

ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL

CLERK'S BRIEFING NOTES

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING ON 2 NOVEMBER 2017

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Correspondence sent since 5 October 2017

All correspondence carried out via email/telephone.

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Specification and Requirements for verge grass cutting and maintenance of war memorial garden

1.0 General

1.1 Scope

The village of Aston lies some 20 miles West of Oxford on the B4449. The specification relates to the grass-cutting of various areas of land specified in the schedules under 20.1 and 20.2 and the maintenance of the war memorial garden.

1.2 Definitions

The terms used in these regulations shall have the following meanings:

“Parish Council” means the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council.

“The Contractor” means the person, firm or Company carrying out the Works to the order or instruction of the Parish Council.

“The Site” is any part or whole of the areas identified and designated in the location schedule.

1.3 Responsibilities

The Contractor is responsible for the overall safety of his work force in all matters relating to safety. The Contractor shall ensure that they are complied with by his employees, sub-contractors and others under his control.

2.0 Statutory Requirements

The Contractor shall comply in all respects with all Statutory Acts of Parliament and local regulations.

3.0 Operating Working Areas

During the work all operating areas shall be kept free of obstruction and if necessary to ensure the safety of the public shall be securely fenced.

4.0 Engine Driven Equipment

All engine driven equipment shall be equipped with an efficient silencer system on the exhaust to limit noise to the acceptable decibel limit.

5.0 Tools and Equipment

The Contractor shall be responsible for providing all tools and equipment necessary to carry out the Works efficiently and shall possess all safety certificates necessary for those items of equipment requiring them.

6.0 Health and Safety

The Contractor shall accept full responsibility for compliance with the Health and Safety at Work Act and all other Acts and Regulations in respect of the work comprised in this Contract.

The Contractor shall comply with any statutory requirements that require the provision of first aid boxes if his work force numbers require such to be provided.

7.0 Advertising

The Contractor shall not display any advertising notices during the programme of Works unless permission is obtained from the Parish Council.

8.0 Clearance of Site

The Contractor shall ensure that any equipment which is not in use is kept clear of the work area as the Works proceed. The Contractor shall clear away and remove from site all surplus material and rubbish as the work proceeds and on completion of the Works.

9.0 Working Hours

The Contractor shall carry out the work during his normal working day. Working within non-daylight hours will not be undertaken.

10.0 Workmanship and Equipment

10.1 The workmanship must be of the highest standard and shall conform to all relevant British Standards, Specifications and Codes of Practice.

10.2 Prior to cutting any area, the Contractor will ensure that it is free of significantly large stones, paper, tins, bottles and other debris.

10.3 The Contractor will at all times during the period of the Contract ensure that all machines engaged in grass cutting operations are sharp and properly set, so as to produce a true and even cut. Any damage or areas of grass not cut to the approval of the Council from such lack of maintenance will be made good by the Contractor at his own expense and to the satisfaction of the Council.

10.4 All grass will be cut cleanly and evenly and without damaging the existing surface.

10.5 The Contractor will complete one area of grass cutting before moving onto the next, and immediately after cutting a scheduled area, the Contractor will ensure that all grass clippings and other arisings are cleared from all paved areas, memorial stones, paths and public footpaths, etc., by sweeping or using a blower.

10.6 Grass cutting will take place on the full area of grass at the site, up to any paving, fencing, obstacles and any other boundaries.

10.7 Mowing around obstructions including seats, trees, fence lines, posts, and in the proximity of margins, will be undertaken using methods, tools and machines as appropriate.

10.8 Areas not cut to the satisfaction of the Council will be re-cut by the Contractor at the Contractor's own expense.

10.9 Should the Contractor cause damage to the surface or levels of the ground, or create divots during grass cutting operations, the Contractor will at his

own expense reinstate such damage forthwith to the satisfaction of the Council.

10.10 All persons operating grass cutting machinery must be satisfactorily trained, and the Council reserves the right to ask the Contractor to provide adequate proof that his operators are well trained, conversant with Health and Safety legislation and competent in their operating methods.

11.0 Labour Relations – Payments

The Contractor shall include in his tender any extra payments he may consider necessary such as: condition money, incentive and bonus payments. No claim for such extra payments will be considered after the contract has been awarded.

12.0 Sub-Contracting

The Contractor shall not sub-let any part of the contract without the prior approval of the Parish Council and any such consent shall not relieve the Contractor of his obligations under the Contract.

13.0 Liability of Contractor

The Contractor shall be liable for any loss damage or injury caused by the Contractor or any sub-contractor, employee servant or agent of the Contractor to third parties or property of such third parties. The Contractor shall also be responsible for any loss, damage or injury to his own plant, equipment and employees howsoever caused. The Contractor agrees to indemnify the Parish Council in respect of any such loss, damage or injury in respect of any claims, proceedings, damages, loss or cost arising therefrom or in relation thereto to the extent detailed in the clause.

14.0 Insurance

Without prejudice to the liabilities of the Contractor under this contract during the period of the contract, the Contractor will maintain full public liability insurance cover for his liabilities under clause 13.0 above. Please note that Oxfordshire County Council requires contractors working on the highway (which includes grass verges) to hold £10 million of public liability insurance.

A current certificate of insurance must be produced to the Parish Clerk prior to commencement of the Contract.

15.0 Default or Bankruptcy of Contractor

If either:

- a) the Contractor contravenes or makes default in the performance of any of the provisions hereof and the contraventions or default continues for 7 days after the Parish Council has given notice in writing to the Contractor specifying the contravention or default, or
- b) the Contractor becomes bankrupt or insolvent or has a receiving order made against him or presents his petition in bankruptcy, or makes an arrangement or assignment in favour of his creditors, or agrees to carry out the Works forming the subject of this Contract under a committee of inspection, or has a Receiver appointed or is the subject of a petition to wind it up or goes in to liquidation (other than voluntary liquidation for the purpose of amalgamation or reconstruction) or has execution levied on his goods (the same not being paid out in 7 days) the Parish Council may (without prejudice to any other remedy available to it) by notice in writing to the Contractor forthwith determine the

Contract, and may retain all monies then due or thereafter falling due under the Contract and apply them towards making good any loss or damage arising from the contravention or default in the performance of this Contract.

16.0 Variations

No variations shall be made nor work involving an extra charge be put in hand without either an instruction in writing from the Parish Council or a verbal instruction from the Parish Council which the contractor confirms in writing to the Parish Council within 7 days and any Works not so authorised shall not be payable.

17.0 Invoicing and Payments

Invoices shall be submitted to the Parish Council monthly in arrears, **by the last working Thursday of the month**. Invoices presented for payment must include a schedule of the works completed, including the dates of the work.

Payments shall be made to the Contractor the month following presentation when they will be approved by the Parish Council at its monthly meeting.

18.0 Termination of Contract

Either party may, without reason, terminate the Contract in writing, giving three months' notice.

19.0 Tender

19.1 Price

The Contractor shall submit a price per cut for each of the three years of the contract with the exception of VAT where applicable, for the whole of the Works as detailed in the "Scope of Works" clause. Tenders are to be priced on an annual basis. There will be no opportunity to alter the rates tendered during the term.

19.2 Timing

The price shall be for the Works to be carried out during the **3 year period 2015 to 2017 and shall cater for 12 cuts per year, beginning in March 2015 and terminating in November 2017**. The timing of each cut is flexible depending on the climatic conditions prevailing. If the climatic conditions cause the grass to grow at a rate that suggests that **12** cuts will be inadequate, the Parish Council may request a maximum additional **2** cuts. This will be discussed with the Contractor during the operation of the Contract.

The vegetation height must be kept below 300mm at all times.

19.3 Site Visits

The Contractor is expected to visit the site to ascertain any conditions that may affect his/her bid. The Parish Council will not entertain any future claims for additional payments due to the Contractor's failure to comply with this provision.

19.4 Return of Tenders

Completed tenders should be returned no later than 5.00pm on Friday 28 November 2014 to:

Mrs H Sandhu
Clerk to the Council
Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council
1 Manor Close
Aston
BAMPTON
OX18 2DD

The tender should be returned in an envelope clearly marked “**Tender for grass cutting**” on the outside.

Any bids received after that date will not be considered.

Any queries in relation to the bids should be addressed to Mrs H Sandhu who can be contacted by telephone on 01993 851774.

The “Questionnaire” attached to this tender document at 21.0 should be completed and returned at the same time.

19.5 Acceptance of Tender

The Parish Council does not undertake to accept the lowest or any tender. The Council's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into on the reasons why a tender has been rejected.

The successful tender, this document and the Council's written acceptance shall form a binding agreement.

20.0 Scope of Work

The scope of work is detailed in the tables below and identifies location and area of each section together with any applicable comments. The grass should be cut with a mower or strimmer, with any obstacles (signs, posts, benches, bins or other) to be strimmed around. The work to include removal of cut grass from footpaths by sweeping or blower.

The Council or other external bodies could add additional outside fixtures and fittings during the period of the Contract and no application from the Contractor to adjust the Contract price will be considered.

This specification does not include the collection and disposal of grass cuttings thereby generated.

20.1 Aston

Reference	Length (m)	Breadth (m)	Times	Area (sqm)	Comments/Location
1	89.5	2.8		250.6	Bampton Road
2	87.0	1.4		121.8	Bampton Road
3	149.0	2.2		327.8	Bampton Rd/High St
4	21.0	7.9		165.9	Vicarage Close
5	39.7	1.3		50.7	High Street
6	124.0	2.2		272.8	Ham Lane
7	20.0	20.0	0.5	200.0	Incls War Memorial
8	7.0	3.0		21.0	Crrn Bull St/Cote Rd
9	19.0	5.9	0.5	56.1	Southlands
10	36.2	5.5		199.1	Crrn Southlands/Bull St
11	19.3	7.5		144.8	Smiths Close
11a	32.7	6.5		212.5	Smiths Close
12	37.2	7.4	0.5	137.6	Woodbridge Close
13	50.5	2.3		116.6	Bull Street
13a	56.5	0.3		16.95	Verge adjacent footpath Bull Street to Saxel Close alongside Thames Water installation
13b	89.0	0.6		53.4	Verge adjacent footpath Bull Street to Saxel Close to turn of footpath – to include cutting back of any brambles
14	61.0	1.4		85.4	Bull Lane
15	Not included				Bull Street
15a	2.6	2.0		5.2	Bull Street
16	102.1	3.4		347.2	Cote Road
17	149.0	2.6		387.4	Saxel CI/30mph zone
17a	56.0	2.0		112.0	Saxel CI from streetlight to boundary of 1 Saxel Close – 2 metre wide swathe at footpath edge only
18	115.0	0.8		92.0	Foxwood/30mph sign
19	126.8	6.0		760.8	Foxwood/Crrn Cote Rd
19c	55.0	3.1		170.7	Foxwood/Crrn Cote Rd
20	150.5	2.3		346.2	Back Lane
21	11.5	1.1		12.7	Back Lane
22	40.8	2.8		114.2	Back Lane
23	19.0	2.4		45.6	Back Lane
24 to 25	195.0	2.9		565.7	Back Lane
25 to 26	51.0	2.2		112.7	Back Lane
26	20.0	1.8		36.0	Back Lane
27	55.0	2.4		132.0	North Street
28	155.7	1.8		280.3	North Street
29	145.0	1.3		188.5	North Street
30	108.0	2.6		280.7	North Street
31	44.5	1.8		80.1	Back Lane
32	104.0	2.3		239.4	Back Lane
33	123.0	1.1		135.2	Back Lane
34	53.0	1.9		100.7	Back Lane

Total Area Aston		6978.35	
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20.2 Cote

(no map supplied)

1	745.0	1.0		745.0	East side of Cote High Street from Cote crossroads B4449 travelling N-S to Hook Hatcheries
2	745	varying		1117.0	West side of Cote High Street from Cote crossroads B4449 travelling N-S to Hook Hatcheries
Total Area Cote				1862.0	

20.3 War Memorial

The war memorial area in Aston is included in the scope of work and the grassed area should be cut at a minimum of two-weekly intervals, or sooner if the grass is growing well, to ensure a presentable aspect in the village.

The Contractor should ensure in particular that this area is in a neat and tidy condition prior to the Remembrance Sunday service.

The central garden round the memorial should be kept weed free and planted with annual plants supplied by the contractor under this scope of work at the appropriate time of year which should be late October for winter flowering and early April for summer flowering.

The yew plants should be kept pruned in an attractive and even shape.

The chains between the wooden posts should be inspected, treated and painted black if there is any rust or discoloration evident.

**21.0 Aston, Cote, Shifford & Chimney Parish Council
Grass cutting contract**

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Business Name:
2. Address:
.....
3. Telephone number:
4. Email:
5. Contact Name and Position in Company:
6. If the Business is a Company:
Is it a Subsidiary of another Company?
If yes, please give details:
.....
7. Please state which branch the Contract will be serviced from:
.....
8. Date of Business formation:
9. Please state number of grounds maintenance employees:
10. Equipment to be used on contract (for mowers include type and blade/cutting width):
.....
.....
11. Please give any other details, which you feel may be relevant, for example, similar Contracts in the area or for similar authorities, etc:

Signed:

Position:

Date:

Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council

Specification and Requirements for playing field grass cutting

1.0 General

1.1 Scope

The village of Aston lies some 20 miles West of Oxford on the B4449. The specification relates to the grass-cutting of the playing field adjacent to the village hall. The village hall is situated on the outskirts of the village on the B4449 Aston to Standlake road.

1.2 Definitions

The terms used in these regulations shall have the following meanings:

“Parish Council” means the Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council.

“The Contractor” means the person, firm or Company carrying out the Works to the order or instruction of the Parish Council.

“The Site” is any part or whole of the areas identified and designated in the location schedule.

1.3 Responsibilities

The Contractor is responsible for the overall safety of his work force in all matters relating to safety. The Contractor shall ensure that they are complied with by his employees, sub-contractors and others under his control.

2.0 Statutory Requirements

The Contractor shall comply in all respects with all Statutory Acts of Parliament and local regulations.

3.0 Operating Working Areas

During the work all operating areas shall be kept free of obstruction and if necessary to ensure the safety of the public shall be securely fenced.

4.0 Engine Driven Equipment

All engine driven equipment shall be equipped with an efficient silencer system on the exhaust to limit noise to the acceptable decibel limit.

5.0 Tools and Equipment

The Contractor shall be responsible for providing all tools and equipment necessary to carry out the Works efficiently and shall possess all safety certificates necessary for those items of equipment requiring them.

6.0 First Aid

The Contractor shall comply with any statutory requirements that require the provision of first aid boxes if his work force numbers require such to be provided.

7.0 Advertising

The Contractor shall not display any advertising notices during the programme of Works unless permission is obtained from the Parish Council.

8.0 Clearance of Site

The Contractor shall ensure that any equipment which is not in use is kept clear of the work area as the Works proceed. The Contractor shall clear away and remove from site all surplus material and rubbish as the work proceeds and on completion of the Works.

9.0 Working Hours

The Contractor shall carry out the work during his normal working day. Working within non-daylight hours will not be undertaken.

10.0 Labour Relations – Payments

The Contractor shall include in his tender any extra payments he may consider necessary such as: condition money, incentive and bonus payments. No claim for such extra payments will be considered after the contract has been awarded.

11.0 Sub-Contracting

The Contractor shall not sub-let any part of the contract without the prior approval of the Parish Council and any such consent shall not relieve the Contractor of his obligations under the Contract.

12.0 Liability of Contractor

The Contractor shall be liable for any loss damage or injury caused by the Contractor or any sub-contractor, employee servant or agent of the Contractor to third parties or property of such third parties. The Contractor shall also be responsible for any loss, damage or injury to his own plant, equipment and employees howsoever caused. The Contractor agrees to indemnify the Parish Council in respect of any such loss, damage or injury in respect of any claims, proceedings, damages, loss or cost arising therefrom or in relation thereto to the extent detailed in the clause.

13.0 Insurance

Without prejudice to the liabilities of the Contractor under this contract during the period of the contract, the Contractor will maintain full public liability insurance cover for his liabilities under clause 12.0 above. A current certificate of insurance must be produced to the Parish Clerk prior to commencement of the Contract.

14.0 Default or Bankruptcy of Contractor

If either:

- c) the Contractor contravenes or makes default in the performance of any of the provisions hereof and the contraventions or default continues for 7 days after the Parish Council has given notice in writing to the Contractor specifying the contravention or default, or
- d) the Contractor becomes bankrupt or insolvent or has a receiving order made against him or presents his petition in bankruptcy, or makes an arrangement or assignment in favour of his creditors, or agrees to carry out the Works forming the subject of this Contract under a committee of inspection, or has a Receiver appointed or is the subject of a petition to wind it up or goes in to liquidation (other than voluntary liquidation for the purpose of amalgamation or

reconstruction) or has execution levied on his goods (the same not being paid out in 7 days)
the Parish Council may (without prejudice to any other remedy available to it) by notice in writing to the Contractor forthwith determine the Contract, and may retain all monies then due or thereafter falling due under the Contract and apply them towards making good any loss or damage arising from the contravention or default in the performance of this Contract.

15.0 Variations

No variations shall be made nor work involving an extra charge be put in hand without either an instruction in writing from the Parish Council or a verbal instruction from the Parish Council which the contractor confirms in writing to the Parish Council within 7 days and any Works not so authorised shall not be payable.

16.0 Payments

Payments shall be made to the Contractor the month following presentation when they will be approved by the Parish Council at its monthly meeting. Invoices presented for payment must include a schedule of the works completed including the dates of the work.

17.0 Tender

17.1 Price

The Contractor shall submit a price per cut for each of the two years of the contract with the exception of VAT where applicable, for the whole of the Works as detailed in the "Scope of Works" paragraph. Tenders are to be priced on an annual basis. There will be no opportunity to alter the rates tendered during the term.

17.2 Timing

The price shall be for the Works to be carried out during the **2 year period 2016 and 2017 and shall cater for 12 cuts per year, beginning in March 2016 and terminating in November 2017**. The timing of each cut is flexible depending on the climatic conditions prevailing. If the climatic conditions cause the grass to grow at a rate that suggests that **12** cuts will be inadequate, the Parish Council may request a maximum additional **3** cuts. This will be discussed with the Contractor during the operation of the Contract.

17.3 Site Visits

The Contractor is expected to visit the site to ascertain any conditions that may affect his bid. The Parish Council will not entertain any future claims for additional payments due to the Contractor's failure to comply with this provision.

17.4 Return of Tenders

Completed tenders must be returned no later than **5.00pm on Thursday 31 December 2015** to:

Mrs H Sandhu
Clerk to the Council
Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council
1 Manor Close
Aston
BAMPTON
OX18 2DD

The tender should be returned in an envelope clearly marked "**Tender for grass cutting**" on the outside.

Any bids received after that date will not be considered.

Any queries in relation to the bids should be addressed to Mrs H Sandhu who can be contacted by telephone on 01993 851774 or by email on astonpc@live.co.uk.

17.5 Acceptance of Tender

The Parish Council does not undertake to accept the lowest or any tender. The Council's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into on the reasons why a tender has been rejected.

The successful tender, this document and the Council's written acceptance shall form a binding agreement.

18.0 Scope of Work

The scope of work is the cutting of the football pitch and the whole of the playing field grassed areas (excluding the fenced children's playground) comprising an area of approximately 26000m².

The field shall be cut in accordance with the timescale as detailed in 17.2 above and the cut shall be as close to the tree and shrub line bounding the field as possible. Grass cutting shall be carried out as close as possible to fixed obstructions.

This specification does not include the collection and disposal of grass cuttings thereby generated.

Financial Matters**1. Cash Balances**

	£
<i>SANTANDER CURRENT ACCOUNT</i>	
Balance at 30 September 2017	1,284.29
Transfer to Unity Trust Account	(1,284.29)
Balance at 31 October 2017	<u>NIL</u>
 <i>UNITY TRUST CURRENT ACCOUNT</i>	
Balance at 30 September 2017	11,712.44
October payments	(2,971.39)
Transfer from Santander current account	1,284.29
2 nd half Precept & grant from WODC	13,070.50
Balance at 31 October 2017	<u>23,095.84</u>
 <i>NATIONWIDE DEPOSIT ACCOUNT</i>	
Balance at 30 September 2017	39,106.79
Transactions in month	NIL
Balance at 31 October 2017	<u>£39,106.79</u>
 <i>SANTANDER BUSINESS DEPOSIT ACCOUNT</i>	
Balance at 30 September 2017	535.11
Transactions in month: interest received	0.04
Balance at 31 October 2017	<u>£535.15</u>
 TOTAL CASH HOLDING AT 31 OCTOBER 2017	 <u>£62,737.78</u>

ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL
6 MONTHS ENDED 30 SEPT 2017
RECEIPTS & PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

	Relevant Statute	BUDGET		ACTUAL	PRIOR YR	PRIOR YR
		Full Year Budget 2017/18	Budget for 6 months 2017/18	3m ended 30 June 2017/18	6m ended 30 June 2016/17	Full Year 2016/17
RECEIPTS						
Precept		25,582	12,791	12,791.00	12,528.00	25,055.00
Council tax support grant (WODC)		559	280	279.50	380.00	760.00
Grants (grass cutting)		1,049	1,049	1,048.60	1,048.60	1,048.60
Interest		30	15	0.28	5.24	241.30
Sundry					8.00	8.00
VAT refund received					702.17	1,708.57
TOTAL RECEIPTS		27,220	14,135	14,119.38	14,672.01	28,821.47
PAYMENTS						
<i>Ordinary Expenditure</i>						
Clerk's Salary	LGA 1972, s112	4,445	2,219	2,219.00	2,174.20	4,358.20
Office equipment	LGA 1972, s111					
Office running costs	LGA 1972, s111	500	250	164.86	157.67	305.24
Bank charges		72	36	36.00	18.00	54.00
Website	LGA 1972, s111				193.20	193.20
Insurance	LGA 1972, s111	432	432	401.67	411.86	411.86
Audit	LGA 1972, s111	200	200	200.00		200.00
Village Hall Rental/Cost APM	LGA 1972, s111	40	40	18.50	32.39	32.39
Subscriptions	LGA 1972, s143	362	219	212.29	208.04	336.04
Chairman's Allowance	LGA 1972 s15(5)	100	50	7.50		
<i>Expenditure under Statute</i>						
Grass Cutting - verges & War Mem	HA 1980, s116	4,961	2,815	1,836.98	2,442.30	3,068.49
Grass Cutting - playing field	LG(MP)A 1976, s19	1,296	792	792.00	648.00	1,152.00
Grants - See Separate Analysis		3,950	1,350	1,155.00	870.00	2,790.00
Dog & Litter Bin Emptying	Litter Act 1983	217	109	109.68	106.26	212.52
Training & Travel	LGA 1972, s174	220	110			
Clock Maintenance	PCA 1957, ss2 & 6	440	220	509.00		638.00
Bus Shelter Cleaning	LG(MP)A 1953, s4	110	55	27.00	54.00	108.00
Repairs (incl Cote phone kiosk)		500	250	18.32		
<i>Expenditure from "Free Resource" (S137)</i>						
Village maintenance/Lengthsman		1,500	750	218.50	190.00	190.00
Subscriptions		111	111	106.00	106.00	106.00
Grants - See Separate Analysis		1,400		0.00		285.00
<i>Projects</i>						
Southlands Noticeboard		1,800	1,800	1,371.55		
VAS on Bampton Road		5,000				
Queen's Birthday Medals	LGA 1972, s137				367.29	367.29
Bench donated to Comm.Trust				20.00	324.98	361.23
Pedestrian Barrier Works					421.81	421.81
Defib at Village Hall	PHA 1936 s234					
Contingency Sum		5,000				
VAT Paid				618.63	704.59	1,014.92
TOTAL PAYMENTS		32,656	11,807	10,042.48	9,430.59	16,606.19
Excess/(Deficit) of Receipts over Payments for Financial Year		(5,436)	2,327	4,076.90	5,241.42	12,215.28
Reserves						
Opening at 1 April		48,562	48,562	48,561.73		36,346.45
Closing at period end		43,126	50,889	52,638.63		48,561.73
Closing reserves analysis:						
Working day to day balance		8,650	19,838	18,300.13		15,936.00
Contingency Reserve		0		5,000.00		5,000.00
Recreation reserve		34,476	31,051	29,338.50		27,626.00
		43,126	50,889	52,638.63		48,562

Bank Reconciliations at 30 September 2017

SANTANDER CURRENT ACCOUNT

	£
Bank Statement Balance at 30 September	1,284.29
Reconciling items	
NONE	NIL
Cash Book Balance at 30 September	<u>1,284.29</u>

UNITY TRUST CURRENT ACCOUNT

	£
Bank Statement Balance at 30 September	11,712.44
Reconciling items	
NONE	NIL
Cash Book Balance at 30 September	<u>11,712.44</u>

SANTANDER DEPOSIT ACCOUNT

	£
Bank Statement Balance at 30 September	535.11
Reconciling items	
NONE	NIL
Cash Book Balance at 30 September	<u>535.11</u>

NATIONWIDE DEPOSIT ACCOUNT

	£
Bank Statement Balance at 30 September	39,106.79
Reconciling Items	
NONE	NIL
Cash Book Balance at 30 September	<u>39,106.79</u>
Total Cash Balances at 30 September	<u>52,683.63</u>

Results from Budget Survey September 2017

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The survey was sent to households with the September issue of Voices. The deadline for survey responses was 30 September 2017. 544 surveys were circulated.

2.0 Response Statistics

2.1 56 responses (a return rate of 10.3%) were returned by the deadline.

2.2 6 of the responses were discounted as the respondents had both ticked the box to reduce the level of the precept but had also ticked boxes indicating their preferences for investment of the maintained precept level – these two options being mutually exclusive.

2.3 Of the remaining 50 responses, 4 (8%) voted for the precept to be reduced to its old level.

2.4 46 (92%) therefore voted for the precept to be retained at its current level, with varying preferences expressed for the investment of the funds thereby raised (analysed below).

3.0 Investment Preferences

3.1 The priority order of those returning the surveys were as follows (lowest score shows highest priority, calculated as average score for those registering a ranking for that item):

- 1st - children's play area (score of 1.53 – 35 votes in total)
- 2nd - traffic calming measures for Cote Road (score of 1.80 – 27 votes in total)
- 3rd - outdoor gym equipment for adults (score of 2.92 – 14 votes in total)
- 4th - floodlighting for multi use games court when built (score of 2.93 – 16 votes in total)
- 5th - replacement pavilion (score of 3.00 – 14 votes in total)
- 6th - projects chosen at Parish Council discretion (score of 3.71 – 14 votes in total)

4.0 Additional suggestions by parishioners

4.1 Parishioners listed 20 additional suggestions, with some people suggesting several, but most people suggesting none (no priority order in listing given):

- Projects to tidy up the village
- Preschool outdoor project (note that contributions towards this project would be restricted by the S137 rules)
- Traffic calming for The Square
- Tennis courts (mentioned by two respondents)
- Improve internet speed (mentioned by two respondents)
- Flashing lights for school
- Road humps on Cote Road
- New signage for Aston Stores & garage (these businesses are privately owned)
- Width limit for vehicles using Cote Road
- Protected cycle tracks
- New trees
- Better access to the current play area (wider path and road crossing point)
- Use allotments for school parking
- Bike racks

- Traffic calming for Cote crossroads (mentioned by two respondents)
- Zebra crossing for school
- Double yellow lines outside pub
- Extension to village hall for changing facilities
- Purchase land for recreational use
- Improve mobile phone coverage
- Lighting in village hall
- Secure bike parking at village hall
- Traffic calming on North Street
- Move 30mph signs on North Street further away from village
- Skate park
- Traffic calming on Bull Street

5.0 **Conclusion**

- 5.1 At 10.3% the response rate is low and the Parish Council must decide whether this is a valid indicator of the wider public view. It is to be noted, however, that all households were given the opportunity to respond and only this number chose to take up this opportunity.
- 5.2 Of the responses received, there seems to be sufficient evidence to retain the precept at its current level in order to generate further funds to enhance facilities within the parish.
- 5.3 Particularly worth bearing in mind is that the two large developments when complete and occupied will generate a significant level of funding which can be spent on sport and recreation only. This does not include wider facilities such as traffic calming; the Parish Council may wish to bear this in mind when choosing which projects to raise funds for from the increased precept.

Helen Sandhu
28 October 2017

ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD AND CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL DRAFT BUDGET 2018/19 – VERSION 1

1.0 Overview

- 1.0 A first draft of the budget for 2018/19 is attached. The precept for the year needs to be agreed at the December meeting at the latest as it must be submitted to the District Council shortly thereafter.
- 1.1 The District Council has not yet provided information on the level of the council tax support grant (introduced in 2013/14 to compensate local authorities for the impact of the localisation of the effect of council tax benefits receivable by local residents) and the council tax base for 2018/19. The council tax support grant for 2017/18 was £559 and the council tax base (the number of households across which the precept is split) was 524.65 in 2017/18. For this version of the budget it has been assumed that these figures will be unchanged in 2018/19.
- 1.2 The first draft budget shows recurrent expenditure of £20,956 and no planned one-off (project) expenditure. The total expenditure is reduced to a net of £19,806 when the non-precept income budgeted is offset against it (the grass cutting grant from Oxfordshire County Council and interest on the deposit accounts).
- 1.3 Built into the precept requirement is the usual general contingency sum of £5,000 to cover unexpected expenditure during the year and a working day-to-day balance of cash funds required to carry forward at the end of the year of £5,000. Holding a reserve of £10,000 has previously been agreed to be sufficient to give the council financial security, given its limited assets and unavoidable commitments.
- 1.4 In 2015/16 the Parish Council resolved to increase the precept by an additional £6,850 for three years to build up a recreation reserve of £32,000.00. 2017/18 was the last year of that increase. At 31 March 2018, this reserve will total £34,476 (having been inflated by the transfer of an excess day-to-day surplus from a previous year).
- 1.5 In September 2017 the Parish Council carried out a public consultation on whether the precept should be returned to the level prior to the increase referred to in 1.4 above, or whether the precept should be maintained at the higher level, with the surpluses generated to be spent on identified projects in the parish.
- 1.6 Including this increase, the total “traditional” precept (the precept for tax setting purposes combined with the council tax support grant) in 2017/18 was £26,141 (£25,582 after deducting the council tax support grant).

2.0 Reserves

- 2.1 The forecast out-turn for 2016/17 (after allowing for the transfer of £6,850 into the recreation reserve) is a surplus of £390.
- 2.2 The forecast reserves at 31 March 2018 are £55,802. This is made up of: recreation reserve £34,476, general contingency sum of £5,000 and a working day-to-day balance of £16,326. The target working day-to-day balance is £5,000. The Parish Council has additional unplanned reserves of £11,326.
- 2.3 These additional reserves have arisen from surpluses in both 2015/16 and 2016/17.

2.4 Parish Councils are not permitted to hold reserves above planned basic levels unless they are for a designated purpose. The Parish Council needs, therefore, to decide what to do with the extra reserves. These could be added to the recreation reserve (which would then be £45,802 at 31 March 2018 compared to the original target of £32,000) or be ring-fenced for another purpose – to contribute towards the Community Trust's current plans for the children's playground for example (subject to the Trust being able to meet any conditions attached to a donation) or to set aside funding for traffic calming to match the funds expected from the Gladman development(s) so that an effective measure can be installed.

2.5 Alternatively, the Parish Council could reduce the precept, but see information in 3.0 below about the potential impact of the Government's suggested extension of the referendum principle to all precepting authorities.

3.0 **The Referendum Principle**

3.1 Since 2012/13, local authorities have been required to hold a referendum to agree any increase in council tax considered to be "excessive". For 2016/17, the Government legislated that "excessive" was an increase above 2% for councils with no social care obligations and 4% for councils with social care obligations.

3.2 Since the legislation was introduced local (town and parish) councils have been exempted from its requirements. However, the Government has expressed concern over increases in smaller authority precept levels and has stated that it will keep precept levels under review. There is therefore no guarantee that smaller authorities will continue to be exempted from holding a referendum.

3.3 This could mean that were the Parish Council ever to wish to or to need to increase the precept in a future year by the greater of 2% or £5 per band D household (an estimated £2,570 for our parish), then the Parish Council would need to hold a referendum. The costs of holding a referendum would be likely to be above £2,570 and would need to be paid even if the public ultimately voted against the precept increase proposed.

3.4 Whilst the Parish Council must not agree a precept level which would generate reserves for undesignated purposes, councillors do need to be mindful of the potential for a decreased precept to increase the risk of the Parish Council needing to hold a referendum in a future year, should the precept be cut too far back.

4.0 **Detail**

4.1 Where expenditure is expected to be subject to an inflationary rise this has been allowed for at between 2% and 4% depending on the nature of the expenditure/supplier.

- 4.2 Explanations for many of the changes made to the budget when compared to the expected out-turn and budget for 2017/18 are provided on the attached spreadsheet.
- 4.3 The areas where greater clarity for the rationale behind the budget is required, or where further decisions by the Parish Council are required are covered below:
- 4.4 Clerk's Salary
Included at the existing level; the annual salary review will take place at the end of this meeting.
- 4.5 General Grass Cutting
The contract with WODC expires in 2017. The 2018/19 budget is based on any new contractor costs being capped at the current level + 4%.
- 4.6 Playing Field Grass Cutting
The contract with Des Johnston expires in 2017. The 2018/19 budget is based on any new contractor costs being capped at the current level + 4%. The contract covers a maximum number of cuts of 18 (base of 15 + 3 extra if required).
- 4.7 Grants paid under statute
This budget was reviewed in detail and updated for 2017/18. The proposed budget of £3,950 has been included at the same level as for 2017/18 and covers the following maximum grants:

Voices	£1000
Citizens Advice Bureau	£150
Community Trust – playground maintenance	£750
Aston minibus	£750
Grass cutting, Cote Chapel	£300
Grass cutting, St Mary's Shifford	£300
Grass cutting, St James' Aston	£700
	<u>£3,950</u>

- 4.8 Village Maintenance
The budget includes a round sum allowance of £1,500, payable either to a dedicated Lengthsman or for specific individual contracts for pieces of work (such as weed spraying). This continues to be significantly above the actual expenditure in recent years, and is one of the reasons why the current budget leads to a surplus – would the Parish Council like to consider reducing this budget?
- 4.9 LGA 1972 s137 Donations
The Parish Council's approach to the non-statutory donations it gives was reviewed in 2017/18. The total budget of £1,400 includes specific donations to The British Legion (£150) and Volunteer Link-Up (£135) in addition to a general donation "pot" for local organisations of £1,115. The success of this "pot" has not yet been tested (deadline for applications expires at the end of December; no applications have yet been received). For the purposes of this budget, the total has been left at the 2017/18 level.

4.10 Village Hall

The budget does not include any funds to be spent on work at the village hall (beyond the routine playground maintenance grant and the cutting of the playing field).

4.11 One-off Projects

The budget does not include any one-off projects for 2018/19. Historically the Parish Council has not always been very effective at identifying projects to include in the budget, but has then embarked on projects during the year in any case, funding these from underspends in other budget headings. It would demonstrate better financial management if the Parish Council were to identify and set aside budgets for one-off projects during the budget setting process. Councillors are therefore asked to consider potential projects for 2018/19 before the budget is finalised.

5.0 **Precept**

5.1 The net expenditure in the budget as presented is £19,806. Assuming that the District Council offers a support grant of £559 as in 2017/18, the Parish Council would need to raise £19,247 from the precept in order to create a break-even budget. This would equate to £36.69 per Band D household (using the 2017/18 council tax base).

5.2 The recent budget survey indicated that there was a willingness from the residents who responded for the precept to be kept at the level it was raised to in 2015/16 in order to generate reserves for investment in local amenities.

5.3 If the precept is retained at the current level of £25,582, the budget as presented would generate a surplus of £6,335.

5.4 As noted in 2.4 above, Parish Councils are not permitted to hold excess reserves for unplanned purposes. If the £6,335 noted above is added to the expected excess surplus of £11,326, at 31 March 2019 the Parish Council would have an additional reserve of £17,661 for which specific purposes will need to be identified.

6.0 **Recommendations**

6.1 That the Parish Council considers the draft budget as presented, proposing amendments where identified.

6.2 Specific areas for discussion

- Village maintenance budget – potential to reduce from current budget level of £1,500 (potentially to release budget for expenditure elsewhere);
- Identification of one-off projects for 2018/19;
- Consideration of creation of specific reserves for future projects, with agreed total target reserve(s) and expected timescale for the expenditure;

6.3 That the Parish Council discusses the provisional level of the precept for 2018/19.

6.4 That the Parish Council resolves to consider a second draft of the budget at the December meeting and to delay a final resolution on the precept for 2018/19 until that meeting at the earliest.

ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL
FINANCIAL YEAR 2018/19
DRAFT BUDGET FOR MEETING ON 2 NOVEMBER 2017 - VERSION 1

	Budget 2017/18	Currently expected outturn 2017/18	Draft Budget 2018/19	
EXPENDITURE				
Recurrent Expenditure				
<u>Ordinary Expenditure</u>				
Clerk's Salary	4,445	4,445	4,445	Inflationary increase to be discussed
Office equipment				No predicted requirement
Office running costs	500	400	500	As existing budget
Bank charges	72	72	72	£6 per month
Website costs	0	0		No renewals due
Insurance	432	402	422	This year actual + 5% New provider, assumed remains as prior
Audit	200	200	200	
Village Hall Rental/Cost APM	40	19	40	As existing budget
Subscriptions	362	340	362	This year + 5%
Chairman's Allowance	100	23	100	As existing budget
<u>Expenditure under Statute</u>				
Grass Cutting - verges & WM	4,961	4,236	5,220	14 cuts - prior actual +4% infl. 18 cuts - prior actual + 4% infl. See 3 November report
Grass Cutting - playing field	1,296	1,080	1,348	See 2 Nov Report
Grants paid under statute	3,950	3,755	3,950	This year + 4% infl.
Dog & Litter Bin Emptying	217	219	228	As existing
Training & Travel	220	0	220	1 unplanned call-out. Servicing in long term contract
Clock Maintenance	440	509	229	This year + 2% infl.
Bus Shelter Cleaning	110	108	110	General round budget
Repairs	500	318	500	
<u>Expenditure from "Free Resource" (S137)</u>				
Village maintenance (Lengthsman)	1,500	656	1,500	See 2 Nov Report
Subscriptions (CPRE & ORCC)	111	106	110	This year + 4%
Grants - See Separate Analysis	1,400	1,400	1,400	See 2 Nov Report
Recurrent Expenditure c/f	20,856	18,288	20,956	
Recurrent Expenditure b/f	20,856	18,288	20,956	
<u>Projects</u>				
Bench donated to CT	0	20		See 2 Nov Report
Bench at Southlands	0	385		
New Noticeboard Southlands	1,800	1,372		
VAS for Bampton Road	5,000	0		
Total Project Spend	6,800	1,777	0	
OVERALL EXPENDITURE	27,656	20,065	20,956	
OTHER INCOME				
OCC grass cutting grant	1,049	1,049	1,049	Same as this year
Interest	30	101	101	
TOTAL INCOME	1,079	1,150	1,150	
NET EXPENDITURE			19,806	
Amount to set aside for reserves			?	
Precept requirement to break even			19,806	

ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL
CONFIDENTIAL ITEM
CLERK'S PAY REVIEW - 2018/19

Redacted for reasons of confidentiality – personal data.