

**MINUTES OF ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL  
MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2014 IN THE  
MEETING ROOM, VILLAGE HALL, ASTON AT 7.30 PM**

**1. Members**                 **Richard Haines (Chairman)**  
**Present:**                 **John Ordish**  
                                  **Paul Sparrowhawk**  
                                  **Jane West**  
                                  **Phil West**

**In Attendance:**   Helen Sandhu – Clerk  
                          Hilary Fenton, West Oxfordshire District Councillor  
                          Henry Chopping and Philip Chopping from Oxford Homes (for item 2)  
                          Jon Westerman, planning consultant advising Oxford Homes (for item 2)  
                          3 members of the public

**Apologies:**         Jane Everex  
                          Ben Lings

**2. Presentation by Henry Chopping of Oxford Homes on proposed redevelopment of North Street Farm**

Mr Chopping told the Parish Council that Oxford Homes is a family-run business which was established 12 years ago and specialises in residential developments in and around Oxfordshire. The business focuses on high quality new-build and also has extensive experience in building conversions, including of listing buildings, and of working in conservation areas.

Mr Chopping went on to talk about the proposals for the redevelopment of the North Street Farm site – the intention is to retain the original stone farmhouse (demolishing the attached cottage) and to convert the two stone barns on the site into detached dwellings. A further four new dwellings (two detached and two semi-detached) will be built. The more modern farm buildings will be demolished. The current plans were created after significant pre-application input from WODC, including from the conservation officer. The design and layout of the site has been drawn up with the aim of creating attractive views from all approaches.

Richard Haines told the representatives from Oxford Homes that the Parish Council would give a formal comment on the planning application through the WODC planning process, but that the key issues that the Parish Council is keen to see addressed in all planning applications cover: access, parking, sewerage (due to existing problems throughout the area), affordable housing and s106 funding.

The representatives from Oxford Homes left the meeting.

**3. Minutes of previous meeting** – on 7 August 2014 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Proposed by Jane West, seconded by Paul Sparrowhawk.

**4. Parish Councillors – Disclosure of interests on agenda items**

None.

## 5. Open session for public debate

One of the members of the public present asked for an update on the planning application for Thistle Cottage. Richard Haines, who had attended the Lowlands Planning Committee meeting at which the application had been considered, told her that it had been refused by WODC, and outlined the reasons why.

## 6. OCC/WODC Items

Hilary Fenton told the Parish Council that the draft Local Plan is now out for consultation. The District Council is working to ensure that the Local Plan is completed and adopted as soon as possible, as the district is seeing a significant volume of speculative developments in the absence of a current Local Plan.

## 7. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

### a) *Second community defibrillator*

Paul Sparrowhawk told the Parish Council that Dick Tracey (South Central Ambulance Service) has checked the defibrillator which he had received, and has confirmed that it is fine for use. A former resident of Aston has offered to supply the box and to run training courses for free. John Ordish told the Parish Council that he is shortly going to be meeting with the electrician who will be able to advise on the placing of the defibrillator and the cost of the electrical installation. It was resolved that the Parish Council would meet the cost of the electrical work.

### b) *Central Aston post box*

The Parish Council's suggested preferred new location has been forwarded to Royal Mail who will now commence the process of investigating its suitability from a technical and safety view point. In response to the Parish Council's request that the relocation be undertaken as a matter of urgency, Royal Mail advises that the required protocols and governance which must be followed can take up to 38 weeks.

### c) *Replacement post office service in Aston*

The response of the Parish Council to the consultation has been forwarded to The Post Office and acknowledged by them.

### d) *Public collection for retiring Postmistress*

The arrangements for giving the gift bought from funds donated by the public were agreed.

### e) *Thames Water information request*

The Clerk told the Parish Council that despite chasing, Thames Water has not supplied any information on infrastructure capacities. Richard Haines said that it appeared that there had been problems with foul water drainage in the centre of Aston in the past week. Hilary Fenton said that she would be very keen to hear of any specific incidents which will help WODC to bring pressure on Thames Water. It was suggested that Mrs Fenton should include a request for information in her next Voices piece, and it was also agreed that this information should be put on the website and on the Twitter page.

### f) *Anti-social behaviour*

John Ordish told the Parish Council that it appears that someone tried to light a fire on the Square in Aston, which he had cleared up. No-one knew who had done this, nor why.

## 8. New Business

### a) *Annual Parish Meeting on 17 June 2014*

The draft minutes (for approval at next year's APM) had been circulated in advance of the meeting. There had been no issues requiring the Parish Council's consideration. It was noted that the APM had been poorly attended. It was agreed that the Parish Council should consider what more could be done to encourage people to come before next year's meeting. It was also agreed that more efforts need to be made to advertise the meeting, possibly by putting a banner on the hedge outside the village hall/outside the shop or The Red Lion?

### b) *Community Led/Neighbourhood Planning*

The benefits of having a community plan were discussed. It was agreed that if any plan is created, a community plan would be more appropriate than a formal neighbourhood plan. It was agreed that the Parish Council would consider this issue further in advance of the Annual Parish Meeting next year, with a view to introducing the idea and gauging community support at the Annual Parish Meeting.

### c) *Consultation on the draft local plan for West Oxfordshire*

The draft local plan had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

It was resolved that the Parish Council would repeat many of the comments given to WODC when the previous draft was subject to consultation in December 2012:

- Observation that the document is very broad-brush
- Concern that there is inadequate detail on the assessment of flood risk arising from the large new potential sites for development identified. Comment that if the potential large development in Carterton increases the flood risk, this will impact significantly on many local communities, including Brize Norton and Bampton as well as our parish.
- Ongoing concern about the inadequacy of the infrastructure, particularly the road system, to cope with significant additional housing - congestion of the A40 will be made worse by large new developments; acknowledgement that this is not the direct responsibility of West Oxfordshire District Council, but request that more is done on this issue. Observation that building new junctions on the A40 does not increase its traffic capacity.
- Concerns about the ability of the sewerage system to cope with significant additional development, given the volume of the problems which already exist

### d) *Filming and recording of public meetings*

The Government has now approved the Regulations which permit the recording and filming of public meetings. The agenda has been updated to include a note relating to this for the public's information (using the WODC wording). It was resolved that the Parish Council would adopt the same protocol as adopted by the District Council, and that a notice informing the public would be displayed on the table during Parish Council meetings.

The new regulations require the Parish Council to suspend Standing Order 3I which states "Photographing, recording, broadcasting or transmitting the proceedings of a meeting by any means is not permitted without the Council's prior written consent." It was resolved to suspend this Standing Order, with a draft replacement Standing Order to be considered by the Parish Council at the October meeting.

### e) *Donation request from West Oxfordshire Citizens Advice Bureau*

It was resolved to give a donation of £120. Proposed by Jane West, seconded by John Ordish.

### **New Business (continued)**

*f) Proposed new sports pavilion and sports facilities for the parish*

John Ordish told the Parish Council that it is still very unclear what will be constructed, which means that it is also unclear what funds will be required and where they will be sourced from. It was agreed that the Parish Council is supportive in principle to the idea of developing more sports and recreation facilities at the village hall, although the Parish Council will not be able to consider what practical and financial support it could offer until the Community Trust's plans are more clear.

*g) Application for a premises licence for Aston Pottery*

It was resolved that the Parish Council would object to the application as it stands as it would permit any number of events to take place throughout the year, both inside and outside, up to 11pm on Sunday to Thursday, and 12am on Friday and Saturday. The District Council will be informed that the Parish Council would be concerned about the potential detrimental impact on residents living in the vicinity of the Pottery if the application is approved. It was resolved that the District Council would be advised that the Parish Council considers it to be more appropriate for occasional entertainment events to be licensed through the temporary events notice system.

It was resolved that the Parish Council would be supportive of the Pottery having a licence to sell alcohol with food for consumption on the premises and for consumption off the premises during the existing opening hours.

*h) West Oxfordshire District Council Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places*

There are no changes proposed for the parish. It was resolved that the Parish Council would not respond to this review.

*i) Changes to WODC planning process*

WODC has advised that they are switching to online applications only, and that parish and town councils will no longer be sent a printed copy of the application. It was resolved that the Parish Council would challenge the lack of consultation on the proposed changes and raise concerns over the financial impact on local councils – will WODC offer support with the cost of the new equipment required?

Hilary Fenton said that she would raise the issue with the Lowlands Planning Committee.

### **9. Community Trust**

As usual there was no meeting in August. John Ordish advised that the committee of the Community Trust is still unsure what to do about the continued unauthorised camping on the recreation grounds, and what procedures could be used to resolve the situation.

### **10. Parish Infrastructure**

*a) Village maintenance*

Des Johnston hasn't yet carried out the weed spraying. It was resolved that he should be asked to include an area at the entrance of Bull Street where some weed growth is obscuring the surface water drain.

*b) Block work and kerbing around the war memorial*

- Highways has provided a quotation to "break out 18m<sup>2</sup> of granite paving and set aside for reuse, replace sub base with lean mix and relay paving and grout in joints" in the sum of £5,099.14.
- The Clerk has queried whether this will make the area fit for purpose as it is just redoing what has already been done twice (and failed twice) and the Clerk has also asked whether Highways will take the responsibility for the future maintenance of the

whole area back over if this work is done. No response yet received – Clerk will continue to chase.

c) *Cote chapel churchyard*

A response to the Parish Council's letter about the maintenance of the churchyard had been received from Historic Chapels Trust (HCT). Further complaints have been received from residents about the condition of the churchyard.

Richard Haines attended the meeting of the Local Support Group on 28 August and provided a report on this meeting – the members of the local group are also dissatisfied with the current grass cutting regime and fed this back to HCT. HCT has now agreed to revert to regular grass cutting, but would like to look at ways of moving towards a reduced cutting, wildflower-friendly, regime using a more staged approach and with local consultation. The local group has requested that a member of the Parish Council becomes a member of their committee. Jane Everex has indicated that she would be happy to carry out this role, and it was resolved that she should be nominated to join the committee as the Parish Council's representative.

It was resolved that the Clerk would write to HCT seeking direct confirmation that the grass will now be cut regularly and to advise that Jane Everex has been nominated to join the local support group. It was further resolved that the Parish Council will seek to engage with HCT at the end of 2014 to discuss the approach to grass cutting in 2015.

d) *A415 bridge at Newbridge*

Richard Haines told the Parish Council that Graham Shelton, the chairman of Nortmoor Parish Council, has recently met with Oxfordshire Trading Standards who advise that they are looking into prosecuting 9 of the 20 drivers who were recorded as going over Newbridge in breach of the weight limit during the survey carried out in July. There is nothing to report on the intended improvements to the monitoring technology.

e) *"Walkabout" with Oxfordshire Highways*

Richard, John and Phil will represent the Parish Council. Clerk to liaise with them and the County to agree a date. It was agreed that the "walkabout" should include Aston Square and the poor wooden railing installed next to Chimney Bridge.

f) *Replacement of remaining wooden posts on war memorial green*

There are 7 old posts. One of these is in an unusual position between the path and the war memorial, and there was some discussion about whether it should just be removed. John Ordish said that he thinks that the primary school may have buried a time capsule on this land on the millennium, and there was a query about whether the "odd" post marks the site. It was resolved that the Clerk would seek more information from the school. It was resolved that the Clerk would request a quotation for the replacement of the posts from MTS fencing who replaced the other posts, with a preference for the work to be carried out before Remembrance Sunday.

g) *Bids for highways maintenance budget controlled by Charles Mathew*

It was resolved to ask Charles Mathew whether he could make a contribution towards the cost of the posts or the cost of the remedial work in The Square.

h) *Repositioning of bench on war memorial green*

John Ordish proposed that the bench be turned around so that it faces the war memorial. Paul Sparrowhawk said that this may not be acceptable on health and safety grounds as people using the bench would have their back to oncoming traffic. The Clerk will ask Highways whether this would be an issue.

## 11. PLANNING

### Planning applications granted

- 14/0885/P/FP 47 Cote Road  
Erection of two storey, first floor and single storey rear extensions
- 14/0965/P/FP 1 Cote Road, Aston  
Erection of a first floor rear extension  
The applicant withdrew the proposed front extension from the original application

## 12. Finance

### a) Account Balances – circulated in the Clerk's Briefing Notes

Balance on Current Account at 31 August 2014	£ 4,666.87
Balance on Deposit Account at 31 August 2014	£16,722.78

### b) Bank reconciliations at 30 June 2014

Circulated in the Clerk's Briefing Notes – noted.

### c) Receipts & payments account to 30 June 2014

Circulated in the Clerk's Briefing Notes – noted.

### d) Annual return for 2013/14

The Clerk informed the Parish Council that the audited return has now been received from the external auditors, BDO Stoy Hayward LLP. The Audit Report is unqualified and no "Issues Arising" report has been issued. The audited Annual Return was approved and accepted by the Council – proposed by John Ordish, seconded by Jane West.

### e) Santander deposit account interest rate

Santander has written to advise that it is reducing the interest rate on the deposit account to 0.45% (from 1.00%) from October 2014.

### f) August invoices presented for approval and payment

		Statute
Clerk's salary and working from home allowance	355.80	LGA 1972, s112
Clerk's expenses – printing – 103 sheets @ 5p & travel to SLCC conference – 50 miles @ 45p	27.65	LGA 1972 s111
SLCC Enterprises Ltd (new Practitioners' Guide)	23.00	LGA 1972 s111
Margaret Johnson Ltd – stationery & copying	11.79	LGA 1972 s111
A J Mitchell – bus shelter clean in August	25.00	LG(MP)A 1953, s4
West Oxfordshire District Council – two grass cuts in July (9 invoiced in year to date)	729.14	HA 1980, s116
West Oxfordshire District Council – emptying of dog bin in September	20.40	Litter Act 1983
Des Johnston – 4 cuts of playing field	224.00	LG(MP)A 1976, s19
West Oxfordshire Citizens Advice Bureau - donation	120.00	LGA 1972, s142
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,536.78</b>	

It was resolved to make the above payments, proposed by Paul Sparrowhawk, seconded by Jane West. The cheques were signed by Richard Haines and John Ordish.

**13. Items for next meeting**

An Aston resident is going to be celebrating her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in October. It was agreed to discuss whether the Parish Council should send her a card/gift at the October meeting.

**14. Date of next meeting:**

**Thursday 2 October 2014, 7.30pm**

Monthly Parish Council Meeting

Richard Haines gave his apologies for this meeting

Signed .....dated.....