded from elsewhere.”

There was a discussion about whether replacing the area with imprinted concrete would work better. It was agreed that the Highways officers should be asked whether they have had experience of using this material during the “walkabout.”

c) *Cote chapel churchyard*

Jane Everex told the Parish Council that the ivy has recently been removed from the stone wall at the front of the churchyard.

d) *“Walkabout” with Oxfordshire Highways*

Due to take place on 17 October. It was agreed that the “walkabout” should include Aston Square, the wooden railings installed next to Chimney Bridge (one side of which has now been replaced with metal railings), and the damaged bridge over the culvert at the junction of the Cote mile and the road to Yelford.

e) *Replacement of remaining wooden posts on war memorial green*

Quotation received from MTS Fencing. John Ordish agreed to try and find out more information about the time capsule which may have been buried on the green before a decision is made on whether to replace all 7 posts, or only 6.

f) *Bids for highways maintenance budget controlled by Charles Mathew*

Charles Mathew told the Parish Council that he may be able to contribute some funds towards the replacement of the posts on the green, and will wait for confirmation of the Parish Council’s decision on this issue (until the end of November at the latest).

Mr Mathew told the Parish Council that he is intending to spend the majority of his highways maintenance budget on cleaning highways signs, getting trees and hedges cut back where they are obscuring signs and recutting grips. He asked for the Parish Council to provide him with a list of any of these items which need attention in the parish.

g) *Repositioning of bench on war memorial green*

OCC Highways has advised that they do not consider that turning the bench round would create a safety issue. John Ordish and Paul Sparrowhawk volunteered to make the arrangements to turn the bench round.

11. PLANNING

Planning applications granted

14/1082/P/FP 3 High Street, Aston

Erection of two storey extension to existing dwelling and erection of attached dwelling with associated parking

With conditions, including that:

- *The car parking areas shown on the approved plans shall be constructed before occupation of the development and thereafter retained and used for no other purpose*
- *The conifer screen located along the eastern boundary shall be retained and protected during the development*

New planning applications

Taken earlier in the meeting, under minute 5.

12. Finance

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

Balance on Current Account at 30 September 2014 £ 3,130.09

Balance on Deposit Account at 30 September 2014 £16,736.98

b) September invoices presented for approval and payment

		Statute
Clerk's salary & working from home allowance	355.80	LGA 1972, s112
Clerk's expenses – printing – 79 sheets @ 5p & stamps	23.65	LGA 1972 s111
R Haines – expenditure from Chairman's allowance – flowers for retiring post mistress	25.00	LGA 1972 s15(5)
Margaret Johnson Ltd – stationery & copying	8.06	LGA 1972 s111
West Oxfordshire District Council – emptying of dog bin in October	20.40	Litter Act 1983
Voices donation (Aston Newsletter)	750.00	LGA 1972, s142
Aston & Cote Community Trust - donation	250.00	LG(MP)A 1976, s19
Total	£1,432.91	

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

13. Items for next meeting

At John Ordish's request, it was agreed that the sub-committee of the Community Trust dealing with the sports development plans will attend the Parish Council meeting to present their outline plans.

14. Date of next meeting: Thursday 6 November 2014, 7.30pm
Monthly Parish Council Meeting

Signeddated.....