

**MINUTES OF ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
Thursday 8th January 2026 at the Village Hall, Aston, at 7.30pm**

Present: R La Forte (Chair), R Anstee, B Lings, P Sparrowhawk, D Outen.

In Attendance: E Anstee (Locum Clerk), D Shenton (RFO), 5 members of the public.

1. **Apologies from Members:** There were apologies from Cllr G Ball & Cllr J Ordish.
2. **Parish Councillors - Disclosure of interests on agenda items** – R La Forte and P Sparrowhawk declared nonpecuniary interests in item 11 and B Lings in item 10 for the Lunch Club grant.
3. **Minutes of the previous meeting** of the Parish Council on 4th December 2025 were agreed, and it was RESOLVED as proposed by R La Forte, seconded by P Sparrowhawk, with all in agreement, that the meeting Chair signs them.
4. **Meeting Open for Public Participation** –
 - It was reported that the corner by the garage is now flooding and taking considerable time to dissipate. RFO offered to report this on Fix-My-Street and follow up by email with WODC Cllrs.
 - The chip van which parks at the at the end of Foxwood on the main road is unlit at the front and back. RFO will try to contact them via Facebook, alternatively E Anstee will speak to they about putting out lights like the ones used for skips.
5. **WODC/OCC Matters – No Reports**
6. **Matters Arising from Previous Meetings**

a) *Quick updates:*

Electronic Speed Signs – We are still waiting for confirmation from OCC of the installation date. We have confirmation that Westcotec can use the two identified lamp posts on North Street and Cote Road.

Traffic Calming – deferred until VAS (see first point) installed and effects analysed.

Highways Permit for Bampton Road VAS Installation

The installation date is the 9th January, at 9am, and Cllr D Outen agreed to be the point of contact on the day.

Footpaths/Treescaping – volunteers have been identified and will start in Spring 2026.

Thames Water – are still working in Aston and Bampton on the storm overflow programme.

- Thames Water have agreed to install fencing and have cleared the rest of the ditch as a goodwill gesture (as it is landowners' responsibility) to the culvert.
- The culvert still needs to be cleared and identification of who is responsible for the culvert on going. RFO to check with OCC on ownership on ongoing maintenance responsibilities.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was noted that enforcement is the responsibility of WODC however there is a limit to the fines that can be imposed. • Cllr Cosier to follow up on groundwater issues. • St Joseph's Court has been completed with a trench dug as far as the gates. There have been no further updates since the last meeting.
<p><i>Great Brook Bridge</i> – First raised as an issue in 2015. Further concerns have been raised frequently ever since. The Chief Exec of OCC has been shown the issue. Barriers have been hit again. Clerk contacted Humza, Highway Engagement Officer at OCC and copied in Cllr T Fenton and the MP. Humza has confirmed that the bridge is currently in the design stage, with construction due to commence in Summer 2026. A general inspection is due in December 2025. The most recent communication was in December 2025 to J West from C Maynard (MP). In this he confirmed that it was on the OCC Highways list for a design statement however if this is not completed in the current financial year (2025/26 for action in 2026/27) the work will be deferred until the 2027/28 financial year.</p>
<p><i>North Street</i> – District Cllr Cosier has had the following response from Chris Grain: No date has been assigned for pothole repairs and this year's schedule is fully booked, however there is a possibility that structural patching could be done. Cllr Outen to liaise with Cllr T Fenton. Clerk contacted Humza, Highway Engagement Officer at OCC and copied in Cllr T Fenton. The response was that any work was likely to be in the 2026/27 financial year. No further update though the surface has deteriorated even further in the recent cold/wet weather.</p>
<p><i>Beddles Turn</i> - Raised with OCC Highways in 2018 and was most recently raised in February 2025. No update.</p>
<p><i>Cote Mile Bridge</i> – No outstanding reports on Fix-My-Street.</p>
<p><i>Defibrillators</i> – Primary School – this was passed to the Head to arrange installation; Brier Furlong (Aston Pottery) - Cllr G Ball will be following up with Aston Pottery to confirm location and Stonewater (funder) to confirm funding.</p>
<p><i>Crossing on Cote Road between the end of Marsh Furlong and Poundfield Road.</i> Currently awaiting scheduling at OCC. OCC have confirmed that the parish will be consulted. No further update.</p>
<p><i>War Memorial and Bus Shelter Cleaning – Tenders for 2026 -</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current contractor is happy to carry on for the time being however the cost of the Public Liability Insurance required to carry out the role exceeds the remuneration for the job. Moved to February agenda. • The loose blocks from the around the curtilage of the war memorial have been removed and stored securely.
<p><i>Appointment of 2 Allotment Trustees for the Aston and Cote Allotments.</i> One person has expressed an interest. B Lings to ask the interested party to contact the Parish Council so a resolution to appoint them can be made.</p>

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OCC Grant Funding for Flood Management

A re-submission of our request for Grant Funding for a flood management plan for the Parish has been submitted, as requested by James Feest OCC Flood Mitigation Officer. We have now been asked to obtain quotes for this work and submit them before the end of January. R La Forte will request a quote from JoFlows as our current supplier.

- b) *Data Loggers and Project Groundwater*
Reports from loggers supplied by D Outen by email.
- c) *History Board Update*
No further update.
- d) *Anti-Social Behaviour* – None as of date of meeting.

7. CORRESPONDENCE – all by email.

8. PLANNING

New planning applications

Reference	25/03121/TCA
Alternative Reference	PP-14579630
Application Validated	Fri 19 Dec 2025
Address	3 Church Farm Court Bull Street Aston Oxfordshire OX18 2BS
Proposal	We wish to reduce the canopy of the silver birch by 30%
Status	Under consideration
No objection	

Reference	25/02919/HHD
Alternative Reference	PP-14520432
Application Validated	Mon 01 Dec 2025
Address	The Paddock Cote Bampton Oxfordshire OX18 2EG
Proposal associated works	Erection of single storey side extension with roof lights, and associated works
Status	Under consideration
No Objection	

Update on Ongoing Planning Applications – For Information

22/00986/FUL Brier Furlong –

- It was reported that the first 18 houses are now occupied and 10 more due for occupation in December.
- Request made for Thames Water to review the issues and for Grampian Conditions to be rephased so this can be enforced.
- Discussion with members of the public regarding the adoption of the road and the pumping station, and who is responsible for managing the drainage - as

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<p>the issue is the connection to the foul water drains which in turn link to the unadopted pumping station.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was noted that enforcement of the planning conditions is inadequate. • Awaiting TW response on how many drains are affected. • Update from District Councillor - Drainage repairs to be carried out by Mears, then Thames Water can assess so that the County Council can then adopt the road. • Thames Water have stated that they have not been invited to any meeting and Mears have not turned up either. Stalemate. Cllr S Cosier will follow up again.
<p>15/01550/OUT Marsh Furlong –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The former clerk spoke to the Brier Furlong site manager who confirmed that all connections to the pumping station for foul water at the back of Marsh Furlong had been finalised. Concerns were subsequently raised by residents following tests of the system at the end of July. • WODC Planning have been advised, and the clerk has contacted Thames Water urgently again for clarification. • As above, update from District Councillor - Drainage repairs to be carried out by Mears, then Thames Water can assess so that the County Council can then adopt the road. • Situation being monitored and chased by WODC Cllr S Cosier.
<p>25/00853/OUT North Farm –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The WODC Case Officer has accepted that the application is for '9+3' units not 12 and additional affordable housing should not be required. However, he still has to discuss this with the housing officer before this position is finalised. • EA objected to connecting to foul water system but subsequently withdrew this objection. It was noted that the default would be to connect to mains water system. • Nothing new to report and last activity on the Planning Portal is 6th November 2025.
<p>24/02466/OUT Potential new development – Lone Star Land (land agents) – Planning application still outstanding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment Agency objected to the application and required another flood risk assessment is carried out; this is now complete, and they have withdrawn their objection. • Last entry on Planning Portal is 17th September 2025.
<p>25/01247/OUT Land south of Bampton Road – Croudace. No decision made yet.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant has submitted revised FRA. LLFA(OCC), EA and ourselves (with Technical Note) have all objected again. Biodiversity objection still extant. • No further updates.
<p>25/01702/FUL Proposed Mount Field Solar Farm – land between Bampton, Aston and Lew.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions with Bampton and Curbridge & Lew Parish Councils regarding funding split are ongoing - Aston and Curbridge & Lew are in agreement, Bampton have not agreed and have revised their claim from an equal third to

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a 35% (Curbridge), 35% Aston and 30% Bampton split. Negotiations ongoing. Reference R La Forte email draft of a response to Bampton's PC rejection of the proposed split. This will be sent once Curbridge and Lew PC have confirmed their response at their meeting on the 12th January 2026.

- EA has objected due to flood risk.

25/01422FUL Land South of St James's Court, North Street – not yet decided; objection agreed at Aug meeting. Nothing to report and last activity on Planning Portal was the 12th December 2025.

Update on previous planning application decisions.

Reference 25/02808/TCA
Alternative Reference PP-14487666
Application Validated Thu 13 Nov 2025
Address 2 St Joseph's Court Bampton Road Aston OX18 2BU
Proposal MT1 - Sycamore - Reduce by 1.5 to 2 metres all round, remove major deadwood, crown raise to 5 meters by removing 4 low branches -due to encroaching on gardens.
 MT2 - Sycamore - Reduce height by 2 metres. Remove major deadwood, remove epicormic growth from stem-due to encroaching on gardens.
 T4 - Red acer - Removed major dead wood. Reduce crown by up to 2.5 meters to balance, remove epicormic growth on stem-due to die back.
Status Decided
Decision Raise no objection
Decision Issued Date Thu 11 Dec 2025

Reference 25/02747/TCA
Alternative Reference Not Available
Application Validated Thu 06 Nov 2025
Address 17 Bull Street Aston Bampton Oxfordshire OX18 2DN
Proposal T1 - crab apple - reduce crown by 1m - 1.5m.
 T2 - bay - reduce to approximately 4ft, retaining young growth
Status Decided
Decision Raise no objection
Decision Issued Date Thu 11 Dec 2025

9. New Business

- a) Grant request from Aston Lunch Club – it was RESOLVED as proposed by R La Forte, Seconded by A Anstee, with all in agreement to provide a grant of £300 to support activities at the lunch club. Additionally, to invite them to apply for funding for specific activities in the future.
- b) Consideration of Aston Community Car Project – it was decided to welcome the initiative and that the Parish Council would welcome feedback on progress.
- c) Date for Annual Parish Meeting was set for 22nd April 2026. RFO to confirm with the Village Hall.

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10. Community Trust

- MUGA Update – next step is the installation of the surface in Spring 2026.
- Path from MUGA to Hall – S106 funding has been indicated will be able to apply for but quotes are needed. R la Forte and P Sparrowhawk to take to next Community Trust meeting in January.
- Solar Panels – progressing but no update.
- Other infrastructure projects – no update.

11. Parish Infrastructure

- a) Village maintenance – none.

12. Governance – Policies for Review and Resolution - None

13. FINANCE

- a) It was RESOLVED as proposed by R Anstee, seconded by P Sparrowhawk, with all in agreement to approve the following payments for the period January 2026.

	NET	VAT	Gross Amount
D Shenton – December pay & WFH	418.21		418.21
HMRC – PAYE on above	108.98		108.98
S Ransom – Christmas tree	83.33	16.67	100.00
OCC – Aston & Cote – Grant Request	300.00		300.00
Total to be decided and approved	£910.52	£16.67	£927.19
Total of already approved/paid	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Monthly Standing Orders/DDs			
Lloyds Bank Card			
Nov 25 – Microsoft £317.64, Bank charge £6	270.70	52.94	323.64
Dec 25 – Microsoft £82.32, Bank charge £3	71.60	13.72	85.32
Total SDOs	£342.30	£66.66	£408.96
Total	£1,252.82	£83.33	£1,336.15

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

14. Matters for inclusion on next agenda – none

15. Date of next meeting: Thursday 5th February 2026 at 7.30pm
Meeting closed at 20.45pm.

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

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**West Oxford District Councillors' Report – January 2026
Councillor Sandra Cosier
Councillor Steve Cosier**

Licensing Committee – Councillor Sandra Cosier – Committee Member

Members were advised that new regulations introduced by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) in 2024 came into force on 6 April 2025. These regulations establish a mandatory licensing scheme for private keepers of primates, with the Council acting as the licensing authority.

Licences will typically be issued for a three-year period, although applicants may request a shorter duration. The regulatory framework also provides the Council with powers to revoke licences where necessary. Fees will apply for both applications and inspections, with estimated costs set out in section 2.9 of the report. These proposed fees mirror those used for horse-riding establishments, reflecting a similar administrative process, and will be reviewed annually.

During discussion, several points were raised by Members:

- A question was asked regarding the likely number of primate keepers within the district. Officers confirmed that no privately owned primates are currently known. Work will be undertaken with local veterinarians to raise awareness of the new licensing requirement.
- Clarification was sought on the reference to “suitable persons” in section 2.6. Officers confirmed that those undertaking inspections will complete a two-day training course, and that a qualified veterinarian will always carry out an inspection prior to an Officer visit, ensuring a robust and professionally led process.
- Members discussed the expected frequency of inspections during the licence period, noting that additional inspections may be arranged if concerns arise.
- The Council’s enforcement powers were considered, including the ability to issue fines, prosecute, or revoke licences where appropriate.
- A query was raised about public awareness. Officers confirmed that the Council’s Communications Team is actively promoting the new requirements to ensure residents are informed.

Overview and Scrutiny – Councillor Steve Cosier – Committee Member

As a member of District Council’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting I raised urgent concerns regarding proposed changes to Oxfordshire’s fire services, warning that reducing staffing or closing fire stations could lead to slower response times, property loss, and a risk to human life, and extra pressure on fire crews.

During the meeting session where the Chief Fire Officer spoke to the committee, I voiced my concerns that response times already vary significantly across the region and that the proposed 905 new houses and industrial development in West Oxfordshire up to 2043 will further exacerbate these delays if fire cover is reduced.

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The potential closure of stations in Eynsham and Woodstock has sounded "alarm bells," with mw particularly after both stations were required to attend a major recent fire in Chesterton alongside six other stations recently.

I am deeply worried that if we don't challenge the proposals in the consultation, the villages of Aston, Northmoor, Standlake, Yelford, Hardwick, Stanton Harcourt, Sutton and towns like Woodstock and Witney will not have equitable fire cover.

The loss of Eynsham and Woodstock stations would I believe place increased pressure on wholtime crews to cover wider areas, potentially leaving residents and fire crews in a "life-threatening" position.

Beyond fire response, I pointed out critical gaps in the proposal regarding climate change and flooding. Despite the Environment Agency identifying Oxfordshire, and specifically areas like Witney, Eynsham, and Woodstock, as being at high risk for increased flooding over the next 25 years, the proposal focuses primarily on engine availability and demand.

I questioned whether specialized water rescue pumping equipment would remain immediately available to these high-risk settlements if local stations are closed. The fire service's challenges are compounded by a long-standing lack of funding. The Chief Fire Officer confirmed that they have been requesting additional funding from the Conservative and Labour governments for six years to provide a more resilient service. I am, as your District Councillor, calling for these fears to be addressed within the ongoing consultation to ensure that rural communities receive the adequate fire cover they deserve and that the safety of both residents and fire crews is not compromised.

I urge residents to access the consultation and put your views forward. We need to save our Fire Service. The consultation ends on: 20 January 2026.

<https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ofrs-consultation>

West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2043: Preferred Spatial Options Consultation Paper

The final public consultation meeting on the Preferred Spatial Options was held in Standlake Village Hall in December. Residents from Standlake, Aston, Stanton Harcourt, Sutton, and Northmoor attended in numbers that exceeded the combined attendance of all the other Preferred Spatial Options' events in West Oxfordshire.

The turnout demonstrated a remarkable level of community engagement and a shared commitment to safeguarding local services and ensuring rural voices are heard. The strong representation from multiple villages highlighted the depth of concern about the Officer's proposals.

The final event provided a valuable platform for residents to raise questions, share experiences, and express their views on the potential impact of increased housing. The

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collective presence of so many residents sent a clear message about the importance of listening to local knowledge.

Sandra and I thank all residents who attended. Their willingness to come together, speak up, and support one another reflects the strength and resilience of our villages. This level of engagement will play a crucial role in ensuring that rural concerns are fully recognised within the consultation.

These are the next steps:

1. Analysis of Responses (Now - Early 2026): The Council is processing and analysing all feedback received
2. Publication of Regulation 19 Draft (Spring 2026): A full, final draft (Regulation 19) of the Local Plan will be published for a statutory 6-week public consultation.
3. After the Regulation 19 consultation, the plan will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for independent examination.
4. An independent Planning Inspector will determine if the Council has met legal requirements and if the plan is sound, potentially leading to modifications.

Best wishes

Councillor Sandra Cosier & Councillor Steve Cosier

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