

**MINUTES OF ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
Thursday 6th March 2025 at the Village Hall, Aston, at 7.30pm**

Members R La Forte (Chair)

Present: J Ordish
G Ball
R Anstee
P Sparrowhawk
B Lings

In Attendance: Elaine Anstee – Clerk
15 members of the public
C Maynard (MP and WODC Cllr)
Cllr D Levy (OCC)
Cllr S Cosier (WODC)

- 1. Apologies from Members:** There were apologies from D Outen.
- 2. Parish Councillors - Disclosure of interests on agenda items – R La Forte and P Sparrowhawk** declared a nonpecuniary interest in agenda item 12 as they are trustees of the Community Trust. R Anstee declared a nonpecuniary interest in agenda item 16.
- 3. Minutes of the previous meetings** of the Parish Council on 6th February 2025 were agreed, and it was RESOLVED as proposed by R La Forte, seconded by R Anstee, with all in agreement, that the meeting Chair signs them.
- 4. Meeting Open for Public Participation**
Resident from Marsh Furlong commented on the free paper that has been delivered that focused on the lack of spending by OCC who have huge reserves.
D Levy responded advising that these reserves have been generated through S106 and can only be spent on the items covered by the funding agreements. The A40 junction is currently in planning and will be built but is centrally funding.
- 5. WODC/OCC Matters**
C Maynard (MP and WODC Cllr) reported that he is driving a court case against Thames and at the court of appeal in the week of the 11th March. This is to challenge the interest payments that they would be taking on if they took on more borrowing. At district council he has been looking at Local Plan to 2040 and including the Witney to Oxford railway. Also looking at Lord Darcy's report and trying to get health care from the main hospitals into the local community as part of the local plan.
Cllr D Levy provided a report at Appendix A. He will be standing at the election in May and with the boundary changes will no longer be county councillor for the parish. The chair thanked him for his service over the last 4 years.
Cllr S Cosier gave a brief update on Marsh Furlong and Thames Water. His report is attached at Appendix B.

6. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

a) Quick updates:

- *Electronic Speed Signs* – Decision on siting was finalised at the white gate opposite Kings Way cottages as proposed by R La Forte, seconded by B Lings with all in agreement.
- *Cote Chapel* – no news.
- *Gate at St James Church* – J Ordish reported that the quote has come back for a double gate, and it is a single one that is wanted. The quote is for £1,400 so the single one will be less than that. J Ordish will get a finalised quote.
- *Footpaths/Treescaping* – On agenda for APM.
- *Thames Water* – Response shared by email on 10th February 2025.
- *Traffic Calming* – deferred until VAS (see first point) installed and effects analysed.
- *Great Brook Bridge* – OCC Highways have responded and confirmed that a rebuild of the bridge is planned but not until 2027 to allow for planning and design.
- *Beddles Turn* - Raised with OCC Highways in 2018 and was most recently raised in February 2025.
- *Bridge at the end of Cote Mile* – no update.
- *North Street* – The clerk has written again to OCC Highways and this time asked if the work planned for the Great Brook Road in May 25 could be changed and North Street resurfaced. This proposal is currently being investigated.
- *Defibrillators* – Brier Furlong (Aston Pottery), no news, and cabinet (Aston & Cote Primary School) still awaiting response from the school about electricity supply to cabinet.
- *B4449 past St Joseph's and Aston Pottery* was resurfaced in October 2024, but the white lines have not been reinstated. Reported via the OCC portal and Fix-My-Street.

b) Neighbourhood Plan

Though the funding is currently closed the Parish Council needs to be ready to apply as soon as the next round opens. Therefore, the clerk is to get 3 quotes for consultancy to create the Neighbourhood Plan so everything is in place to support a funding bid.

c) Data Loggers and Project Groundwater

All 4 data loggers are now in action and recording.

d) History Board Update

No update.

e) Anti-Social Behaviour – None reported.

7. PLANNING

New planning applications - None

Update on Ongoing Planning Applications – For Information

- a) Brier Furlong – There has been an update on the foul water connection by Thames Water on the WODC planning portal under 25/00381/CND. The Parish Council is not a consultee on these applications but circulated for information.
- b) Marsh Furlong – agenda item 9a.
- c) St Joseph’s Court –agenda item 7 under Thames Water.
- d) North Farm – Planning application due but not yet on WODC planning portal.
- e) Potential new development – Lone Star Land (land agents) – there is still no planning application formally submitted, and it is now expected at the May Lowlands Planning committee but awaiting the applicant’s response to the objections and Natural England
- f) Land south of Bampton Road – Croudace – no planning application at time of agenda. Great Crested Newts have been identified on the site. It will not stop the development but helps put in another hurdle.

Update on Previous Planning Applications

Reference	25/00128/PN42
Alternative Reference	PP-13706468
Application Validated	Mon 20 Jan 2025
Address	4 Southlands Aston Bampton Oxfordshire OX18 2DA
Proposal	Erection of replacement conservatory to rear elevation (4.5m x 2.2m height to eaves/3.3m max. height).
Status	Decided
Decision	Prior Approval Refused
Decision Issued Date	Tue 18 Feb 2025

Reference	24/03083/FUL
Alternative Reference	PP-13483624
Application Validated	Fri 20 Dec 2024
Address	Land North of Foxwood Close Aston Bampton Oxfordshire
Proposal	Erection of public art sculpture
Status	Decided
Decision	Approve
Decision Issued Date	Wed 12 Feb 2025
Decision Issued Date	Mon 13 Jan 2025

Note: R La Forte and P Sparrowhawk are on the Community Trust subcommittee for the MUGA.

8. New Business

a) *APM 23rd April – Draft Agenda*

This is a meeting of the parish and not a Parish Council meeting. It is a legal requirement and must take place between 1 March and 1 June (inclusive). The date has been confirmed as Wednesday 23rd April starting at 7.30pm. It was agreed to invite the MP, County and District Councillors, Headteacher, Community Trust Chairman, Community Shop to have a slot on the agenda. Agenda to be finalised at the meeting in April.

b) *Renewal OALC Membership for 2025-26*

It was RESOLVED as proposed by P Sparrowhawk, seconded by R La Forte, with all in agreement, to renew the parish Council membership with OALC for 2025-26 at a cost of £333 inclusive of VAT.

c) *6 Monthly Review of External Assets.*

Half yearly of the external fixed asset is due J Ordish agreed to carry this out.

9. Governance – Policies for Review – Annual review of Effectiveness of Internal Controls

It was RESOLVED as proposed by R La Forte, seconded by G Ball, with all in agreement to agree the Annual review of Effectiveness of Internal Controls as presented, with no amendments.

10. Community Trust

The Community Trust will provide a quote for the clearance of the area for the MUGA and then the clerk will complete the application for the S106 monies.

11. Parish Infrastructure

a) *Village maintenance.*

The missing street sign in Saxel Close that had been raised with WODC still has not been replaced. WODC Cllr S Crosier will follow this up.

12. FINANCE

a) *Account Balances to 28th February 2025 – noted.*

b) *Review of the year to 28th February 2025 – noted.*

c) It was, RESOLVED, to approve the following payments for the period March 2025 as proposed by J Ordish, seconded by G Ball, with all in agreement.

	NET	VAT	Gross Amount
E Anstee - Overtime	637.40		637.40
E Anstee Printing – 1318 @ 7ppc	92.26		92.26
D Shenton - Overtime	177.78		177.78
D Shenton Printing – 641 Copies	44.87		44.87
HMRC – PAYE on overtime	243.63		243.63
Community First Membership	70.00		70.00
OALC Membership	277.50	55.50	333.00
Total to be decided and approved	£1,543.44	£55.50	£1,598.94
Total of already approved/paid	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Monthly Standing Orders/DDs			
ICO – Annual Fee	47.00		47.00
Clerk’s CC – Microsoft £65.88, Print Ready £42, Bank Charge £3	92.90	17.98	110.88
Clerk’s Salary including WFH Allowance	225.38		225.38
RFO Salary including WFH Allowance	201.20		201.20
HMRC PAYE	93.40		93.40
Total SDOs	£659.90	£17.98	£677.86
Total	£2,203.34	£73.48	£2,276.80
New So’s to replace above from 06/04/2025			
Mrs E Anstee (£209.74 plus £26 WFHA)	235.74		235.74
HMRC PAYE	96.00		96.00

13. CONFIDENTIAL ITEM.

REDACTED

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

P Sparrowhawk reported now has a direct contact at OCC in relation to drainage and will be inviting them to the next Bampton Flood Meeting.

15. Matters for inclusion on next agenda.

Street Lighting – Particularly the stretch along Cote Road at the end of Foxwood and Saxel Close.

Annual Parish Meeting agenda and report for approval.

16. Date of next meeting: Thursday 10th April 2025, 7.30pm

Being the monthly meeting of Parish Council. Meeting closed at 21.25 hrs.

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

Appendix A

County Council report, March 2025 Aston Parish Council dan.levy@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Another busy month!

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Thursday 6th March 2025

Budget The County Council budget was passed on 11 February. Among other key things in the budget:

- £60m to roads maintenance
- £4m to flood measures (including a restoration of annual gully cleaning, which was made once every 4 years in the last budget of the previous administration)
- Increases spending on Children’s Services and Adult Social Care, including measures for early interventions and help preparing children coming up to starting school
- Puts more money into libraries and family hubs
- Provides additional money into rural active travel facilities. Roads A40 The work on the Shores Green junction in Witney has commenced. There will be some delays getting into Witney and occasional closures of the A40 overnight. When finished it will make the eastern Witney junction four way and relieve pressure on the centre of Witney.

Potholes There has been a large investment in road maintenance, with £46m being put into road surface treatment, and £14m into other key maintenance after decades of underfunding, the legacy of the previous county council administration of “managed decline”, which was explicitly set out in a 2014 cabinet paper in response to government funding cuts
https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/documents/s27013/CA_SEP1614R18%20%20Highway%20Asset%20Management%20Plan.pdf.

As the weather improves, you will see increased activity filling holes and resurfacing roads. I would expect the busier roads to be worked on first. The remediation of central Aston has been scheduled - that includes North St – and I am expecting work within 28 days. The road through Yelford is also scheduled to be fixed. We do still need increased funding from central government to get on top of the issue. It would take around £45, annually, to prevent the roads deteriorating. Local government reorganisation latest. As expected, the complexities of Oxfordshire mean that the government didn’t put us in the first wave of changes for either unitarization or devolution.

Unitarization Unitarization will happen if the government sticks to its policy. There will be one or more unitary authorities in place of the current two-tier system of districts and county. We are required to put in an outline proposal by 31 March, with a full proposal by 30 November this year. The wisest option is for a whole Oxfordshire unitary authority, which would exceed the government’s stated requirement for new unitary authorities to have at least 500,000 residents. It would avoid splitting up key services like social services. And would be financially stable. Oxford City Council appear wedded to an inner and outer “doughnut”, with the inner authority comprising Oxford and part of each of the other districts, which would almost certainly include Eynsham and Kidlington, and possibly Witney and Abingdon. It might well include Aston. “Devolution” The current top tier authorities, including Oxfordshire, are in discussions about the other part of the reform, which is to set up a Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA). The MCA will have power over things like public transport and inward investment. It is likely that we will end up with a Thames Valley MCA, with the first mayoral election in May 27 Elections.

The good news is that the government did not cancel County Council elections, so they will be going ahead on 1 May. These will be under the new boundaries agreed by the Electoral Commission. I will be standing again for the Eynsham Division. Aston will be part of the new Carterton South and Bampton division. There will also be a by-election for the Standlake, Aston and Stanton Harcourt ward of WODC, as Charlie Maynard fulfils his commitment to stand down following his election to Westminster.

Botley West Applications to make further comments on the Botley West planning proposal to be considered by the Sec of State (Ed Miliband at the time of writing) had to be made by 27 Feb. WODC and OCC will be making representations which are strongly opposed to the developer’s proposals. I have registered as the local county councillor and as a district councillor. I objected to the proposal submitted by the developer on lots of grounds, including its effect on local residents and the environment, and the frankly derisory level of

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funding the developer proposes passing to parish councils and local groups. WODC is putting in a strongly worded objection to the current plans, which will be continued into the Local Impact Statement required by the planning inspectorate. Unfortunately, the opposition at WODC failed to back this action by the council.

Other things Among lots of other activity so far this year, I have had the pleasure of accompanying Calum Miller, the MP for Bicester and Woodstock, to meet the senior management team of the Eynsham Partnership Academy Trust, including the headteacher Mr Thomas, at Bartholomew School. EPA looks after all the schools in the Eynsham division, apart from Aston (which is still under local authority supervision).

I attended a crowded Stop Botley West meeting in Cassington and communicated with our Oxfordshire MPs about the topic and about Thames Water. And I met with our new local police colleague, Hannah Leggott, who is working alongside Helen Keen. They are both keen to be seen around

Appendix B

March Report: Councillor Steve Cosier (District Councillor SASH ward)

Letter Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs)

I have sent a letter to the Under Secretary to highlight the severe and persistent flooding issues faced by the 60 residents of Bablock Hythe. Informing the minister of the frequent flooding events which cause significant distress, property damage, and safety concerns within the community.

This letter brings to the attention of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) the severe and persistent flooding issues faced by the 60 residents of Bablock Hythe, Oxfordshire. The community has been suffering from frequent flooding events since at least July 2007, causing significant distress, property damage, and safety concerns.

Key issues contributing to the flooding include inadequate surface water management, a breach in the Moreton to Bablock Hythe flood bank and ditch, insufficient maintenance of the River Thames and River Windrush tributaries, and ineffective downstream run-off management. Additionally, the bureaucratic delays in obtaining permits from the Environment Agency (EA) to unblock ditches have hindered local efforts to manage flooding.

The letter urges the Minister to consider two critical actions: simplifying the process of de-designating 'main rivers' to ordinary watercourses and streamlining the EA's permit procedure. These changes would empower the community to maintain local drainage networks and reduce flood risks more effectively.

The financial burden of flood damage is also a pressing concern, with many residents struggling to secure insurance due to the history of flooding. Climate change has intensified the strain on flood defences, and only half of the defences damaged during the 2019-20 winter floods have been fully restored.

D&M concrete crushing operation within the overall Dix Pit complex:

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I am pleased to present my findings and actions in response to the noise complaints related to the D&M concrete crushing operation within the Dix Pit complex. Upon receiving the complaints, I asked Jonathan Durham Oxford County Council's Enforcement Officer from the county's Development Management Team to undertake a site visit and investigate and identify the potential noise sources within the complex.

Jonathan reported back his finds which highlighted that one specific problem the use of a pneumatic breaker, a noisier method, was necessary to break up the deep embedded concrete foundations of the former Hanson's processing plant at Watkins Farm.

Jonathen has confirmed that the work was temporary and confirmed that the noisiest elements have been completed. While he believes the most impactful part of these operations has passed, he has assured me that he will continue to reassess the situation if further information or new complaints arise.

I encourage residents to report any further concerns directly to email: planning@oxfordshire.gov.uk, quoting case ref EN.0078/25.

I would like to thank residents in Northmoor and Stanton Harcourt for bringing this matter to my attention.

West Oxfordshire District Council NEWS:

On 24 February, the West Oxfordshire District Council's Development Control Committee reviewed the Botley West Solar Farm proposal and raised several significant concerns, which will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate as part of the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) process. The Council's relevant representation addresses key issues including the impact on the landscape and heritage, environment, and local communities.

During the meeting, various local representatives and officers discussed the concerns, with the aim of clarifying the Council's position for the Planning Inspector. The key issues highlighted for further consideration include:

- Impact on tourism to the area
- Potential impact on wildlife and adequacy of mitigation measures
- Plans for decommissioning and the future of solar panels
- Loss of high-quality agricultural land
- Need for increased community benefits from the site
- Developer's disregard for previously suggested improvements to reduce harmful impacts

These concerns will be incorporated into the Council's agreed response, which will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate as part of the formal application process. The Council's proactive engagement ensures that the community's views and concerns are thoroughly represented and addressed.

Thank you for reading this report. If you would like to discuss anything withing the report, please let me know.

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Steve Cosier, District Councillor for Sutton, Stanton Harcourt, Northmoor, Standlake and
Aston. Steve.cosier@westoxon.gov.uk