

**MINUTES OF ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY  
ANNUAL PARISH MEETING  
HELD ON MONDAY 20th MAY 2019  
IN THE VILLAGE HALL, ASTON AT 7.30 PM**

**1. Present:**

Parish Councillors:

John Ordish (Outgoing Parish Council Chairman)

Russell La Forte (New Parish Council Chairman)

Gill Ball

Paul Sparrowhawk

Jane West

Phil West

Elaine Anstee (Parish Clerk)

Steve Good, District Councillor

Paul Farrow, Trustee of Aston & Cote Community Trust

Dick Tracey and David England – Community First Responders

17 members of the public

**2. Apologies:**

There were apologies from H Fenton, District Councillor, and Cllr Charles Matthews (OCC).

**3. Welcome**

John Ordish, Meeting Chairman, welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the members of the Parish Council and the Clerk.

**4. Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2018**

Were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

**5. Parish Council Report – John Ordish**

Local councils are the first tier of governance and are the first point of contact for anyone concerned with a community issue. They are democratically elected local authorities and exist in England, Wales and Scotland. The term 'local council' is synonymous with 'parish council', 'town council' and 'community council'.

The parish council is a civil local authority and is the first tier of local government. It is an elected corporate body and is responsible for representing the local community, delivering services to meet local needs, and improving quality of life and community well-being.

Parish councils are funded by levying a "precept" collected from within the council tax paid by the residents of the parish. Parish councils are made up of unpaid councillors who are elected or co-opted to serve for 4 years.

The Parish council must be notified by the district or county council of:

- All planning applications in their areas
- Intention to provide a burial ground in the parish
- Proposals to carry out sewerage works
- Footpath and bridleway (more generally, 'rights of way') surveys
- Intention to make byelaws in relation to [hackney carriages](#), music and dancing, promenades, sea shore and street naming

All of these the parish council can make representation on to the relevant authority, but has no executive authority or 'veto' – with planning applications for example, where it is WODC to decide.

It also has statutory responsibilities such as the power to support the provision of entertainment and support the arts under the Local Government Act 1972. Other acts include the Localism Act 2012 and a raft of other acts such as the Public Health Act 1936.

Another busy year in the parish with these as the main topics:

### **Housing developments**

- a) Mears / Sovereign development north of Cote Road has steamed ahead with the sales office opening in early April.

A major concern raised by the Parish Council and residents during the planning stages was the inability of the current Thames Water waste water system serving the parish to cope with this size of development. Condition 10 of the Outline planning permission for this development (15/01550/OUT) was that: Development shall not commence until a drainage strategy detailing any on or off site drainage works, has been approved by, the local planning authority in consultation with the sewerage undertaker. No discharge of foul or surface water from the site shall be accepted into the public system until the drainage works referred to in the strategy have been completed. The Parish Council is unaware that an approved strategy has been put in the public domain but continues to request sight of the document and express its concern at the lack of transparency and planning in this area.

- b) Matthew Homes Ltd development

The Matthew Homes application for 'reserved matters' on appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for the 38 home development on land between Saxel Close and the Village Hall has now been approved by WODC Planning. This means that after certain conditions have been discharged, this development may commence. One of the outstanding conditions is that relating to drainage from the site, an issue of major concern to many residents. Nineteen of these homes will be affordable homes split between affordable rent and shared ownership. The Parish Council has again asked that for the affordable homes preference must be given to current residents or people with local connections. The parish council has also made representation that the hedge running from Saxel Close to the Village Hall be retained to mitigate the detrimental loss of the hedge on the opposite side of the road.

- c) Gladman 2 development

Gladman lost the judicial review and have not reapplied for outline planning to a 30 home application on land north of Foxwood.

- d) Other Developments

Going back to waste water issues, for development applications of less than 10 homes Thames Water does not need to be consulted. In addition to the three larger development sites outlined above, a total of 16 further homes across eight separate sites in Aston have been granted planning permission. So there is an element of 'creep' and as a matter of course the Parish Council raises the waste water issue for all new build applications.

The total number of new homes with planning permission is therefore 94; an increase of about 20% on Aston's current housing stock.

It is hoped that the long-delayed (11 years) adoption of the Local Plan by WODC in Sep 18 will now provide more substantial and substantive grounds for WODC to consider and if necessary reject proposed developments.

### **Parish Council Precept**

At the December Parish Council meeting the budget for financial year 2019/20 was agreed and set. It was agreed that the precept (the charge on local residents that is collected with

the Council Tax) to be increased by 2%. The increase equates to 8p per month per Band D household and is to be used towards funding of a new bus shelter at the end of Saxe Close, defibrillator in the telephone box in Cote, traffic calming reserves and bus shelter cleaning as well as covering the reduction in the council tax support grant.

Once the Matthew Homes development is built and occupied the Parish Council will receive around £48,000 for improving leisure facilities in the parish. In response to a questionnaire in 2015 the parish residents identified a desire for a multi-use-sports-court to be provided. The total cost for which is estimated at £80,000. The balance of £32,000 has been built up as a specified reserve through the parish precept over the last 3 year period; this reserve is now complete.

From the 2017-18 budget surplus £11,000 was put into a new Play Facilities Reserve, with the intention being to use it to support the development of the new playground proposal at the Village Hall by the Community Trust. The Parish Council is pleased to confirm that the amount of £11,000 has been transferred to the Community Trust and the playground is fully funded with a completion date of summer 2019. Paul will be giving a full update on this project. In 2018 it was also resolved to set up a new Traffic Calming Reserve, with the intention being to generate additional funds to add to the £10,000 of S106 funding which will come from the Mears development adjacent to Foxwood in order to install some traffic calming measures on Cote Road.

### **Grants**

In last year's budget the Parish Council included an amount for a 'Small Grants Scheme' from which non-profit making groups in the parish can apply for one-off project applications, to a maximum value of £500. The Parish Council is only able to report that last year's grants allowance was partially used with £500 going to Aston & Cote Primary School towards the visit of the Life Education Bus. Other grants given included Voices (£1,000), CAB (£150), Aston Minibus (£1,000), Community Trust (£816 Playground Inspections) and grass cutting grants for Cote Chapel, St Marys Shifford and St James church.

The Small Grants Scheme will be available again from 1 July. More information, guidance notes and the application form can be found on the village website ([www.astonoxon.com](http://www.astonoxon.com)).

### **Parish Assets**

The condition of parish-owned physical assets is regularly reviewed and following the review in March 2019 one of the benches at the war memorial required minor repairs (painting and staining). 2 new seats will be installed this summer to replace the ones at the end of Southlands and on the playing field. Our thanks also go to Bob Jones and volunteers for organizing litter picking in April 2019.

### **Parish Elections**

Every four years all seven seats on the Parish Council are up for election, with 2018 being an election year. Following the elections two parish councillors were co-opted, these being Gill Ball and Russell La Forte, meaning that the council has its full compliment of councillors.

### **6. Aston & Cote Community Trust – Carolyn Simmonds, Chairperson and Paul Farrow, Trustee**

Mr Farrow joined the Community Trust in 2017 and has been a real driving force with the new playground project. The playground is now under construction having taken two years to raise the £56k required and get the relevant permissions. Grants have been received from OCC, WODC, PD Hook, Bampton Education Trust and the parish council. The intention is to have a formal opening of the play area at the village fete on 22 June 19.

*Q: What is happening to the existing play area?*

*A: The old play area will be dismantled to create more football pitches for the youth team. Volunteers to help always welcome.*

*Q: Why has the new play area been sited so close to the main road, surely this is dangerous and fumes from cars and the like?*

*A: There was considerable research done before the project was put together and it was the expressed wish of the parents that the play area be located nearer to the facilities of the village hall. The safety of users has been paramount in this project.*

*Q: Surely this will reduce the car parking?*

*A: The plan is to extend the car park along the hedge line away from the village hall as 'green' parking.*

John Ordish thanked Paul for all his work for this project and giving the meeting an update.

## **7. Community Responders**

Dick Tracey (SCAS Retired) and David England (SCAS) gave a briefing to the meeting on the importance of Community First Responders (CFR) within the community. They are volunteers trained by the Ambulance Service and equipped to give first aid whilst the ambulance is on its way. This is to maximize recovery rates especially in relation to cardiac arrest where the quicker the treatment the better the outcome for the patient. There is a 10 minute window of opportunity with a cardiac arrest. The parish has two defibrillators but the nearest CFR is in Carterton. So far there are 29,000 CFR across the country, with 114 in Oxfordshire, but every community should have one. In Oxfordshire someone suffering a cardiac arrest is twice as likely to survive when compared to the national average.

The current promotion is to get all developers to install defibrillators on new housing estates.

The parish council has run two defibrillator training sessions this year and will be running another in the summer.

## **8. WODC Councillor Steve Good**

He commented on the excellent work done by Paul (Farrow) and the community trust to get the playground project nearly at completion though it is a shame that the project has been marred by the theft at the weekend.

He stated that for the last 12 months he has been Cabinet Member for Environment which includes bins and recycling, and car parking. They continue to defend the free car parking as this helps keep places like Witney and Chipping Norton active and thriving.

He has been on the planning committee for the last 9 years and receives numerous emails asking for planning applications to be refused but the law, central government and until the end of last year, lack of a Local Plan, has not helped to defend against building. In the next 16 years 16,000 new homes are required which will impact of the infrastructure, such as the A40, which cannot cope now. The 5 district councils and city council have created a growth board who had been allocated £250 million which has now been put in doubt.

Last week was honored by the leader of WODC to be asked to stay on as the Cabinet Member for the Homeless and Housing. The new title is Cabinet member for Communities and Housing which covers things such as, safe guarding, community safety partnerships, crime and disorder working with the police, scrutiny of the Police and Crime commissioner for Thames Valley, parish and town council liaison, assets of community value and the broadband delivery for the district (98% to 99% direct fibre).

He is also vice chair of the licensing and miscellaneous licensing committees.

He continues as board member for Cottesway Housing.

Q: *What percentage increase is 16,000 of current housing stock in WODC?*

A: *About 180,000 current housing stock so 10%.*

Currently 6<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> best council for recycling in the country.

## 9. Open Questions

Q: *Why are there only plans for traffic calming on Cote Road?*

A: *When asked the police said that parking on the road is the best form of traffic calming.*

*Comment: We do not see the police or the camera van. Many concerns have been raised about vehicle engines running outside school and the hatching being parked on. On a positive note the walking bus to school is good.*

SG: *(WODC) OCC has posters about turning engines of when parked and walking buses.*

PF: *Hatched area not central to school entrance (the entrance has moved since the yellow lines were put in) so could it be requested that they be moved?*

SG: *This needs consultation and OCC say they cannot afford such things.*

SG: *(WODC) Would a visit from parking/traffic enforcement officers be appreciated?*

A: *Yes.*

AL: *PCSO covers Eynsham to Woodstock.*

JO: *(Parish Council) Would be lovely to see a PCSO occasionally walk round.*

SG: *(WODC) Will try.*

Q: *Concern raised about the number of hedges that are overhanging pavements meaning pedestrians having to walk in the road to get round – how do we approach this?*

A: *(Parish Council) Either individuals can speak to the relevant householder or send photos/reports in via the contact forms on the Aston and Cote website.*

BL: *The village shop has closed but would be possible as a community shop because the wages are the most significant cost.*

JO: *(Parish Council) This will be put on next parish council agenda and the parish council will look into how it can support.*

SG: *(WODC) Standlake 3-4 months ahead of this, they called a meeting and spoke to other community shops already up and running.*

AL: *ORCC have a brief to support community shops and have a designated officer who can give advice.*

*A general discussion was proposed after the Annual parish Meeting but if the shop is to reopen then the community will have to step up to the plate.*

## 10. Close of Meeting

John Ordish thanked the speakers for their presentations and the members of the public who came for attending and participating in the meeting. He reiterated that all are welcome to parish council meetings which are on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month at 7.30pm in the village hall.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.

Signed .....

Dated.....