

**MINUTES OF ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
Thursday 6 July 2023 at the Village Hall, Aston, at 7.30pm**

Members R La Forte (Chair)

Present: J Ordish
B Lings
P Sparrowhawk
R Anstee

In Attendance: Elaine Anstee – Clerk
6 members of the public

1. **Apologies from Members:** An apology was received from G Ball and A Chapman.
2. **Minutes of the previous meeting** of the Parish Council on 1st June 2023 were agreed it was RESOLVED as proposed by R Anstee, seconded by R La Forte, 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.
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 was not in attendance and submitted a report by email which is attached at appendix 2.

6. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

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

Councillors have been briefed in full by email during this process.

The chairman noted the WODC performance at the appeal and that the appellant did not push for costs, but they would have been justified.

Neighbourhood Plan which has previously not been considered due to the cost, time/workload it would take and that it was thought that there were few sites for development left as supported by the local plan. The Chair will do some research and report at the August meeting.

A further vote of thanks was made to 'team Smith' for all their work on the appeal.

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It was RESOLVED to confirm payment of £13,500 (incl VAT) to Landmark Chambers for counsel representation at the Appeal Hearing as proposed by J Ordish, seconded by R Anstee, with all in agreement.

b) Traffic Calming Update and other traffic issues

- The Square, Aston – There are no plans for any action on the issues affecting this area.
- 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. No change.
- 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 Jospeh's Court has been looked at by Thames Water, OCC and no action has been taken. WODC Cllr L Nicholls is looking into this.

c) Electronic Speed Signs

OCC have a budget to replace all VAS signs now redundant within new 20 limits with new VAS signs able to operate in 20 mph speed limits. Unfortunately, they have no staff to manage such a programme (probably around 400 signs). Arrangements whereby parishes approach the supplier directly with their choice of sign(s) and the supplier invoices us are being negotiated. Once this is in place the PC can get both existing VAS replaced. Clerk to look at siting a new one on the Bampton Road which the Parish Council will pay for but match with the OCC funded ones. The Councillor Priority Fund may be able to give a donation once there is more information available.

d) Footpaths/Treescaping

No update.

e) Grounds Maintenance contracts 2024 onwards

The amendments to the grass cutting for the recreation ground were agreed and that the costing to be shared with the Football Club once they are in. This is so the Football Club know what any potential commitment will be for them for the additional cuts they have requested for the new contract.

f) Anti-Social Behaviour

None reported.

7. Planning

New planning applications

Reference **23/01155/HHD**

Alternative Reference Not Available
 Application Validated Fri 16 Jun 2023
 Address 16 Cote Road Aston Bampton Oxfordshire OX18 2DX
 Proposal Proposed single storey rear extension.
 Status Under consideration
 No comments

Reference **23/01530/S73**

Alternative Reference Not Available
 Application Validated Mon 05 Jun 2023
 Address 32 Saxel Close Aston Bampton Oxfordshire OX18 2EB
 Proposal Variation of condition 2 of permission 22/00113/HHD to allow six additional solar panels to roof.
 Status Under consideration
 No comment

Update on Ongoing Planning Applications – For Information

- a) **North Farm** – nothing to date
- b) **Hawthorns** – Following the removal of the panel fence a rail and post fence has been installed. There is no gate to allow access for maintenance and the concrete plinth remains. The hedging has been planted. – Clerk to chase as the concrete plinth as it is in the flood plain and preventing drainage. Hedging and landscaping been planted at the wrong time of year and no sign of maintenance, but the condition says 3 years of maintenance.
 Hedging along the path between Saxel and Bull Street is overgrown again – Chair will speak to the landowners.
- c) **Marsh Furlong** – No news on the adoption of the pumping station by Thames Water.
- d) **Terra** – moved to agenda item 8a.
- e) **Children's Home** – completion on target for end of October 2023. Clerk and R Anstee to pop down and check on progress.
- f) **St Joseph's Court** – Surface water and drainage. The clerk has had a response from Thames Water to the effect that one of the design teams have picked up the work on the pumping station issue at St Jospeh's Court, but they are not aware of the surface water issue.

Update on Previous Planning Applications

Reference	23/00945/CLP
Alternative Reference	PP-11862617
Application Validated	Fri 05 May 2023
Address	Aston and Cote Church Of England School Cote Road Aston Bampton Oxfordshire OX18 2DU
Proposal	Certificate of Lawfulness (Construction of a single storey classroom extension along with Internal alterations to provide a group room and reception office, together with provision of a secure lobby with level access served by a ramp and external canopy. Provision of planting areas and minor alterations to hard landscaping to separate car parking from pedestrian use. Reopening of blocked up gateway to boundary wall on Cote Road. Replacement of boundary fencing facing allotments to the east side).
Status	Decided
Decision	Approve
Decision Issued Date	Thu 29 Jun 2023

The clerk to check with LPA why the Parish Council was not consulted? The chair having discussed with head teacher concern was raised that the new classroom extends to the car park. What about the parking being moved on to the road?

8. New Business

a) Asset Review and War Memorial Reinstatement Valuation

The council asset list (not physical) is due for review and the War Memorial has not had a 'reinstatement valuation' since 2009. The cleaning work in 2018 was done By Harri-stone Masonry Limited who are in Witney. It was agreed that the clerk to approach them for a revaluation. Current reinstatement valuation is £56,317.10.

b) Cote Chapel

On the 6th July 2023 the clerk had a call with a representative each from Tricolor Associates and the Historic Chapels Trust. Tricolor are the consultants advising the Historic Chapels Trust on the disposal of the chapels as the trust is being dissolved. They are looking to the local communities to help identify 'viable' use for the chapels they are disposing off. The one in Cote has an open churchyard where burials still take place. In the autumn events will be run at each of the sites, including Cote, for the local

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community to find out what is happening and contribute to the future plans of the buildings.

c) *Neighbourhood Plan*
Covered under 8a.

d) *Stop Botley West – CPRE call to Parish Councils*
The Parish Council noted the information provided and that the consultation was open to all.

e) *2023 - Community Resilience Funding from SSEN*
No bid this year.

9. Governance – Policies for Review

The policy list was discussed, and it was felt that many of these are effectively covered in the Standing Orders, Code of Conduct and Finance Regulations. It was agreed that a Health & Safety Policy including safeguarding was necessary. The clerk was tasked with drawing this up and checking the rest of the list for what was statutorily required.

10. Community Trust – The AGM was held on the 21st June 2023 at 7.30pm in the Ordish Room at the Village Hall. No members of the public attended. There were new trustees elected and the minutes have been circulated to councillors by email.

11. Parish Infrastructure

The clerk to request OCC clear the gravel on North Street and contact the Residents Association for Hawthorns to ask about getting front hedge/brambles cut.

12. FINANCE

a) *Account balances – noted*

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

c) *CCLA Changes to Accounts.*
As of the agenda there has been no further information. The change is due to come into place on 17th July 2023.

d) *It was RESOLVE* as proposed by J Ordish, seconded by P Sparrowhawk, with all in agreement to approve the following payments for the period July 23.

	NET	VAT	Gross Amount
Clerk's expenses 164 x 7p/Microsoft £49.08/Amazon £94.77/Print Ready £96.00	211.25	39.98	251.23
D Johnson – Grass cutting and WM Maintenance – Invoice - 2387	596.45		596.45
WODC – Weed spraying and Grounds Maintenance Inv 33525736	790.00	158.00	948.00
Community Heartbeat Trust Annual Support Y2 – Invoice 17074	165.00	33.00	198.00
Total to be decided and approved	£1,762.70	£230.98	£1,993.68
Total of previously decided	£0.00	0.00	£0.00
Already Paid under Minute Number			
<i>Landmark Business Account – Appeal attendance – already paid -</i>	11,275.00	1,175.00	13,500.00
Tpa – Transport report for TERRA appeal- already paid	3000.00	600.00	3600.00
Total of already paid	£14,275.00	£1,175.00	£17,100.00
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	£16,548.51	£2,005.98	£19,604.49

13. Confidential Item

Discussed Parish Clerk's resignation and recruitment of replacement. The clerk agreed to look at the alternative option of recruiting an RFO/assistant clerk so she could reduce her hours and slowly hand over. This would enable the Parish Council to keep the knowledge of the current clerk and give stability whilst managing a new staff member. Clerk to break down the post and produce appropriate job description for the September meeting.

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

Patients Group Surgery minutes from JO.

27 June 2023 – Oxfordshire County Council Day – the clerk.

15. Matters arising since publication of agenda/

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

(For discussion only)

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16. Date of next meeting: Thursday 3rd August 2023, 7.30pm
the monthly meeting of Parish Council

Meeting closed at 21.24pm.

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

Appendix 1

6 July 2023

County Councillor report.

Aston, Cote, Chimney and Shifford PC.

Roads and Transport update. Botley Road remains closed at the Railway bridge. Can I remind everyone that trains continue to run into Oxford from Hanborough. However, do note that there will be a closure of the railway at Oxford from 23rd July for a couple of weeks. 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! And the E1 journey is delightfully quick! Nuneham Viaduct has been repaired ahead of schedule and the line from Oxford to Didcot has been reopened.

Pulhams have been acquired by the Go-Ahead Group's Oxford Bus Company. OBC will be extending the £2 capped fare to the acquired routes from July 1. I hope that gives an additional incentive for residents to use the bus to get into Witney or Abingdon, or elsewhere. First and Last Mile, which runs the service from Northmoor to Standlake, Stanton Harcourt, Eynsham and Hanborough. is still looking for volunteer drivers.

We are expecting the latest iteration of the A40 plans to go to Cabinet in July and again in September. More news when I get it. The Shores Green junction improvements were approved by the County Council planning committee. This will make the easterly A40 Witney junction four way. South Leigh PC have ensured a set of interventions to try to discourage the use of South Leigh as a rat run. It will be interesting to see what effect the new junction has both to the south of the A40 and to Witney town centre. Traffic patterns will get monitored and if necessary, there could be further intervention. The Park and Ride is taking shape. There was a find of an Iron Age settlement, which is apparently very interesting.

Town and Parish charter. OCC is looking at developing a 'Town and Parish Council Charter'. Recognizing the importance of town and parish councils (incl. parish meetings) in local government, the charter would aim to strengthen how OCC works town and parish councils. The charter will be co-created through a process of engagement, kicking off in July.

Marsh Furlong appeal Along with residents, and the PC, and Charlie Maynard, I spoke briefly at the appeal hearing in Witney, in support of the decision by WODC's Lowlands planning committee. The planning system is loaded in favour of developers, and we will wait and see the outcome of the appeal. Fingers crossed.

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

Appendix 2

District Councillor update – Charlie Maynard, 6 July 2023

1. Marsh Furlong

Hats off to Russell, Cathy, Julian and everyone else that contributed to the huge amounts of preparation around the appeal. I presented the concerns around the inadequate sewage capacity at the Bampton sewage treatment works, in the 15cm diameter pipe linking Aston with Bampton and with the network in the village. We're waiting for the result.

2. Rail

Rail consultants commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council have now completed their rail feasibility study and are close to completing their funding study. Key highlights include that the rail line is feasible and would be operationally profitable, it will likely be built in phases and would reduce journey times by up to 70%. Shockingly, AECOM, the lead road contractor for the current A40 works, is predicting that Witney-Oxford road travel times will be 30 minutes slower by 2031 even with the work they are currently carrying out to add a bus lane between Eynsham and the Wolvercote roundabout. Goals from here include to safeguard a route so it is not accidentally blocked by further building and to quantify how much funding is possible from private sources rather than the taxpayer.

3. Sewage / Thames Water

The news is dire. Thames Water was privatised with no debt in 1989 and now has a completely unsustainable £13bn of net debt. Ofwat has been asleep at the regulatory wheel, completely failing to ensure that these companies are run prudently. In order to get these companies on a sensible footing, the equity of the water companies will likely be wiped out by their losses, with debt write-offs and then much of the remaining debt will need to be swapped into new equity. What should not happen is the public taking the hit for the extended and gross financial mismanagement over the last three decades. Going forward the water companies will need to be run as sensible, boring public benefit companies which remain in private hands with reasonable but low rates of return and proper financial and environmental regulation. Locally, we are very concerned that Thames Water will now seek to reduce their commitments to expanding the capacity of their sewage treatment works.

4. The Moors, Ducklington

We met with Environment Agency a few weeks ago who appeared to recognise that there are indeed severe problems with plans to put 120 homes onto a field with severe flood problems. We are exploring how the flood zones can be reassessed.