

**MINUTES OF ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
Thursday 5 October 2023 at the Village Hall, Aston, at 7.30pm**

Members R La Forte (Chair)
Present: J Ordish
G Ball
R Anstee
B Lings
P Sparrowhawk
A Chapman

In Attendance: Elaine Anstee – Clerk
2 members of the public
Cllr Charlie Maynard (WODC)

1. **Apologies from Members:** There were no apologies from members.
2. **Minutes of the previous meeting** of the Parish Council on 7th September 2023 were agreed it was RESOLVED as proposed by R La Forte, seconded by R Anstee, with all in agreement, that the Chair signs them.
3. **Parish Councillors - Disclosure of interests on agenda items** – R La Forte declared an interest in agenda item 13, Community Trust, as a trustee. J Ordish declared an interest in agenda item 11a, grant application for St James Church grass cutting, as he is a church warden.
4. **Meeting Open for Public Participation** – The clerk read out a message expressing disappointment at the turnout for the recent public meeting about the proposed Local Plan 2041 and suggesting that in future such meetings should be advertised more widely on social media. Every household in the parish had notification of the event through Voices. The councillors acknowledge that generating interest in the consultation is challenging and as many avenues for sharing information should be used.
5. **WODC/OCC Matters**

OCC Councillor D Levy emailed his report (Appendix 1).

WODC Councillor L Nicholls emailed her report (Appendix 2).

WODC Councillor C Maynard (full report at Appendix 3) highlighted the WEST HIVE crowd funding for Community Projects. He also confirmed that he would be holding a meeting with Thames Water on 6th October at 10.30am to discuss issues including the statutory requirement/conditions for the new Marsh Furlong site to be connected to the sewage system.

6. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

a) WODC Local Plan 2041 – Consultation

Councillors agreed that a response in the form of a letter would be made by the Parish Council. The main thrust of the response to focus on section 5, 'The Future

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pattern of development in West Oxfordshire'. *'Of the 8 scenarios proposed under this section, the Parish Council is **against** Scenarios 5 (Dispersed Growth) and 6 (Village Clusters) as it believes this would not only encourage yet more speculative development in the Parish, but would dilute community identity, undermine local democracy and, mindful of already woefully overloaded local infrastructure, be demonstrably unsustainable, including increasing the reliance on private car usage. Informed by the public meeting held on 20 September, the Parish Council is therefore currently minded to **support** Scenario 1, the 'Hierarchical Approach', which underpins the current Local Plan 2031, perhaps blended with aspects of Scenario 7 'New Settlement' and Scenario 8 'Public Transport Focus'.* The letter will include an overarching response to the objectives specifically commenting positively on the proposal for 'better and more constructive communication with Parish Councils' and overall, they are reasonable. However, there are too many objectives which makes them difficult to visualise and the quantity will make it difficult for WODC to achieve. The chair to draft a letter and share with members before sending to WODC planning.

b) Neighbourhood Plan

No update.

c) Traffic calming update and other traffic issues

- 20 mph – Parish Council requests for changes – Clerk must complete letter and anecdotal reports of increased overtaking both through Aston and Cote.
- Bridges at Beddles Turn and over Great Brook - indications that the proposed works have now been put back to 2025.
- The Square, Aston the Chair requested an official sign off from OCC Highways. Has the 20-mph signed this off?

d) Electronic Speed Signs

No update from OCC Highways as OCC purchasing have not yet finalised supplier.

e) Footpaths/Treescaping

Verbal update from A Chapman. Clanfield are setting up a community orchard and following a visit A Chapman felt this looked good. He is trying to contact the main person behind the project, but they have not come back to him yet. This has been put in on Parish Council land.

The Parish Council has previously discussed the footpath called 'Badgers Way' from Bull Street to Ham Lane to be made an official path – (West Hive for funding). Chair to contact M Judson in Stanton Harcourt to understand the process.

Right of way map from OCC to go on our website.

f) Asset Review and War Memorial Reinstatement Valuation

Followed up but still no response from Harri-Stone Ltd.

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g) Gate at St James Church – Coronation Commemoration

There has been no response from the initial request to a local supplier and despite several emails/phone calls the clerk has been unable to progress this. Kelly's Iron Wrought Iron Work have been approached for a quote.

h) Cote Chapel

No further news on the open day but there has been a request to disseminate a request for information. Clerk to contact Voices and put the request on the Parish Council website.

i) Anti-Social Behaviour

None at time of agenda.

7. Planning

New planning applications

Documents emailed to councillors for perusal prior to the meeting and available at:

<https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-permission/view-planning-applications/>

Reference

23/02425/HHD

Alternative Reference

PP-12446305

Application Validated

Tue 12 Sep 2023

Address

25 Foxwood Aston Bampton Oxfordshire OX18 2DZ

Proposal
to fenestration.

Erection of a two-storey rear extension along with alterations

Status

Under consideration

No comment

Update on Ongoing Planning Applications – For Information

- a) **Terra** – Keep this on the agenda as there were conditions from the appeal that could potentially be renegotiated. Chair to contact D Ditchett (WODC Planning Officer) to ensure that the Parish Council is consulted on any changes to conditions. Living Homes are the developer now and they have promised that there will be a consultation in the village hall. The Parish Council and residents will need to develop a working relationship with the site manager to help keep them on track.
- b) **North Farm** – No news at time of agenda.
- c) **Hawthorns** – Concrete plinth broken up in early September and site now clear. There were concerns raised on how the area would be maintained as there is no access. The grounds maintenance will be managed by the resident's association.
- d) **Marsh Furlong**. Water connection.
- e) **Children's Home** – completion on target for end of October 2023.
- f) **St Joseph's Court** – Surface water and drainage. Thames Water have contacted the LPA (Aug 23) and no further update but this will be discussed at a meeting on 6th October at which C Maynard (WODC Councillor) will be.

Update on Previous Planning Applications

Reference 23/01699/HHD

Alternative Reference PP-12250436

Application Validated Mon 31 Jul 2023

Address 1 St Joseph's Court Bampton Road Aston OX18 2BU

Proposal Erection of a summerhouse

Status Decided

Decision Approve

Decision Issued Date Thu 14 Sep 2023

Reference 23/02139/HHD

Alternative Reference PP-12366456

Application Validated Fri 18 Aug 2023

Address Carousel Cottage Bull Lane Aston Bampton OX18 2DN

Proposal Construction of detached garage and office.

Status Decided

Decision Approve

Decision Issued Date Fri 29 Sep 2023

8. New Business

a) St James Church Grass Cutting Grant

It was RESOLVED s proposed by R La Forte, seconded by R Anstee, with all in agreement, to grant £570 to St James Church in respect of the grass cutting of the churchyard.

9. Governance – Policies for Review – None this month

10. Community Trust

Issues

- Utilities had been on a fixed rate deal, but this has now ended and there has been a significant rise in cost.
- MUGA planning went in but withdrawn due to confusion about location and biodiversity. Nicky Melling's (WODC) has been helping to work this through. Possible presence of bats is the main issue, and that the flood lights could disturb them. Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) is required, and a local person has been found who can do this.
- The original plans for the village hall have not been found in the archives held by the history group.
- The flag is looking very tatty and needs replacing.

11. Parish Infrastructure

Grass cutting in Foxwood – OCC have given an additional £2.97 to the annual grant for the small area that they accept as theirs. The remainder is not their responsibility.

Aston – the gutters in the roads are full of weeds. The road sweeper will not remove the weeds and weed killer only temporarily knocks them back. Suggestions for encouraging

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people to tidy the areas outside their homes include 'best kept street competition' and/or a spring clean.

The suggestion was made to plant crocuses across the parish in the green spaces.

Councillors to bring ideas for where to plant crocuses and how this could be done to the November meeting.

12. FINANCE

a) *Account balances – noted.*

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

c) *Budget 2024-2025 – Projects*

At the November Parish Council meeting the clerk will present the first draft of the budget for 2024-25 and councillors were asked to make recommendations for projects.

d) *External Auditor Report and Certificate for 2022/23*

The Audited Return has now been received from the external auditors, Moore. The Audit Report is unqualified and no "Issues Arising" report has been issued. The Parish Council RESOLVED to formally approve and accept the audit certificate and the annual return as proposed by J Ordish and seconded by P Sparrowhawk with all in agreement.

e) *It was RESOLVED as proposed by P Sparrowhawk, seconded by G Ball, with all in agreement to approve the following payments for the period October 23.*

| | NET | VAT | Gross Amount |
|---|------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Clerk's expenses 1023 x 7p/Microsoft £49.08 | 112.51 | 8.18 | 120.69 |
| D Johnson – Grass cutting and WM Maintenance/Bus shelter cleaning – Invoice - | 240.00 | | 240.00 |
| WODC –Grounds Maintenance Inv 3354347 | 369.01 | 73.80 | 442.81 |
| Moore – External Auditor – Invoice 319869 | 210.00 | 42.00 | 252.00 |
| St James Church Grass Cutting Grant | 570.00 | | 570.00 |
| Total to be decided and approved | £1,501.52 | £123.98 | £1,625.50 |
| | | | |
| Total of already paid | £0.00 | £0.00 | £0.00 |
| 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 | £2,012.33 | £123.98 | £2,136.31 |

13. CONFIDENTIAL – Recruitment of RFO

The job description was reviewed and the advert to include that the Parish Council will be looking for a candidate who is prepared to complete the appropriate training to qualify as a clerk in due course.

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- Hours to be 15 per month including holiday.
- Grade based on Greenbook to be LC1 (13-17) being £12.97 to £13.95 per hour depending on experience.
- Clerk to set out timeline for recruitment and interview dates.
- Interview panel to be clerk, G Ball and A Chapman, with Chair in reserve.

Finalised advert and job description to be circulated before being advertised.

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

P Sparrowhawk attended the Bampton Flood Committee and reported that the Environment agency tell the farmers to clear ditches, but they have no power to enforce these requests/orders. Work has happened on the Great Brook and the trees will be actioned over the winter. There were no Thames Water officers in attendance. A new junior water person at WODC has been employed.

7th or 15th October (Alistair Ray) has called a local event re flooding to be held in the Lewington room above the Post Office in Bampton. It is focusing on concerns but appears to be the same as the daytime meeting but with tea and biscuits. P Sparrowhawk will attend and raise the concerns of maintenance of the ditches and how do we get this enforced. The official flood maps and how do we get these updated via the EA.

G Ball attended the Bampton Exhibition Foundation meeting on 26.9.23 and reiterated that Aston School has had £500 for their new book shed. The foundation looks for individual applications such as computers/bus passes. The foundation is on the Parish Council website and it would be good to have the annual report published on there.

15. Matters arising since publication of agenda/

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

(For discussion only)

16. Date of next meeting:

Thursday 2nd November 2023, 7.30pm

the monthly meeting of Parish Council

Meeting closed at 21.55pm.

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

Appendix A

County Councillor Report, 5 October 2023

Dan Levy

County Council administration. The Labour group has resigned from the administration at County Hall and withdrawn from the Oxfordshire Fair Deal Alliance. This follows an OFSTED report which highlighted a number of failings in the County Council's support for those with Special Educational Needs. In response to the demands of a number of the parents of those children and our observation of how the department was being run, the Lib Dem and Green groups suggested that Labour that it might choose to have a change in the cabinet leadership of the Children's Services directorate. Labour apparently took this as meaning that their freedom of choice of cabinet members was being curtailed. It is very unfortunate, particularly as many people had congratulated us on being able to put together a progressive alliance. The Lib Dems and Greens have formed a minority administration that will continue to implement the objectives previously agreed by the council.

Among other things, we are appointing a cabinet member specifically to address SEND issues with urgency. At the same time, the Cabinet member for finance and property, Calum Miller, has chosen to stand down to spend more time campaigning to become the first MP for the new Bicester and Woodstock constituency (which contains Eynsham, South Leigh and Cassington). I have taken over this cabinet role, in a challenging time for council budgets. And I have resigned from the WODC Executive, while remaining a district councillor at WODC.

Botley Road - The work to build a new station in Oxford ran into issues when the road under the railway bridge was found to be covering an interesting archaeological structure. That has made creating the new bridge more difficult.

In order to meet the deadline for finishing the new station by October 2024, Network Rail have taken the decision to move to 24 hour working and to keep the closure of Botley Road to motor vehicles during the period they had previously planned to open it. That means the road will remain closed to cars (but open to pedestrians) during the Oct23 to March 24 period. Stagecoach will continue to run the S1 service to the station via the A40 and the excellent E1 to Osney.

The additional closure is difficult. Businesses remain open on Botley Road. At the end of the process, we will have a bridge that is no longer too low for conventional buses and which endangers people on foot or bike. And a station with additional platforms to accommodate the new service to Milton Keynes and the potential services from Cowley and from Carterton/Witney/Eynsham.

At the same time, National Highways are working on the A420/A34 junction and have insisted on doing this even while National Rail have closed Botley Road.

Aston to Ducklington - The road is being repaired and will be closed for another few weeks. The work was much needed. In the interim, can I urge people not to drive via Yelford, whose road is very much not designed for high traffic volumes.

Electoral Commission review of Oxfordshire - As you may recall, the County Council seats and boundaries for Oxfordshire are under review by the Electoral Commission. The process has now moved to public consultation. Details here <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/oxfordshire> The suggested new structure would put Aston (and Standlake and Yelford) into a new seat covering Bampton and South Carterton in time for the next set of County Council elections in 2025.

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As ever, please get in touch with issues, comments or anything else via
dan.levy@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Appendix 2

District Councillor update for Aston, Cote, Shifford & Chimney Parish Council meeting 5 October 2023

Lysette Nicholls District Council Update

Planning Update

In the next few weeks West Oxfordshire District Council is hoping to move to the standard method for housing. This will mean a reduction in housing numbers, but officers are unclear whether this will bring us in alignment with numbers required based upon the new calculation. This is also being challenged by WODC and a KC has been appointed to see if this number can be reduced further as we have taken some of Oxford's allocation. The hope is that we will no longer have to look at planning using the tilted balance.

The Local Plan Consultation – Both myself and Charlie have agreed in conjunction with the Parish Council to do village surgeries at the Village Hall on the 13th October and 20th October 10am -1pm.

The consultation went live on the 30th August and will close 25th October. Now more than ever it is important that we try and get residents to respond.

With the help of villagers' leaflets have been delivered to everyone in the Parish to try and ensure that residents have their say having held a meeting on the 20th September. The Parish Council are discussing at tonight's meeting to provide their steer.

The Local Plan shapes our future and the decisions made for the future of West Oxfordshire and is key in developing the areas where we live and work ensuring the surrounding environment isn't negatively impacted.

There will be several options for you to look at but two of the options focus on villages are:

Dispersed Growth - A more even distribution of growth with emphasis on small - medium scale development taking place in villages.

Village Clusters - similar to above but with villages considered collectively in 'clusters' based on available services and facilities.

We all recognise that there is a real need for housing and equally a huge demand for affordable housing. The question is are villages the right place? Villages will still play their part regarding additional housing numbers but without your input it could be much larger and have a much greater impact on where many of us live now.

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Whilst this will be available online and will be fully interactive allowing you to make comments WODC will be engaging with Town and Parish Councils and will also be happy to receive written feedback on the consultation via email or post.

Please register now to ensure that you can have your say. To sign up for the Local Plan consultation please visit <https://yourvoice.westoxon.gov.uk/en-GB/>

This is the link that takes you to the Pattern of Development section.

<https://yourvoice.westoxon.gov.uk/en-GB/projects/objectives?fbclid=IwAR2tflsNzi32Gcr-XKHJj6OxRXn9Dw7euijZID-yEAqqJFVkJFhKADhY2Zho>

Lysette Nicholls (District Councillor) lysette.nicholls@westoxon.gov.uk

Appendix 3

District Councillor update – Charlie Maynard - 5 Oct 2023

1. Local Plan consultation – this is the opportunity to give your views on how our district should develop out to 2041. Given I’m Chair of the Witney Oxford Transport Group seeking to restore the Carterton-Witney-Eynsham-Oxford railway, you won’t be surprised that I am speaking up loudly for Scenario 8, which focuses on putting housing around sustainable public transport rather than haphazardly around our villages. Whatever your thoughts are, please give them. The deadline is October 25th. · Online - <https://yourvoice.westoxon.gov.uk/en-GB/projects/the-future-pattern-of-development?hasAccess=true> · Email - planning.consultation@westoxon.gov.uk

· Mail - Planning Policy Team at West Oxfordshire District Council, Woodgreen Offices, New Yatt Road, Witney, OX28 1NB

2. Community funding

The council has just launched a platform through which anyone can raise money easily for community purposes. Please have a look at - <https://news.westoxon.gov.uk/news/if-you-can-imagine-it-you-can-crowdfund-it-council-launches-westhive-community-crowdfunding-to-transform-neighbourhoods> and have a think about how you could put it to work!

3. Sewage / Thames Water

I spoke to them on Tuesday and am meeting them on tomorrow. I am pushing them to quantify their “statutory obligations” regarding Marsh Furlong and what improvements are necessary to accommodate these houses, both in the network and works. They are not spending enough on their infrastructure.

4. Flooding

I spent the morning yesterday (Wed 4th) at a Windrush Catchment Partnership meeting. My

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main interest is in what (ideally, natural) flood control measures can be undertaken upstream in the headwaters to lower and slow the flood crest through Witney and beyond. We have a long way to go here, but the Evenlode CP is a good example of what's possible and a good path to follow.

DRAFT