

**MINUTES OF ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL
MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 6TH OCTOBER 2016 IN THE
VILLAGE HALL, ASTON AT 7.30 PM**

1. Members Present: John Ordish (Acting Chairman)
Jane Everex
Ben Lings
Paul Sparrowhawk
Jane West
Phil West

In Attendance: Helen Sandhu – Clerk
Steve Good, West Oxfordshire District Councillor
26 members of the public

Members' Apologies: Richard Haines

2. Election of Chairperson for the meeting

John Ordish was proposed, seconded and elected to chair the meeting.

3. Minutes of previous meeting – on 1 September 2016 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Proposed by Jane West, seconded by Paul Sparrowhawk.

4. Parish Councillors – Disclosure of interests on agenda items

None

5. Public Representations

Several members of the public present expressed concern about the planning application for up to 30 dwellings on land behind Foxwood Close (16/03005/OUT), including:

- School capacity – some people expressed the opinion that the primary school in Aston is already nearly full and will not be able to accommodate growth in pupil numbers arising from the new housing;
- Access to GP service – people are already finding it difficult to get appointments at the surgery in Bampton within the timescale they would like. A significant number of new homes are being built in Bampton, and adding to the local population with additional growth in Aston will mean that the GP service is over-stretched;
- Cumulative impact – the Gladman evidence looks at this proposed development in isolation, and does not take into account the other developments in Aston which already have outline planning approval – the combined impact of all the proposed developments need to be considered together;
- Affordable homes – one member of the public present noted that the application proposes that there will be “up to” 50% affordable homes. He expressed the view that this should be a minimum, not a maximum;
- Rapid substantial growth in parish population – there were concerns that the village would not be able to effectively absorb the 30% population growth which would be created by this development together with the other developments with outline planning permission;
- Sewerage capacity issues – there are already problems with the sewerage system in Aston, which have been well documented, and Thames Water have had to

supply tankers to pump out the sewerage from the pumping stations on several occasions in recent weeks. The contractors who have attended have themselves expressed surprise at the proposal that more houses will be built in Aston given the inability of the pumping stations to cope with the current volume of housing;

- One of the members of public present noted that a new application has been submitted to vary the outline planning approval for the site between the village hall and Saxel Close (13/1494/P/OP). The current approval is conditional on the site not being connected to the mains sewerage system, and the new application is to vary this to permit the site to be connected to the mains sewerage system. The evidence submitted with the application includes a letter from Thames Water which states that there is capacity within the sewerage system to connect the site to the mains system. This appears to contradict the information Thames Water has previously provided on the other Gladman site (15/01550/OUT) which states that there is not capacity within the system, and substantial upgrading investment will be required in order to accommodate more housing. The evidence in the new planning application for the variation of the condition on the village hall/Saxel Close site states that the land is brownfield, whilst it is clearly greenfield. The reliability of the information produced by Thames Water therefore appears questionable;
- There was a suggestion that residents should get together and put pressure on the local councils and Thames Water for action on the investment required in the sewerage system. When residents did this in Goring, they secured investment of £100,000 for a new pumping station.
- John Ordish commented on behalf of the Parish Council – the council is not against the principle of growth in Aston provided it is appropriate, and has previously made representation that the cumulative impact of developments must be considered rather than each application being considered in isolation. The Parish Council has historically campaigned for new affordable housing in Aston, however there are concerns over the volume of affordable housing proposed when this new application is considered alongside the developments with outline approval on Cote Road (which also state “up to” 50% affordable housing). The Parish Council is aware of the problems with the sewerage infrastructure in Aston and has previously made representation to Thames Water. The Parish Council also raises concerns about the impact on the sewerage system in the response it sends to WODC for every planning application for new housing. The Parish Council is aiming to send a representative to speak at the Lowlands Planning Committee meeting when this application is discussed.

A member of the public present said that he had attended the meeting to ask if the dog bin on Ham Lane could be resited as it is currently opposite his new property. He was advised that this request was discussed by the Parish Council in September following his communication with the Clerk prior to that meeting, and that the Parish Council had resolved that the bin was in the most suitable position and would not be moved. John Ordish agreed to discuss this further with the member of the public outside the meeting.

6. PLANNING

New planning applications

- 16/03005/OUT Land North of Cote Road, Cote Road, Aston
Outline planning permission for up to 30 residential dwellings and associated works
John Ordish summarised the comments and concerns expressed by the members of the public earlier in the meeting.
It was resolved that the Parish Council would object to the application on the following grounds:
- Sustainability – capacity issues at local GP surgery, primary school;
 - Sustainability – limited public transport services in parish means that residents rely on private transport. Suggestion in the application that people can cycle to access services in Bampton is unrealistic – the road to Bampton is unsafe for cyclists and pedestrians; applicant should be required to contribute to infrastructure to improve access to Bampton – shared foot and cycle path?
 - Increase in traffic will increase road safety concerns on Cote Road in particular;
 - Concern about more building in area increasing flood risk for site and neighbouring properties;
 - Serious concerns about the ability of the sewerage system to accommodate additional houses; if permission is granted it should include a Grampian-style condition requiring improvement in the sewerage infrastructure before any new properties are connected to the sewerage system;
 - Cumulative impact of development in Aston, with this application needing to be considered in conjunction with the other two developments which already have outline planning permission;
 - Detrimental impact on badgers in vicinity of site; they are a protected species;
 - Request members of Lowlands Planning Committee carry out a site visit before the meeting at which the application is considered;
 - If approved, require S106 contribution for leisure and contribution in line with the other two Cote Road developments and financial contribution towards traffic calming to add to the £10,000 required from the first Gladman Cote Road development, so that an effective traffic calming measure can be installed;
 - Richard Haines to be asked to represent the Parish Council at the Lowlands Planning Committee meeting where the application is considered.
- 16/03004/FUL 8 Foxwood Close, Aston
Erection of dwelling with associated works
No comments
- 16/03040/HHD The Limes, High Street, Aston
Single storey conservatory to rear extension
No comments

PLANNING (continued)

New planning applications

- 16/03133/S73 Acacia Bungalow, Old Shifford, Witney
Non compliance with condition 2 of planning permission 14/02328/HHD to allow Cedar roof tiles
No comments

Follow up to previous planning applications

- 14/01496/FUL Thistle Cottage, Ham Lane, Aston
Some of the new/converted properties are now occupied.
It was noted that concrete bollards have been erected on the roadside edge of one or more of the properties fronting Ham Lane. The bollards are located close to the road and the previous highway verge has therefore been subsumed into the private land. This boundary treatment is not compliant with the planning permission which included the erection of post and rail fences and hedges as the boundary of the front gardens, set back from the road to reinstate the highway verge. The Clerk has emailed the Enforcement Officer at WODC and Oxfordshire Highways to request that urgent action is taken – response awaited.

Planning applications going to appeal

- 16/04419/S73 Chimney Farm Barns, Chimney
Removal of condition 4 of Planning Permission W2001/0924 to allow unrestricted use of C3 dwellings

Planning applications approved

- 16/02344/FUL Manor Farmhouse Woodbridge Close Aston
Erection of two dwellings with new access and associated works.
- 16/01423/FUL Westfield House, Bampton Road, Aston
Conversion of Westfield House from a vacant former nursery school into 4 apartments with access and car parking (amended).

7. West Oxfordshire District Council Matters

Steve Good told the meeting that he had attended to hear the representations of the public and Parish Council on the planning application for the proposed new development on Cote Road. In relation to the issue of the obstructions installed on the highway verge at the Ham Lane development, he encouraged the Parish Council to continue to put pressure on Oxfordshire Highways to attend on site and measure up where the boundary of the private property lies so that the highway verge is properly reinstated. Fellow District Councillor Hilary Fenton had been unable to attend this meeting due to a clash with a District Council meeting.

8. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

- a) *Millennium Clock on St James' Church*
The work to replace the motors has now been completed.
- b) *Closure of Great Brook Road to allow replacement of the metal bridge at the end of the footpath from Ham Lane*
This work was originally scheduled for the end of September, but has been rescheduled to start on 7 November.

Matters Arising from Previous Meetings (continued)

c) *Installation of commemorative bench on new patio at Village Hall*

John Ordish told the Parish Council that the work to extend the patio has been started and that he has ordered the commemorative plaque.

d) *Community Trust proposals for relocation and re-equipping of the younger children's play area at the village hall*

John Ordish provided feedback from the Community Trust. The Parish Council is waiting for more information from the Community Trust in order to consider their request.

e) *The Reorganisation of Councils in Oxfordshire*

Following a pause in the process earlier in the summer after the Government intervened to request closer working together between all the principal councils in Oxfordshire, the Cabinet of the County Council has now formally decided to press ahead with its proposals for a single unitary council in Oxfordshire. The County Council has stated that it will also be looking further at the proposal (referred to as Option 6) in the report it commissioned from Grant Thornton which would create a single unitary council but with district boundaries preserved so that unitary councillors representing areas within a given district would meet to make local decisions, as well as being part of the wider authority.

The City and District Councils are continuing to oppose the County Council's plans and continue to propose a three unitary authority model.

Information provided by both the councils was put in the folder for councillors' information.

f) *Anti Social Behaviour*

It was noted that the benches on the field next to the play area had recently been vandalised and that people have been observed driving mini motorbikes on the patio at the village hall. The Chairperson of the Community Trust is aware.

9. New Business

a) *Donation request – Voices*

It was resolved to provide the requested donation of £750.00. Proposed by Jane West, seconded by Ben Lings.

b) *Donation request from CPRE Oxfordshire*

It was resolved that it was not appropriate for the Parish Council to provide a donation towards CPRE's "campaign fighting fund."

c) *Annual General Meeting of Community First Oxfordshire (formerly ORCC)*

No-one would be available to attend this meeting.

d) *Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) consultation on the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2017-18*

This includes proposals regarding the potential extension of council tax referendum principles to local parish and town councils.

It was resolved that the Parish Council would respond to say that the council does not agree with the proposal that the referendum principles should be extended to all local precepting authorities – smaller authorities should be excluded as the impact of the extension would be disproportionate. The Parish Council would also respond to suggest that if the principles are extended to smaller precepting authorities, that the Government should provide funding to meet the cost of holding a referendum.

10. Community Trust

Work on the extension to the patio at the side of the hall and to repair the pillar at the front of the building is underway. The driver of the vehicle which damaged the pillar has admitted liability and the issue is in the hands of the Community Trust's insurers.

11. Parish Infrastructure

a) *Village maintenance*

The Clerk said that she has tried to contact Chris Smith about the second weed spray and the work to cut back hedges and trees from the 30mph signs, but has not had a response. Phil West agreed to try to speak to Mr Smith.

b) *Grass cutting of the playing field*

It was noted that the contract with Des Johnston only provides for a maximum of 15 cuts in a year and that 14 cuts have been carried out between 31 March and 29 September. It was resolved to increase the maximum number of cuts for this season to 17. If any additional cuts above this are required, Mr Johnston will need to request approval from the Parish Council before carrying out the work.

12. FINANCE

a) *Account Balances – Noted*

b) *Annual Return for 2015/16*

BDO Stoy Hayward LLP has completed the external audit. The Audit Report is unqualified and no "Issues Arising" report has been issued. The audited Annual Return was approved and accepted by the Council – proposed by Jane West, seconded by Paul Sparrowhawk.

c) *Budget for 2017/18*

The Clerk advised that a first draft of the budget will be presented at the November meeting. It was resolved to discuss potential amendments to the grass cutting arrangements of the recreation ground at that meeting. Councillors were asked to email the Clerk with any suggestions for other items which need to be incorporated into the budget.

d) *September invoices presented for approval and payment*

		Statute
Clerk's salary and working from home allowance	374.00	LGA 1972, s112
Clerk's expenses – printing – 108 sheets @ 7p	7.56	LGA 1972 s111
Des Johnston – 5 cuts of playing field in August & September (14 in season to date – contract only allows for 15 maximum)	360.00	LG(MP)A 1976, s19
BDO LLP – external audit 2015/16	240.00	LGA 1972 s111
West Oxfordshire District Council – emptying of dog bin in October	21.25	Litter Act 1983
Chris Smith – verge cutting, Cote Road	55.00	HA 1980, s116
Aston Newsletter (Voices) donation	750.00	LGA 1972, s142
Total	1,807.81	

It was resolved to make the above payments, proposed by Ben Lings, seconded by Jane Everex.

13. Parish Councillors' reports from meetings attended

Richard Haines attended the meeting of the Local Consultation Working Group at RAF Brize Norton on 7 September 2016 – minutes in the folder

Jane Everex told the Parish Council that she attended a meeting of the Cote Chapel committee on 4 October 2016. The committee expressed their thanks to the Parish Council for agreeing in principle to contribute towards the cost of the grass cutting of the churchyard.

Signeddated.....