

**MINUTES OF ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL
MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 6TH MARCH 2014 IN THE
MEETING ROOM, VILLAGE HALL, ASTON AT 7.30 PM**

- 1. Members Present:** Roy Williams (Chairman)
Jane Everex
Richard Haines
Ben Lings (arriving at item 5)
Paul Sparrowhawk
Jane West

In Attendance: Helen Sandhu – Clerk
Hilary Fenton, West Oxfordshire District Councillor
Steve Good, West Oxfordshire District Councillor
Charles Mathew, Oxfordshire County Councillor, arriving at item 7g

Apologies: John Ordish

- 2. Minutes of previous meeting** – on 6 February 2014 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
Proposed by Richard Haines, seconded by Paul Sparrowhawk.

- 3. Parish Councillors – Disclosure of interests on agenda items**
None.

4. WODC items

Hilary Fenton & Steve Good provided an update on matters relating to the District Council. The budget for 2014/15 has been approved, with no increase in the District Council's share of the council tax, for the fourth consecutive year. There are no cuts in services, large amounts of savings have been achieved (primarily due to the increased use of shared services), and the key grants to organisations such as the Citizens Advice Bureau have been retained. West Oxfordshire District Council has the second lowest council tax out of the 101 "shires" in the country.
All the funds previously invested in the failed Icelandic banks has now been returned to the District Council, with interest.

5. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

Ben Lings arrived at the meeting.

- a) *Signage for Aston Pottery*
The invoice has been paid, with installation to take place shortly.
- b) *S106 developer funding if the Cote Road planning application is approved*
Martin Holland, WODC Officer, has been advised of the preferred use of the funding (improvement/additions to leisure amenities at the village hall site).
- c) *Post Office services in the parish*
The current postmistress is still looking at the options for retaining services within the parish.

Matters Arising from Previous Meetings (continued)

d) Request for listing of The Red Lion Pub, Aston as an Asset of Community Value

The Clerk has submitted the application to the responsible WODC officer and has supplied further information as requested by her. The owners of the pub will now be contacted. A decision will be made on the listing within 8 weeks.

e) Annual Parish Meeting 2014

The Annual Parish Meeting has been arranged for the evening of Tuesday 17 June. Jane Bowley, Project Officer, Lower Windrush Valley Project, has advised that she can attend.

It was agreed that the following additional speakers/organisations should be invited to attend the meeting and make a short presentation:

- Aston & Cote Community Trust
- Thames Valley Police
- Thames Valley & Chiltern Air Ambulance Trust
- County Council speaker about the OCC's rollout of faster speed broadband
- West Oxfordshire District Councillor
- Oxfordshire County Councillor
- Brownies (Paul Sparrowhawk to invite)
- Headmistress of Aston & Cote Primary School if there are any new items she would like to present to the public

f) Anti Social Behaviour

Ben Lings said that people have asked him to raise the issue of the problem of dog waste fouling. It was observed that this is a continual problem, and it is very hard to know how to resolve it.

Jane West informed the Parish Council that people riding mini-motorbikes are causing problems in Chimney. She was advised to contact Thames Valley Police direct on this issue.

6. Correspondence sent

Listed in the Clerk's Briefing Notes previously circulated to all Councillors.

7. New Business

a) Environment Agency proposed "Western Conveyance Channel" and related work to increase "upstream flood water storage"

Councillors were reminded that the Environment Agency consulted on these proposals in spring 2009 and attended the Annual Parish Meeting in May of that year. The Western Conveyance Channel would be a new man-made watercourse constructed in Oxford to link together parts of the existing river system between Botley and Sandford, which would be constructed with the aim of improving the flood flows through the floodplains to the west of Oxford, reducing the risk of flooding in Oxford. When the Environment Agency consulted on these proposals, there was also a potential extension to the flood prevention work which would involve using the (non-residential) land between Newbridge and the villages of Aston, Cote and Yelford as "upstream flood water storage."

There has been no funding to construct either of these proposals, but the recent flooding and the Government's state commitment to the provision of more funding to improve flood protection for residential properties, means that the construction of the proposed Channel has been revisited.

New Business (continued)

Roy Williams told the Parish Council that Charles Mathew has contacted him about this issue and has indicated that he will be happy to represent the parish's interests in discussions at County level, and will keep the Parish Council informed.

Steve Good told the Parish Council that he represents West Oxfordshire District Council on the River Thames Alliance, where he will be able to provide any input which would help ensure that the parish's interests are taken into account. He advised that West Oxfordshire District Council is in discussion with the Environment Agency in relation to flooding issues in the district.

- b) *Donation request for cost of grass cutting at Cote Chapel from Historic Chapels Trust*
It was resolved to provide a donation of £300, being the amount included in the budget for 2013/14. Proposed by Paul Sparrowhawk, seconded by Richard Haines.
- c) *Request for a donation towards the visit from the Life Education Bus from Aston & Cote Primary School*
It was resolved that the Council, in accordance with its powers under sections 137 and 139 of the Local Government Act 1972, would pay a donation of £450.00 to Aston & Cote Primary School towards the cost of the visit of the Life Education Bus. This is, in the opinion of the Council, in the interests of the inhabitants of the Parish and will benefit them in a manner commensurate with the expenditure. Proposed by Roy Williams, seconded by Jane Everex.
- d) *Litter blitz*
Bob Jones has informed the Parish Council that he is organising a community litter blitz to run between 7 and 19 April. He is making the necessary arrangements with WODC for the equipment required and the rubbish collection.
- e) *Annual review of the Parish Council's risk assessment*
The draft risk assessment and a report thereon by the Clerk had been circulated in the Briefing Notes. The Clerk advised that she is proposing amendments to the existing risk assessment to incorporate a reference to the Parish Council Twitter account under the section on Public Involvement, and reference to the loss/damage insurance now in place for the bus shelters. It was resolved to adopt these proposed amendments.
- Richard Haines expressed the view that, whilst the risk assessment states that all official communication with the media should be channelled through the Chairman, the Government's new draft regulations in relation to the openness of local government bodies will mean that anyone attending a Parish Council meeting could provide data direct to the media. Whilst it was acknowledged that this would be the case, it was confirmed that all official communication should continue to be channelled through the Chairman, as stated in the Council's Media Policy, with no changes to be made to the risk assessment.
- It was resolved to approve the revised risk assessment – proposed by Paul Sparrowhawk, seconded by Jane West.
- f) *Oxfordshire County Council's consultation on the new draft Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Core Strategy*
The draft strategy was put in the folder for circulation amongst Councillors, with the Parish Council's response to be agreed at the April meeting.

New Business (continued)

g) Oxfordshire County Council consultation on its draft Rights of Way Management Plan (RoWMP)

The consultation document was put in the folder for circulation amongst Councillors, with the Parish Council's response to be agreed at the April meeting.

Charles Mathew arrived at the meeting.

h) Draft regulations: Openness of Local Government Bodies

Richard Haines informed the Parish Council that the new draft regulations still enable a council meeting to be closed to members of the public and the media for the discussion of matters which are deemed to be confidential.

It was resolved that the Parish Council would not respond to this consultation.

i) Community Information Network Partnership

Funded by the County Council, Age UK is about to launch a new service which will provide support to older people across the county by ensuring that they have access to information to help them to live well and independently. There will be a meeting to introduce the partnership in the Witney Methodist Church on Thursday 3 April.

The Clerk was asked to give a copy of the information about the partnership and the initial meeting to a representative of the Wednesday Club, in case they would find it interesting to attend the meeting.

8. OCC items

The Parish Council asked Charles Mathew about the current status of the proposed Western Conveyance Channel discussed earlier in the meeting at item 7a. Mr Mathew informed the Parish Council that he had attended the Flood Forum on 1 March run by the County Council in Oxford. The Environment Agency and MPs seem to be backing the proposed channel as a potential solution to Oxford's flooding problem. The channel is estimated to cost £123 million, and there is no information yet on timescales for its construction, if it is approved. Mr Mathew was asked about the status of the proposals to use the land in the parish as "upstream flood water storage." Mr Mathew advised that this aspect of the proposals is considered to be too expensive to progress at present.

Mr Mathew was then asked whether he had anything he would like to add to the views he has previously shared on the County Council's new draft Minerals and Waste Core Strategy. Mr Mathew advised that he has organised a meeting for 28 March in Eynsham at which the Strategy will be discussed and he encouraged people to attend this meeting so that the views of the local area could continue to be clearly represented to the County Council.

9. Parish Infrastructure

a) Block work and kerbing around the war memorial

The Clerk informed the Parish Council that she had requested a quotation and proposal for work to deal with issues at the site from Gordon Hill & Sons Ltd. Gordon Hill has suggested that it would be beneficial to dig three test holes at the location to assess the substructure, for a sum of £730 + VAT.

A letter has been sent to Southern Construction advising that a two year warranty is required by Oxfordshire Highways – no response yet received.

It was resolved that the Clerk should contact Oxfordshire Highways to request that they provide a specification and quotation for carrying out remedial work at the location, particularly in the light of the fact that the land is owned by Highways.

Parish Infrastructure (continued)

b) Wooden posts around the war memorial – chain fixings

The fixings have been installed. Oxfordshire Highways has agreed to fund the cost of this work; which had been arranged due to the support of Charles Mathew.

c) Cote village information sign

It was resolved to order five self-adhesive patches (three for the 'phone box and two for the crossroads sign) for a sum of £30 + VAT. Proposed by Paul Sparrowhawk, seconded by Jane Everex.

d) Road into Chimney

The road into Chimney will be closed for 2 days from 17 March so that Highways can overlay the five poorest sections of the road.

e) Road closure signs (for flooding) Great Brook Road

Various ways to better inform the public that the road is closed due to flooding were discussed. It was resolved to ask Highways whether it would be possible to install signs stating "road liable to flooding" at both ends of the road.

10. PLANNING

WODC Local Development Framework

It was noted that the new Strategic Housing Market Assessment being prepared for Oxfordshire was going to be published in January 2014, but has been delayed.

The draft new Local Development Framework cannot be published for consultation until the SHMA is complete.

Planning applications granted

13/1709/P/FP 49 Cote Road, Aston
Erection of single storey rear extension

14/0025/P/FP 3 Home Farm Cottages, Back Lane, Aston
Change of use of land from agricultural to domestic garden

Follow-up to previous planning applications

13/1494/P/OP Land between Saxel Close and Village Hall, Cote Road, Aston
Thames Water has now responded to the WODC consultation – they require a "drainage strategy to be paid for by the developer to identify what needs to be done to upgrade the waste water system, and have no objections on surface water or water pressure grounds."

The application may go to the Lowlands Planning Committee on 17 March.

Planning application in neighbouring parish with potential impact on our parish

13/1465/P/OP Land to north of New Road, Bampton
Erection of residential development of up to 160 dwellings

The Lowlands Planning Committee resolved at its meeting on 17 February to delay a decision on this application until a site visit has taken place.

11. Finance

a) *Account Balances – circulated in the Clerk’s Briefing Notes*

Balance on Current Account at 28 February 2014 £ 2,220.10
 Balance on Deposit Account at 28 February 2014 £16,640.09

b) *Statement of Internal Control and Annual Review of Effectiveness of Internal Control*

In order to assist the Parish Council with their annual review of the effectiveness of the internal control system the Clerk had recirculated the Parish Council’s Statement of Internal Control in the Clerk’s Briefing Notes.

The Parish Council resolved to readopt this Statement and members confirmed that they are satisfied with the internal control procedures being followed – proposed by Jane West, seconded by Richard Haines.

c) *February invoices presented for approval and payment*

		Statute
Clerk’s salary and working from home allowance	346.00	LGA 1972, s112
Clerk’s expenses – printing – 101 sheets @ 5p	5.05	LGA 1972 s111
W R Hall & Son – metal plates for war memorial posts	336.00	WM (LAP) Act 1923 s1 &3
Margaret Johnson Ltd – printing (including 520 copies of amenities survey)	49.63	LGA 1972 s111
A J Mitchell – bus shelter clean in February	25.00	LG(MP)A 1953, s4
West Oxfordshire District Council – emptying of dog bin in February	19.91	Litter Act 1983
Information Commissioner – renewal of Data Protection registration	35.00	LGA 1972 s111
Aston & Cote Primary School – donation towards visit of Life Education Bus	450.00	LGA 1972 s137
The Historic Chapels Trust – grant towards grass cutting	300.00	LGA 1972, s214
Total	£1,556.59	

It was resolved to make the above payments, proposed by Richard Haines, seconded by Jane West. The cheques were signed by Roy Williams and Richard Haines.

12. Date of next meeting: Thursday 3 April 2014, 7.30pm
 Monthly meeting of Parish Council

Signeddated.....