

**MINUTES OF ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD & CHIMNEY PARISH COUNCIL  
MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2015 IN THE  
MEETING ROOM, VILLAGE HALL, ASTON AT 7.30 PM**

**1. Members**                    **Richard Haines (Chairman)**

**Present:**                    **Jane Everex**  
                                     **Ben Lings**  
                                     **Paul Sparrowhawk**  
                                     **Jane West**  
                                     **Phil West**

**In Attendance:**    Helen Sandhu – Clerk  
                                     Steve Good, West Oxfordshire District Councillor  
                                     Charles Mathew, Oxfordshire County Councillor  
                                     7 members of the public

**Apologies:**                John Ordish

**2. Meeting open for public debate**

6 of the members of the public present raised the issue of the potential sale of the Red Lion public house. The Parish Council had recently been informed that the owners have started the process to potentially sell it as a non-going concern, triggering the right-to-bid process as it is listed as a community asset.

It was explained that people interested in seeing the pub retained as a going concern have two options; a bid could be put together to buy the pub via the normal commercial purchase process; or a community bid could be submitted, using the right-to-bid process. Under the right-to-bid legislation, the community can request a six month moratorium on the sale of the pub as a non-going concern, giving the community time to put together a bid for consideration by the owner of the pub. The legislation restricts the purchase of a community asset under the right-to-bid legislation to certain types of legal vehicle, which would mean that the “asset” (the pub) would have to be retained as a community asset, and any profits it would generate would not be available for distribution to the people who had funded its purchase. If people are interested in buying the pub as a commercial concern, which would enable them to benefit from any profits it would make, they could do this at any point during the process. If the owner receives an acceptable offer from someone wanting to buy the pub and continue to run it as a public house, then the right-to-bid process would stop, and the sale would be able to go through in the usual way.

It was further explained that if someone buys the pub intending to run it as a going concern, but then wants to change its use (for example to a residential property), this would require planning permission, which is not easy to obtain if it is the last remaining pub in a community. The owners would need to robustly demonstrate that the pub is not viable.

The current landlord of the Red Lion was present at the meeting and expressed his confidence in the commercial viability of the pub as a freehouse. He said that he has already received offers of funding from several people who would be interested in ensuring that the pub is purchased and retained as a going concern.

Richard Haines asked the members of the public present if they would want the Parish Council to request that the six month sale moratorium is triggered (which would prevent the sale of the pub as a non-going concern during that period) to enable them to work to pull

together a proposal to purchase the pub and retain it as a community asset. The members of the public present confirmed that they would like the Parish Council to do so, and two of them agreed to lead the process. Richard Haines informed them that the Parish Council would not be able to get involved in the bid and would not be able to put funding into the proposed purchase.

Six members of the public left the meeting.

- 3. Minutes of previous meeting** – on 5 March 2015 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.  
Proposed by Paul Sparrowhawk, seconded by Jane Everex.

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

- 5. District and County Council matters**

Charles Mathew reminded the meeting that he is always available to help with any queries relating to County Council matters.

Mr Mathew informed the meeting that the County Council had resolved at a meeting on 24 March 2015 to approve the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Core Strategy and its submission to the Secretary of State for independent examination. Mr Mathew informed the Parish Council that he was one of a number of councillors who had voted against the motion. He and twenty-two other councillors had proposed a motion to defer approval of the Strategy until further consultation had been carried out on the methodology used to determine the volumes of minerals required.

Mr Mathew explained that his continued concern is that the methodology used to determine the volume of minerals required is materially wrong, and significantly overstates the true requirements. The National Planning Policy Framework refers to the use of a 10 year rolling average for the calculation of a minerals strategy. For Oxfordshire, this would be 702,000 tonnes of sand and gravel, which is itself 75% higher than the most recent annual extraction figure, which in turn is 285% lower than the figure the County Council has included in the Core Strategy, which is 1.15 million tonnes.

Mr Mathew's other concern with the Strategy is that it refers to public consultations that were carried out, but during the consultation process the extraction figures referred to were the old seven year rolling averages, and not the figure which has ultimately been included in the Core Strategy.

Mr Mathew explained that the reason this matters is that the County Council is required to maintain a seven year land bank (of permissions granted) for the extraction volume included in the Strategy. If the volume is unreasonably high, then the amount of land required is (unreasonably) increased proportionately. The current situation puts the control very much in the hands of the mineral extracting companies.

Whilst it is clear that minerals will be needed to meet construction needs, it is important that they are extracted from the closest source possible to where they will be required.

The Core Strategy refers to a 50/50 split of extraction between the north and the south of the Thames. Mr Mathew said that this still won't fairly reflect where construction will take place, and does not acknowledge the heavy historic burden of extraction on the north of the Thames, but it is an improvement over the 75/25 historic split.

The Core Strategy will now be examined by the Secretary of State. Mr Mathew said that he thinks it very likely that the Strategy will not be passed by the inspector, and the County Council will then have to start the process again. This will further increase the amount of time that the County is operating without a valid current strategy, which strengthens the arm of the extraction companies.

Mr Mathew left the meeting.

Steve Good said that there was no significant news from the District Council. He did, however, express concern about the deteriorating condition of the road between Aston and the A415 (the "Aston mile").

Mr Good left the meeting.

## **6. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings**

### *a) Second community defibrillator*

This has now been installed, and John Ordish will be ensuring that South Central Ambulance Service is informed.

### *b) Central Aston post box*

Richard Haines and John Ordish met with a representative (Steve Davis) from Royal Mail on 10 March. Mr Davis apologised again for Royal Mail's delay in processing the move of the box, and the current plan is to move the existing box (providing it can be reused) to the land at the corner of Cote Road and Bull Street. Royal Mail first need to identify who owns this land (it is not highways verge). If the existing box can't be reused, Royal Mail may install a lamp-style post box instead (smaller box on a post).

### *c) BT payphone at entrance to Ham Lane*

BT has informed Oxfordshire Highways that they would not be prepared to fund the replacement of the payphone kiosk with an alternative model which would have a smaller impact on the visual splay. As the Parish Council considers that the alternative solution suggested by Highways (the relocation of the give way markings at the Ham Lane exit and the central line of the main road ) could cause greater problems on the main road through the village, it was resolved that the Parish Council would not pursue the suggestion by Highways at this point in time.

### *d) Half yearly review of external Parish Council assets*

Completed by John Ordish on 6 March. Work to be scheduled for spring/summer – painting/staining of bench on war memorial green (once it has been turned round), the VE/VJ seat on the playing field and the Parish Council notice board. The backboards on the noticeboard also need to be replaced – the Clerk will obtain a quotation from the supplier. The Clerk was asked to request a quotation from Oddjobs for the staining/painting required.

### *e) Cote Baptist Chapel – grass cutting regime*

The Historic Chapels Trust (HCT) has written to inform the Parish Council that they have now appointed a contractor who will cut the grass at the front of the chapel four times during the season, with HCT electing to restrict the number of cuts to match the level of grant funding available from the Parish Council.

### *f) Connecting Oxfordshire – Local Transport Plan 2015- 2031 – Oxfordshire County Council consultation*

The Clerk informed the councillors that she had submitted a response from the Parish Council to the consultation, with the focus of the response on the Parish Council's concerns about the current problems of congestion on the A40, which will be exacerbated by increased housing development.

**Matters Arising from Previous Meetings (continued)**

*g) Community Information Network*

Information provided by Age UK on this scheme was put in the folder for circulation amongst councillors.

*h) Cumulative impact of small developments on rural communities*

The response from Giles Hughes, the Head of Planning & Sustainable Housing at WODC was put in the folder for councillors' information.

*i) Annual Parish Meeting – 19 May 2015*

Paul Sparrowhawk informed the Parish Council that the Community Trust will not be making a presentation about the status of the Sport Aston proposals, as these are still in the very early stages of development.

Charles Mathew has been invited to give a report on matters pertaining to the County Council and either Steve Good or Hilary Fenton will give a report on matters relating to the District Council.

The neighbourhood police team will be invited to attend and give a presentation.

Richard Haines will provide an update on Parish Council matters, including the proposed new housing developments within Aston.

*j) New Annual Parish Banner*

It was resolved that the Clerk would order a new banner, at a maximum cost of £150.

*k) Anti Social Behaviour*

The resident who reported concerns about the manner in which a tractor had been driven on Cote Road outside school during an afternoon in March has been in contact with the neighbourhood police team. The team has attended one time on site at 8.45am on a school day morning. As requested, the Clerk has also expressed the Parish Council's concerns to the neighbourhood team.

There have been new incidents of under-age young people driving unlicensed motorised vehicles on the highway in Aston. The neighbourhood police team has been informed.

**7. New Business**

*a) The Red Lion – community right to bid for community asset*

Following the discussion during the public part of the meeting, and given the expression of interest by the members of the public present in putting together a bid to buy the Red Lion, it was resolved that the Parish Council would request that the District Council triggers the six-month sale moratorium.

*b) West Oxfordshire Local Plan*

A copy of the pre-submission draft of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan and the draft charging schedule for the district's Community Infrastructure Levy were placed in the folder for circulation amongst the councillors.

The Parish Council will resolve whether to respond to this statutory consultation (on certain specified matters only) at the meeting on 7 May.

*c) Annual renewal of membership of OALC*

It was resolved to renew this membership at a cost of £192.39 net – proposed by Jane West, seconded by Phil West.

**New Business (continued)**

*d) Annual renew of membership of ORCC*

It was resolved to renew this membership at a cost of £65.00 – proposed by Jane West, seconded by Jane Everex.

*e) Renewal of membership of CPRE*

It was resolved that the Council, in accordance with its powers under sections 137 and 139 of the Local Government Act 1972, would renew its membership of Campaign to Protect Rural England at a cost of £36 for 2015/16. 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 Paul Sparrowhawk, seconded by Jane West.

*f) Donation for grass cutting – request from St Mary’s Church, Shifford*

It was resolved to pay the requested donation of £210. Proposed by Paul Sparrowhawk, seconded by Jane Everex.

*g) Donation for playground maintenance – request from Aston & Cote Community Trust*

It was resolved to pay the requested donation of £630 – proposed by Ben Lings and seconded by Jane West.

There was a discussion about the condition of the playgrounds and questions about the Community Trust’s longer term plans for the improvement and relocation of the younger children’s play area. The Clerk was asked to write to the Community Trust to ask what maintenance and improvement plans there are for the playgrounds for this year on which the Parish Council’s donation will be spent, and what the longer term plans are, particularly if the Sport Aston project is not able to proceed soon.

*h) Councillors’ Travelling Allowances Scheme*

A report on the renewal of the scheme had been circulated in the Clerk’s Briefing Notes.

It was resolved to readopt the scheme – proposed by Jane West, seconded by Paul Sparrowhawk.

**8. Community Trust**

Paul Sparrowhawk informed the Parish Council that the Sport Aston committee had recently met with the West Oxfordshire District Council officer responsible for leisure and sport. He had been pessimistic about the ability of the project to attract significant grant funding, as most funders are currently seeking to target areas of deprivation.

**9. Parish Infrastructure**

*a) Village maintenance*

It was agreed that the Parish Council would seek quotations for weedspraying the main roads through Aston. The Clerk will prepare a specification and send it to three potential contractors.

*b) Contract for grounds maintenance with WODC*

WODC has written to advise that from 1 April 2015, the grounds maintenance and other contracts will be run by a local authority owned company called Ubico Ltd, rather than by WODC direct. The existing staff of WODC have been transferred into the new organisation.

**Parish Infrastructure (continued)**

- c) *Repositioning of bench on war memorial green*  
The Parish Council resolved at the meeting on 2 October that this bench should be turned round - John Ordish and Paul Sparrowhawk are dealing with this.
- d) *Damaged sign at turn of Chimney and Cote*  
Reported to Highways who are seeking a quotation for the replacement.
- e) *Damaged wooden sign at Isle of Wight bridge turn (from Bampton-Buckland Road)*  
Reported to Highways. Highways are consideration replacing it with a standard-style sign and have asked whether this would be a concern to the Parish Council. Councillors confirmed that this would be acceptable, but Highways to be advised that it is not, in fact, in our parish.
- f) *Potholes across the parish*  
With the help of John Ordish, 17 potholes in the parish were identified during March and reported to Highways. They have now mostly been marked up for repair. In addition to this, the Clerk has reported damage to the granite kerb stones at the junction of Bull Street and Southlands, and the broken wooden fencing on the culvert adjacent to Chimney Bridge.
- g) *Bus shelter cleaning*  
The contractor has advised that the price for cleaning the bus shelters will increase by £2 to £27 per clean from April 2015. The Parish Council accepted the increase.
- h) *Remedial works on culvert on Great Brook Road*  
Scheduled to start on 13 April, with a road closure for approximately 5 days.
- i) *Litter*  
The Parish Council has been contacted by two local residents with concerns about specific areas in the parish:
- One resident has commented on the litter on the verges on the road into Aston from Bampton and the broken branches, stating that it gives a poor first impression of the village. She has also expressed concern about the litter and weeds on the path outside Kingsway cottages. The Clerk has contacted WODC who litter-pick roadside verges and asked them to attend to the B4449 between Aston & Bampton. The community litter pick will shortly be taking place, and the Parish Council will be seeking quotations for weed spraying, as Highways has not undertaken this work for several years.
  - A resident has asked whether the Parish Council can do anything about the condition of the private open space on Woodbridge Close (adjacent to 5 Woodbridge Close). Councillors expressed the view that the Parish Council has no jurisdiction on this matter as the land is in private ownership – resident to be informed.

## 10. PLANNING

### Planning applications – updates to previous applications

**14/01496/FUL Thistle Cottage, Ham Lane, Aston**  
Erection of 7 dwellings and associated works

The s106 legal agreement has been signed and formal planning permission has been granted.

A revised site plan has been agreed, with the two cottages fronting Ham Lane to have their own off-street parking from Ham Lane (two spaces per property).

The front boundary of the development is to have new post and rail fencing and a hedgerow, which is something that the Parish Council had requested.

One of the conditions of the permission is that no development, including demolition, shall take place until a Construction Method Statement has been agreed with the District Council. The Clerk has emailed the Planning Officer to ask whether this Statement has been agreed and, if it has, to request a copy.

**14/02062/FUL North Street Farm, North Street, Aston**  
Residential development

The developer has installed a large wooden fence around the boundary of the site, on highways land. Emails and photographs were sent to the planning department at WODC and to OCC Highways so that they may assess whether the fence is acceptable from a planning and highway-safety perspective. WODC has confirmed that the fence is acceptable from a planning perspective, as it is a temporary structure. OCC Highways will be reviewing the road safety issue and will also be contacting the developer about the hoarding licence required.

**14/1282/P/OP The Old Chapel, North Street, Aston**  
Erection of three detached dwellings

This application was refused by WODC on 4 December 2014. The Parish Council objected to the application.

The applicant has now appealed the decision, and the application will be reviewed by a Planning Inspector. The Parish Council's objection will be forwarded to the Inspector by WODC.

**14/1082/P/FP 3 High Street, Aston**  
Erection of two storey extension to existing dwelling and erection of attached dwelling

This application was approved by WODC on 17 September 2014 and construction is underway.

A local resident has queried whether the new dwelling is being built with materials which meet the conditions of the planning approval. They have contacted WODC direct and informed the Parish Council of their concerns.

**11. Finance**

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

Balance on Current Account at 31 March 2015           £ 7,145.82  
 Balance on Deposit Account at 31 March 2015           £16,779.68

**Finance (continued)**

*b) March invoices presented for approval and payment*

		Statute
Clerk’s salary and working from home allowance	355.80	LGA 1972, s112
Clerk’s expenses – printing – 170 sheets @ 5p	8.50	LGA 1972 s111
Margaret Johnson – stationery & copying	5.76	LGA 1972 s111
A J Mitchell – bus shelter clean on 24 March	25.00	LG(MP)A 1953, s4
ORCC – membership subscription for 2015/16	65.00	LGA 1972, s137
OALC – membership subscription for 2015/16	230.87	LGA 1972 s111
CPRE – membership fees for 2015/16	36.00	LGA 1972, s137
Aston & Cote Community Trust – donation towards playground maintenance	630.00	LG(MP)A 1976, s19
St Mary’s Church, Shifford – donation towards grass cutting	210.00	LGA 1972, s214
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,566.93</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 Jane West.

**12. Matters arising since publication of agenda/**

**Matters which Councillors wish to raise for inclusion on next agenda (for discussion only)**

The Clerk informed the councillors that WODC has approached the Parish Council for suggestions for the name of the new residential court on the Ham Lane development. To be discussed at the May meeting.

**13. Date of next meetings:**

**Thursday 7 May 2015, 7.30pm**

Annual meeting of Parish Council and monthly Parish Council Meeting

**Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2015, 7.45pm**

Annual Parish Meeting

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