

MINUTES OF ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON Thursday 5th March 2026 at the Village Hall, Aston, at 7.30pm

Members R La Forte (Chair)
Present: J Ordish
P Sparrowhawk
Ben Lings
R Anstee
D Outen

In Attendance: E Anstee – Interim Clerk
D Shenton (RFO)
8 members of the public
Cllr S Cosier (WODC)

1. **Apologies from Members:** There were apologies from G Ball.
2. **Parish Councillors - Disclosure of interests on agenda items** – R La Forte and P Sparrowhawk declare nonpecuniary interests in items 9b, 9c, 9f and 10 as trustees of the Community Trust.
3. **Minutes of the previous meetings** of the Parish Council on 5th February 2026 were agreed, and it was RESOLVED as proposed by P Sparrowhawk, seconded by R LA Forte, with all in agreement, that the meeting Chair signs them.
4. **Meeting Open for Public Participation.**
The meeting was advised of the work being carried out by the landowners of the area behind Kingsway Cottages and the ditch along the road opposite the cottages. The ditch clearance work is recognised as being the land owner’s responsibility but the removal of very mature hedges and trees is a concern. The work has also included new ponds for water to flow into when the Aston Ditch is high.
The resident raising the matter wanted to know if WODC and specifically the Design and Conservation officer had been consulted. Cllr S Cosier (WODC) will follow up on this question.
5. **WODC/OCC Matters**
WODC Cllrs S and S Cosier – see emailed report at appendix A.
6. **Matters Arising from Previous Meetings**
 - a) *Quick updates:*
 - i) **Appointment of 2 Allotment Trustees for the Aston and Cote Allotments.** It was RESOLVED as proposed by R Anstee, seconded by D Outen, with all in agreement, to appoint S Lee, E Anstee and C Hill, with immediate effect, as trustees for the Aston and Cote Allotments.
 - ii) Traffic Calming – deferred until results of VAS installations effects analysed.
 - iii) Thames Water/St Joseph’s Court – The ditch works that Thames Water agreed to do were completed. The further works to link to the Aston Ditch which fall under the EA/OCC responsibility to work with the land owner to complete. The ditch to the track has been cleared but the actual culvert under the track

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does not appear to have been reinstated, so the link up to the Aston Ditch is still not in place. G Ball is working with the land owner and R La Forte will follow up with her.

- iv) **Footpaths/Treescapes** – volunteers have been identified and hope to start in April 2026.
- v) **Great Brook Bridge** – No update since last meeting. First raised as an issue in 2015. Further concerns have been raised frequently ever since. The OCC Chief Exec has been shown the issue.
The most recent information is, following contact from a resident of Chimney, the MP Charlie Maynard has been in contact with Sean Rooney, Head of Service – Highway Maintenance and Road Safety who has advised that the work on the bridge can only go ahead in the 2026/27 financial year if the design is completed by March 2026. This work has been given priority, but no guarantee of when it will be completed has been given. In the meantime, **and subject to budget**, OCC will review the visibility of the existing “Unsuitable for HGV’s” signage.
- vi) **North Street** – Following District Cllr Cosier liaising with OCC the stretch along North Street have been properly repaired but further pot holes have appeared before and beyond the repaired areas.
- vii) **Beddles Turn** - Raised with OCC Highways in 2018 and was most recently raised in February 2025.
- viii) **Cote Mile Bridge** – No outstanding reports on Fix-My-Street.
- ix) **Defibrillators** – Living Space (Brier Furlong /Aston Pottery) have still not supplied the funding so R La Forte will follow up. Aston & Cote Primary School have been supplied the box for the defibrillator and will arrange installation.
- x) **Crossing on Cote Road between the end of Marsh Furlong and Poundfield Road.** Currently awaiting scheduling at OCC. OCC have confirmed that the parish will be consulted.
- xi) **OCC Grant Funding for Flood Management** - A re-submission of our request for £5k Grant Funding for a flood management plan for the Parish (or part thereof) was submitted, as requested by James Feest OCC Flood Mitigation Officer. The Council is awaiting quotes and James Feest OCC has been advised of current situation. The quotes will have to be in by 31st March 2026 to ensure receipt of grant funding.

- b) **Data Loggers and Project Groundwater**
Reports from loggers supplied by D Outen by email.
- c) **History Board Update**
No update.
- d) **Anti-Social Behaviour** - None

7. PLANNING

New planning applications - None

Update on Ongoing Planning Applications – For Information

- a) 22/00986/FUL Brier Furlong –
Some work has been done to the roads and manholes, drains but Mears are not engaging with Thames Water, OCC or WODC so adoption of the foul water system is still not being discussed/resolved. There is no responsibility on the Planning Enforcement.
- b) 15/01550/OUT Marsh Furlong –
See above point.
The Parish Council need to keep these issues alive to try and get an effective resolution for residents. Mears are not interacting with anyone.
- c) 25/00853/OUT North Farm
Still in limbo and no updates on the planning portal since the 26th January 2026, Road Safety.
- d) 24/02466/OUT Potential new development – Lone Star Land (land agents) – Planning application still outstanding.
Environment Agency objected to the application and required another flood risk assessment is carried out; this is now complete, and they have withdrawn their objection. An archaeological survey has been completed and the report posted on the planning portal on 26th January 2026. The objection from WODC Design and Conservation Officer is still standing.
- e) 25/01247/OUT Land south of Bampton Road – Croudace. No decision made yet. Applicant has submitted revised FRA. LLFA(OCC), EA and ourselves (with Technical Note) have all objected again. Biodiversity objection still extant. Repeated Thames Water responses inconsistent and incomplete. Currently awaiting a decision from the case officer at Planning on whether the developer can try for a 3rd time submitting a flood risk response. Contractors recently on site digging bore holes.
- f) 25/01702/FUL Proposed Mount Field Solar Farm – land between Bampton, Aston and Lew.
Due at Lowlands Planning on Monday 9th March 2026. It is expected to be approved. The 42% (ACSC)/42% (Curbridge and Lew)/16% (Bampton) split on the income is what will be taken to the developer by R LA Forte (for ACSC) and Curbridge and Lew Parish Council.
- g) 25/01422/FUL Land South of St James’s Court, North Street – not yet decided; objection agreed at Aug meeting.
WODC Conservation objected and developer submitted a revised design. WODC Conservation noted changes but concerns remain.

Update on Previous Planning Applications

Reference	25/02919/HHD
Alternative Reference	PP-14520432
Application Validated	Mon 01 Dec 2025
Address	The Paddock Cote Bampton Oxfordshire OX18 2EG
Proposal	Erection of single storey side extension with roof lights, and associated works
Status	Decided
Decision	Approve
Decision Issued Date	Mon 09 Feb 2026

8. New Business

- a) *Grant request from Aston Youth Football*
RFO to contact applicant and request details on constitution or equivalent.
- b) *Request from Community Trust that the Parish Council request the S106 monies for the Solar Panels installation at the village hall.*
The Parish Council agreed in principle but need the Community Trust to provide a letter on headed paper, with quotes attached and details of the decision-making process, dates of the meeting that the decision to purchase was made.
- c) *Request from Community Trust for matched funding for the purchase of new chairs for the Village Hall.*
See point 8b – same applies.
- d) *Local Elections – 7th May 2026.*
3 of the current parish councillors will stand down at this election. The remaining 4 will stand again. The RFO has the packs for applicants and these can also be obtained from the WODC District offices. Applications have to be submitted between 30th March 2026 and 7th April (midday).
- e) *New date for June Parish Council meeting is the 11th June.* D Outen and RFO gave their apologies for this meeting.
- f) *Funding request from the Community Trust for a footpath to and around the MUGA.*
This will have to be a new application in its own right for S106 funding. It was RESOLVED as proposed by R Anstee, seconded by J Ordish, with all in agreement, to request from WODC the release of the S106 MUGA contingency back to the S106 pot. It was further RESOLVED as proposed by B Lings, seconded by R Anstee, with all in agreement that the Parish Council would process a request for S106 funding for the full costs of the MUGA path installation.
- g) *Aston Drainage Board.*
Invoices have been issued by Atkins/Browns to those who have in the past paid the Aston Drain Board for drains maintenance. There are still no published accounts or a clear understanding of the remit of this organisation.

NOTE: - P Sparrowhawk and R La Forte both abstained from items 8b, 8c and 8f – see declarations of interests.

9. Community Trust

- MUGA Update- It was RESOLVED and proposed by R Anstee, seconded by J Ordish, with all in agreement, to make the final payment of a maximum of £26,143.76, plus VAT, for the MUGA once the installation is complete and has been inspected and signed off.
- MUGA biodiversity conditions has required a report which was commission by the Community Trust and will not be funded by the Parish Council.
- Other infrastructure projects – the older children play area continues to be rejected by WODC S106 team for the funding requested. Cllr S Cosier (WODC) to follow up.

10. Parish Infrastructure

- a) *Village maintenance.*
 - *War Memorial* – ongoing concerns about the state of the kerb area and the potholes along the piece for road by the shop. RFO to report on Fix My Street.

- *Street signs* – R Anstee will do a walk round in March and send report, with photographs, to RFO to submit to WODC.

11. Governance – Policies for Review and Resolution - None

12. FINANCE

- a) Account balances - Last month’s transfer was not actioned as not enough Councillors available to sign at end of meeting. This is outstanding for signature at this meeting. Further transfer from investment account of £28,000 recommended to cover the final payment of the MUGA if approved. This further transfer not to be actioned until final MUGA payment in progress. It was RESOLVED as proposed by R LA Forte, seconded by J Ordish, with all in agreement, to transfer £28,000 from the CCLA investment account to the Unity Trust Current Account.
- b) It was, RESOLVED, to approve the following payments for the period March 2026 as proposed by J Ordish, seconded by B Lings, with all in agreement.

	NET	VAT	Total
D Shenton – January pay & WFH	494.79		494.79
HMRC – PAYE on above	142.55		142.55
D Shenton – Printing (969 X .07)	77.07		77.07
D Shenton – Pads, battery & cabinet for defibs.	844.61	168.92	1,013.53
Aston & Cote Community Trust – Hall Hire	112.00		112.00
E Anstee- Locum Services for ACSC PC	465.00		465.00
D Johnston – Grounds Maintenance	65.00		65.00
OALC – Annual Invoice	291.35	58.27	349.62
Payment to Charles Lawrence Courts (If approved)	£26,143.75	£5,228.75	£31,372.50
Total to be decided and approved	£28,636.12	£5,455.94	£34,092.06
Monthly Standing Orders/DDs			
ICO – Annual Data Protection fee	47.00		47.00
Lloyds Bank Card – Bank Charge £3, Annual MS	389.40	77.28	466.68
Total SDOs	£436.40	£77.28	£513.68
Total	£29,072.52	£5,533.22	£34,605.74
Transfer from Investment Account to Current A/C	£28,000.00		£28,000.00

- c) As the Parish Council is now in the last month of the financial year, with most of the payments due to go out in March already known, a fairly accurate full-year forecast is possible.
- The original budget had an operating loss of £2.5k (covered by a surplus from the previous year). The current full year forecast gives an operating surplus of £7k – overall £9.5k better than budget.
 - Income is £1.9k better than budget mainly due to improved cash management and therefore higher interest income.

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- Expenses are forecast £7.6k underbudget for the full year, predominantly due to underspend on staff costs and grants. There has not been any spend on travel and training and the sickness/ overtime/special project contingency is forecast to be underspent by £2k at the year end.

13. Confidential Item

Only councillor's present so no requirement for resolution to exclude press and public. There have been 3 applications for the clerk's post. It was agreed to invite them all for interview on the afternoon of the 16th March. The RFO will contact the applicants. R LA Forte and Gill Ball to carry out the interviews with D Outen as the reserve. RFO will support on the day and check right to work.

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

P Sparrowhawk has completed his Flood Warden training and awaits result.

15. Matters for inclusion on next agenda.

16. Date of next meeting: Thursday 2nd April 2026 at 7.30pm
Being the monthly meeting of Parish Council.

Meeting closed at 21.49 hrs.

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

Appendix A

Councillor Steve Cosier (SASH District Councillor)

February Report 2026

District Councillor's Report - Cllr Steve Cosier

Thames Water - Letter to CEO: This issue's report begins with the continuing sorry saga of Thames Water. As your District Councillors Sandra and I have written to the CEO of Thames Water on behalf of residents in the ward following another season of sewer failures and groundwater infiltration. The letter (posted on the Village's Facebook pages) highlights ongoing problems that leave households without essential facilities and place pressure on the local environment.

In the letter, we reminded Thames Water of their legal duties to maintain effective drainage, reduce infiltration and publish transparent, time-bound improvement plans. We reminded TW of national policy which now requires full monitoring of storm overflows, and that Thames Water's current "poor performing" rating from the Environment Agency strengthens the need for decisive action in SASH.

We have requested detailed data on tankering, overflow events and CCTV surveys, alongside a village-level infiltration-reduction programme. We are endeavouring to arrange a meeting with Thames Water. Watch this space...

Improving Mobile Coverage: At a recent WODC Council meeting, a motion I seconded was passed addressing the "patchy" mobile phone reception that continues to plague our rural communities. Sandra and I recognise that our rural communities suffer from "total not spots" which are more than just an inconvenience; they are a significant barrier to safety and economic growth.

We are both currently working with WODC Officers and OCC to provide specific evidence in a formal letter to the Rt Hon Ian Murray, the Minister of State for Culture, Media and Sport. Sandra and I want to ensure that the specific experiences of residents are represented in the letter.

Please can you contact Sandra or me with any specific areas in or around Sutton and Stanton Harcourt where you experience significant concerns regarding mobile coverage. Your feedback will be included in our conversations with OCC and our representation to the Minister.

Sewage Issues in Northmoor, Aston, Babcock Hythe, Sutton, Standlake and Stanton Harcourt:

Hydraulic overload and groundwater infiltration Thames Water has formally responded to our complaint about hydraulic overload and groundwater infiltration affecting Northmoor, Stanton Harcourt, Sutton, Standlake, Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney.

We have received Thames Water's formal response. We are pressing for a face-to-face meeting with their senior engineers and decision-makers because residents deserve real answers. At the same time, we are gathering further evidence from every affected village: Northmoor, Stanton Harcourt, Sutton, Standlake, Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney; to ensure resident's voices are heard. We will continue applying pressure until Thames Water commits to a genuine long-term fix, not just temporary patch-ups. Below is a copy of there the letter we have received.

LETTER FROM THAMES WATER...

Hydraulic overload and groundwater infiltration - Oxfordshire

'Dear Councillor Cosiers,

Thank you for your letter on behalf of your constituents in Northmoor, Stanton Harcourt, Sutton, Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney, relating to hydraulic overload and groundwater infiltration issues.

I am sorry to learn of the concerns you have raised in West Oxfordshire. Please be assured, as the Local Engagement Manager for your area, I am happy to review this with my colleagues across the business. I will be working closely with our Operational and Senior Complaints team to keep you updated in a timely manner.

Due to the information requested, this will take some time to collate. Please be assured, once I have received this information, I will provide you with an update as soon as possible. You have mentioned, you would like a meeting to be organised to discuss the issues you have raised. I will be happy to facilitate a meeting, and I have already reached out to my colleagues to organise this.

Once we have the correct people on board to meet with you, I will be happy to provide some dates and times which will hopefully suit everyone's schedules.

Next steps I have asked Eileen, a member of our Senior Complaints team, to contact you with an update no later than 18 March. However, should you have any further questions relating to this issue, please do not hesitate to let me know.

*Local Engagement Manager
Public Affairs'*

Croudace Development – Update for the Parish Council

We have received an update from the planning officer at WODC regarding the Croudace development application. The applicants have requested additional time to submit further flood-risk modelling to support their proposal. At this stage, the planning officer is considering whether to accept the requested extension.

Should the extension be granted by WODC, the Parish Council will be fully reconsulted, ensuring that councillors and residents have the opportunity to review and respond to any new information provided. We will continue to monitor the situation closely and will share further updates as soon as they are available.

If you would like to discuss anything in the report please contact us, thank you. Best wishes
Cllr Steve and Sandra Cosier West Oxfordshire District Councillors - SASH
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