

**MINUTES OF ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON  
Thursday 7 July 2022 at the Village Hall, Aston, AT 7.30 pm**

**Members** John Ordish (Meeting Chairman)

**Present:** Paul Sparrowhawk  
Ben Lings  
Alex Chapman  
Gill Ball

**In Attendance:** Elaine Anstee – Clerk  
Russell La Forte (Chairman) – via TEAMS  
Dan Levy – (OCC)  
Charlie Maynard - WODC  
3 members of the public

1. It was RESOLVED as proposed by P Sparrowhawk and seconded by A Chapman with all in agreement that J Ordish chair the meeting.
2. **Apologies from Members:** There were no apologies from councillors. The Chairman, R La Forte was present via TEAMS so not voting.
3. **Minutes of the previous meeting** of the Parish Council on 19th May 2022 were agreed as a true record and it was RESOLVED as proposed by P Sparrowhawk and seconded by G Ball, with all in agreement, that the meeting Chairman signs them.
4. **Allocation of Roles**
  - a) *Election of Vice Chairperson*  
There were no nominations or volunteers for the role of Vice Chairman. It was RESOLVED as proposed by P Sparrowhawk and seconded by A Chapman, with all in agreement, to elect a meeting chairman as required rather than have a Vice Chairman.
  - b) *Parish Transport Representative (PTR)*  
G Ball volunteered to be the Parish Transport Representative and was so designated as proposed by J Ordish, seconded by A Chapman, with all in agreement.
  - c) *Community Trust Representative*  
R La Forte was proposed B Lings, seconded by G Ball, and unanimously elected to this role as the Parish Council's representative on the Committee of Aston & Cote Community Trust.
  - d) *Contact Person for Cote Chapel Committee*  
Ben Lings was proposed by P Sparrowhawk, seconded by A Chapman, and unanimously elected to continue to act as the contact between the Parish Council and the Cote Chapel Committee.

- e) *RAF Brize Norton Local Community Working Group Representative*  
Ben Lings was proposed by G Ball, seconded by J Ordish, and unanimously elected to act as the Parish Council's representative on the RAF Brize Norton Local Community Working Group.
- f) *Writer of Parish Council news item for Voices*  
R La Forte to continue to write the Parish Council news articles for Voices, working together with the Clerk.
- g) *Portfolio Assignments*  
A general discussion initially allocated the following positions:  
Chairman – R La Forte and J Ordish  
Resources – B Lings  
Environment – P Sparrowhawk and A Chapman  
Health and Leisure – Paul Sparrowhawk  
Communities – G Ball and B Lings  
Strategic Planning – Russell La Forte and J Ordish

The final designations to be completed once the 7<sup>th</sup> councillor has been co-opted. To be included on the agenda for the 4<sup>th</sup> August 2022.

#### **5. Parish Councillors - Disclosure of interests on agenda items**

R La Forte declared a non-pecuniary interest for the Community Trust item as he is a trustee.

#### **6. Meeting Open for Public Participation**

A member of the public raised a comment on Facebook about defibrillators in the parish and a lack of training. The clerk was asked to put a map on the website and noticeboards of the location of the defibrillators. Training has been run previously by the Parish Council and there are plans to run more in the Autumn.

#### **7. WODC/OCC Matters**

Dan Levy (OCC) reported We are in, as you will have noticed, challenging times.

##### **Covid advice**

I had hoped not to have to mention Covid again, but numbers are rising rapidly. Can I pass on the advice from Ansa Azhar, Oxfordshire County Council's Director for Public Health:

"It's been great for everyone to relax after the difficult last couple of years we've had with rules of varying kinds meaning restrictions on our lives.

"Currently there are no restrictions but there is still good, solid guidance that people are advised to observe to protect themselves and their families, particularly vulnerable and elderly people.

"The main bit of advice is to stay at home if you feel unwell – but it's also worth reminding people of all those things that we learned during the height of the pandemic to reduce the risk of COVID spreading.

“This includes ventilating indoor spaces and washing your hands. During periods of good weather being outdoors rather than indoors also helps reduce risks.

“We expect to see fluctuations in cases, and it remains the case we need to learn to live with COVID, but we need to strike a sensible balance and I would ask people to take precautions while cases are on the rise. Let’s enjoy the summer and our regained freedoms but keep in mind that COVID-19 hasn’t gone away, and we all need to play our part to live safely.”

### **Cost of Living Crisis**

We are in a period of rapidly rising prices. This affects everyone but has a higher impact on people in many rural locations, if they have a reliance on motor vehicles or are not connected to the gas network. Although gas and electricity prices are rising quickly, there is at least a cap, unlike with bottled gas or tanked oil. The County Council is lobbying government to enable us to offer some support and we are bringing a motion to the Council meeting on 12 July to add force to this effort, I hope with cross-party support.

### **Vision Zero**

Following the tragic deaths of cyclists in Oxfordshire, the county has adopted ‘Vision Zero’, a vision to eliminate road deaths and serious injuries in the county. The decision adds weight to efforts to improve cycle and walking infrastructure and reduce speeds. I was pleased to speak on behalf of this motion as County Active Travel Champion. Of course, it is easier to have a vision than to put it into practice - we must promote safe walking and cycling infrastructure especially at road junctions, and we have to apply our vision in the countryside as well as the city.

Some good news is that Oxfordshire has been granted extra powers to enforce traffic violations using ANPR cameras. This permission is for specific places, but we can apply for additional locations in the future. Up to now, only Cardiff and London councils have had these powers. Among other things, these powers will make delivering “school streets”, where motor vehicles are restricted in school entry and exit times, much easier.

### **Bus Improvements**

The cabinet approved a plan to improve bus services and use the £12.7 million Oxfordshire secured from national government. The plan includes cheaper fares for under-19s, 2 new rural services (around Didcot and Bicester), and bus priority improvements and traffic filters (in Oxford). Improvements to bus stops, real time information, and the quality of buses are also planned. The plan will be consulted on with the bus companies and needs government sign off.

I appreciate that such improvements might feel a bit remote for people off the main bus routes – but we are constrained by government policy and the availability of grants from central government. I and others will keep banging the drum for rural services.

### **HIF1 and HIF2**

The cabinet of OCC have agreed to proceed with Housing Infrastructure Fund 1 (‘HIF1’), consisting of 4 road / bridge projects around Didcot. While it is an inherited Conservative project, the Lib-Dem led administration worked to improve provision for active travel and public transport, as well as better mitigate cost risks to the council

HIF2 is the A40 project. The cabinet approved merging the project with the P&R project to give more flexibility in the finances and more control over timescales. There are still lots of areas

that need improvement in the A40 plans, particularly to make crossing between Eynsham and Salt Cross safe and convenient.

In addition, the Shores Green project, to deliver westbound access to and eastbound access from the A40 at Cogges looks like coming for approval in the next few months. It may change traffic patterns to the south of the A40, and I would expect some new A40 avoidance routes and “preferred” ways between the A40 and

Charlie Maynard – WODC reported

Flooding – various efforts are afoot to bring more clarity and action to flood preparation. I chaired a meeting of the Climate & Environment Scrutiny Committee on Jun 23rd and two key points from that meeting are as follows:

1. While the County Council is officially designated as the “Lead Local Flood Authority” it has historically delegated unspecified powers to the district council, which has been a bit of a fudge. This situation is now going to stop with the county and district agreeing and making public who has what responsibilities.
2. A permit is required from the Environment Agency before any landowner can carry out any work to “Main Rivers”. In practice, there are tens of miles of ditches in the ward that are designated as Main Rivers and the application for being granted a permit is confusing and convoluted. This has resulted in very little maintenance work being done to ditches and drainage channels, which is clearly bad news. This system isn’t going to be fixed overnight but is something we are working on. As part of this process, Aston parish council will have a review of the Aston, Cote, Chimney and Shifford WODC Flood Report which was carried out on the back of the 2007 floods. The focus will be on identifying what work in the parish hasn’t been carried out that needs to be carried out.

Potholes – huge thanks to Trevor Jackson who presented a couple of months back to Aston parish council about the volunteer network of FixMyStreet “Superusers”. A Superuser is a volunteer, typically one in each ward, who after a couple of hours training, has extra access to the Highways’ database so that he or she can upload pothole locations and receive some spray cans of paint to mark potholes for repair. Once a pothole is marked and entered into the system, the contractor’s commitment is to get it dealt with in 28 days. I’ve since learned more from Trevor and am seeking to roll the same process out in each parish across our ward. My near-term goal is to find a Superuser in each parish of our ward, my medium-term goal is to work with colleagues to encourage take-up in all of the wards in the district.

## **8. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings**

### *a) North Farm Update*

OCC are still awaiting the response from WODC as the planning authority to their pre application. J Ordish also asked if there was any update on the site being used for Ukrainian refugees and D Levy (OCC) will follow up on this.

*b) Traffic Calming Update*

No further update than the Parish Council is on the list.

*c) HM Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee 2022*

At the May meeting it was decided to plant 7 trees, one for each decade of HM Queen Elisabeth's reign. The Community Trust has agreed for an area by the bridge into the field behind the recreation field to be used for the planting of the 7 trees. The area will be landscaped as part of this project. The Parish Council RESOLVED as proposed by B Lings, seconded by G Ball, with all in agreement to the purchase of 7 trees, native species, between £50 and £100 each and to the project being a joint one with the Community Trust. The funding to come from the General Maintenance budget. The clerk to research suppliers and the project planting plan to aim for November 2022. It was suggested that it would be a nice idea to plant a tree on the retirement of a Parish Councillor as a normal activity. For this year that would mean 2 trees. This was agreed in principle and the clerk to research locations in the parish that would be suitable.

The council took this opportunity to extend its thanks to P West for his commitment and dedication as a Parish Councillor following his retirement from the council.

*d) Defibrillators*

New box for Village Hall defibrillator cabinet has delivered and installation is being arranged. Chimney defibrillator paid for and awaiting delivery.

*e) Parish Council Logo*

There have been no submissions and R La Forte to take forward.

*f) Anti-Social Behaviour*

P Sparrowhawk informed the meeting that non-Aston children have been coming into the village on the Henry Box School bus and then targeting an elderly couple in their home. The children have been moving things around in the garden and accessing the house. This has been reported to the police though the response was not swift.

## 9. 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**

**22/01402/HHD**

Alternative Reference

PP-11265685

Application Validated

Wed 01 Jun 2022

Address

Wishing Well House Bull Street Aston OX18 2DT

Proposal

Construction of external stairs and installation of door with glass panels to access first floor home gym above existing garage.

Status Under consideration  
No objection but concerns were raised about invasion of privacy for neighbours from the external staircase and the potential future conversion to a separate residence.

**Reference** **22/01595/HHD**  
Alternative Reference PP-11307602  
Application Validated Wed 22 Jun 2022  
Address 6 Cote Road Aston Bampton Oxfordshire OX18 2DX  
Proposal Remove existing conservatory and erect single storey rear extension. Extend existing garages and create first floor bedroom with ensuite and storage space above.  
Status Under consideration  
No objection.

**Reference** **22/01340/HHD**  
Alternative Reference PP-11255201  
Application Validated Mon 16 May 2022  
Address 28 Marsh Furlong Aston Bampton Oxfordshire OX18 2FN  
Proposal Erection of single storey rear extension to existing garage to form garden room.  
Status Under consideration  
No objection though the parish Council would be interested to know if the developer had put time restrictions on development of these properties.

#### **Update on Previous Planning Applications – For Information**

**Reference** **22/01231/CLP**  
Alternative Reference PP-11231341  
Application Validated Tue 03 May 2022  
Address 47 Saxel Close Aston Bampton Oxfordshire OX18 2EB  
Proposal Certificate of Lawfulness (erection of single storey rear extension).  
Status Decided  
Decision Approve  
Decision Issued Date Thu 09 Jun 2022

**Reference** **22/00938/HHD**  
Alternative Reference PP-11162853  
Application Validated Mon 11 Apr 2022  
Address The Old Coach House Bull Lane Aston OX18 2DT  
Proposal Demolish existing prefab garage, erection of detached pitched roof garage and garden room  
Status Decided  
Decision Approve  
Decision Issued Date Mon 06 Jun 2022

## 10. New Business

a) *NALC Dementia Survey*

The survey referred to The Dementia-Communities guide which the Parish Council has not read or used. The Clerk to send a copy of the guide to councillors and complete the survey as discussed.

b) *Cote Chapel Grass Cutting Grant Request*

This item was deferred to the August meeting as the accounts had not been received.

c) *OALC Fraud in Parish Councils*

The meeting discussed the OALC guide document and the Parish Council's own internal controls document, last approved in March 2022. It was RESOLVED as proposed by G Ball, seconded by P Sparrowhawk, with all in agreement to adopt the Certificate of Internal Controls (page 10 of the Briefing Notes) to be completed with the quarterly check of the Bank Reconciliation.

## 11. Governance – Policies for Review

a) *Code of Conduct 2022*

It was RESOLVED as proposed by B Lings, seconded by A Chapman, with all in agreement to adopt the Member Code of Conduct 2022 as provided by the WODC Monitoring Officer and adopted by West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council.

b) *General Power of Competence*

The Parish Council qualified for the *General Power of Competence* in November 2019. Under the legislation '*The council must resolve at a meeting that it meets the criteria for eligibility relating to the electoral mandate and relevant training of the clerk. The resolution can be passed at any meeting of the council, but a further resolution must be passed at every subsequent "relevant annual meeting" for the council to be able to continue to exercise the power. A "relevant annual meeting" is the annual meeting that takes place in a year of ordinary elections, once every four years.*'

It was RESOLVED as proposed by B Lings, seconded by G Ball, with all in agreement that the Parish Council met the criteria eligibility relating to the electoral mandate and relevant training of the clerk to adopt the General Power of Competence.

## 12. Community Trust

R La Forte updated the meeting with the new Community Trust chairman's name and that the revised constitution is in process.

### 13. Parish Infrastructure

a) *Village maintenance*

To identify any current maintenance work required. Remaining budget for 2022/23: £1,500. The road sweeper visited Aston on the 29<sup>th</sup> June 2022 and swept areas including, Bull Street, the High Street and Cote Road.

The grass in Foxwood, which Cottsway has decided following a review, not to be its responsibility to cut but OCC's, is being challenged by the Parish Council. The clerk has found a minute from March 2007 where a Housing Officer at Cottsway confirmed their responsibility for the maintenance of these areas. The clerk is to write to Cottsway again with this information.

### 14. FINANCE

a) *Account Balances – noted*

It was noted that the CCLA investment account interest had now increased and even surpassed pre Covid rates with the monthly receipt for July being £35.28.

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

Noted

c) *Change of Signatories*

It was RESOLVED as proposed by P Sparrowhawk, seconded by B Lings, with all in agreement that J West and P West be removed from the Unity Trust account and R La Forte and G Ball be added.

It was RESOLVED as proposed by P Sparrowhawk, seconded by B Lings, with all in agreement that J West and P West be removed from the CCLA account, and R La Forte and G Ball be added.

d) *Revised Budget for 2022-23*

The revised budget for 2022/23 was discussed showing the reserves figures below:

Working day to day balance	11,325
Contingency reserve	5,000
North Farm Reserve	3,800
War Memorial Reserve	2,000
Office Equipment Reserve	2,000
Defibrillator Reserve	0
Recreation reserve	33,476
Traffic Calming Reserve	7,901
	<u>65,502</u>

The revised budget shows an overspend of £9k however there are already savings against this as the Cote Noticeboard, including installation will cost £910 saving £90 against budget. The Chimney defibrillator will cost £2235 and with the £2k to be transferred to the reserve will show as saving against the budget of £1,870.

Forecast overspend as at 30.6.2022 = £7,188 and this includes the 'Contingency' of £5,000.

- e) It was RESOLVED as proposed by P Sparrowhawk and seconded by B Lings with all in agreement to approve the following payments for the period June and July 2022.

	NET	VAT	Gross Amount
Clerk's expenses 478 x 7p/Microsoft Office £30.43	63.89	6.09	69.98
Des Johnson Inv 2286 – Cote Noticeboard and War Memorial and Inv 2275	606.70		606.70
DF Williams Invoice 109905 – Bus shelter cleaning	145.38	29.08	174.46
WODC Dog Bin Emptying – Invoice 33472839	20.17	4.03	24.20
<b>Total to be decided and approved</b>	<b>£836.14</b>	<b>£39.20</b>	<b>£875.34</b>
<b>Monthly Standing Orders</b>			
Clerk's Salary including WFH Allowance	387.16		387.16
WODC Dog Bin emptying Inv – Cancelled			
HMRC PAYE	92.20		92.20
<b>Total SDOs</b>	<b>£479.36</b>	<b>£0.00</b>	<b>£479.36</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,315.50</b>	<b>£39.20</b>	<b>£1,354.70</b>

**15. Co-Option – 1 Vacancy**

It was RESOLVED as proposed to co-opt R Anstee as proposed by P Sparrowhawk, seconded by G Ball, with all in agreement.

The clerk to write to him and the monitoring officer at WODC to confirm the appointment.

**16. Parish Councillors' reports from meetings attended since last meeting.**

Clerk - UK Shared Prosperity Fund – West Oxfordshire consultation webinar.

Clerk – OALC AGM – 4th July 2022.

P Sparrowhawk – Bampton Flood group – Great Brook due to have debris removed but no dredging. Minutes circulated by email. Next meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

**17. Matters arising since publication of agenda/**

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

Clerk to get a photographer for the meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2022 to take picture of Council for Voices.

Planning discussion re Terra and Children's Home for 13<sup>th</sup> July 2022 and then next agenda.

**18. Date of next meeting:**

**Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> August 2022 at 7.30pm** –Monthly meeting of Parish Council

Meeting closed at 21.25pm.

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