

COLD ASTON PARISH COUNCIL

	<p>AGENDA OF THE COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON Wednesday 14th April 2021 Via zoom, Starting at 6.45pm. zoom link</p> <p>https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87808099880?pwd=b1FvbTNlMmQxOVVlaHJFSWZQKzI3QT09</p>
	Public Participation 15 minutes at discretion of chair of meeting
1.	<p>Apologies and Attendance to be recorded</p> <p>Parish Councillors Paula Marchant, Yvonne Nicholas and Greg Pearce.</p> <p>Apologies received to be recorded</p> <p>County Councillor P Hodgkinson and District Councillor Richard Keeling are invited</p>
2.	Declaration of Interests for any interests on matters of the agenda to be invited
3.	Council are ask to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 3 rd February 2021
4.	Report from County Councillor if available
5.	Report from District Councillor if available
6.	Payments for approval as attached
7.	<p>Financial reports as attached to be approved</p> <p>Cash book</p> <p>Budget against actual</p>
8.	Highway and PROW matters to be discussed
9.	PROW definitive map and the significance of 2026 correspondence – as distributed via email
10.	Update from residents working party regarding Village map /information pack
11.	Update from residents working party regarding Chapel Lane sign
12.	<p>Council to consider planning applications received and distributed via email</p> <p>Where Councillors have declared an interest, they are not allowed to take part in the decision making process and in this case the Council will be non-quorate for these items and will not be allowed to make a decision. Parishioners are advised to make representations to the District Council via the planning portal, should they wish to comment on these applications.</p> <p>Applications have also been distributed to data base</p>
13.	Ecology report to be discussed –b fwd from previous meeting
14.	Allotments matters to be discussed and general repairs and maintenance costs to be approved
15.	<p>Council to consider items relating to village verges following on from the actions agreed at the previous meeting</p> <p>Council also to consider village kerbsides, clearance of leaves and debris</p>
16.	Council to receive update on bio-diversity project
17.	<p>Council to consider items relating to trees in the Village</p> <p>including update relating to Ash Trees project –from the Nurture Nature group:</p> <p>The Ash Tree on Bang up Lane to be discussed</p>
18.	Bramble in the holly bush in Chapel Lane –brought forward
19.	Council to note update on election of 2 parish councillors as distributed via email
20.	<p>Council agreed date of next meeting as to be agreed Wednesday 5th May (which is the 1st and not the 2nd Wednesday as previously agreed by Council) at 6.45pm via zoom – AGM and Parish Assembly- to note that decision on holding a zoom meeting before 7th May or an “in person” meeting after 7th May will need to be taken as legal position will change with effect from 7th May 2021 and Parish Councils have to hold the AGM/Parish Assembly before 1st June. Use of the Village Hall may still be restricted during May and therefore “in person meetings” are very likely needed to be held outdoors.</p>
21.	<p>Any other business for information purposes – no decisions can be made at this point</p> <p>Meeting to be closed</p>

	<p>DRAFT MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON Wednesday 3rd February 2021 Via zoom, Starting at 6.45pm. zoom link</p> <p>https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89387206765?pwd=WnV4T1B0dFVsWG54NFhnSFI0cXJTdz09</p>
	<p>Public Participation 15 minutes at discretion of chair of meeting- members of the public raised issues regarding Grit on the side of road and the ditches behind the grit are clogged up. Blocked culvert and other blocked drains reported. Residents were advised to use the “report it “ website facility Ecology report submitted to PC for agenda item (Clerk had responded that it could be taken as part of the allotment agenda item) Nature and Nature group would like to research lizard colony further and Ash die back application has been submitted. They would also like to consider ideas for developing Tree projects and Wildlife corridors. Also noted CPRE project to record stone stiles. bio-diversity project overview has been submitted via email to parish clerk. Green verges have been damaged by contractors (it was suggested that it may be a condition of planning permission) Tree works in the allotment was praised. Public session closed at 19.00</p>
1.	<p>Apologies and Attendance recorded as Parish Councillors Paula Marchant, Yvonne Nicholas and Greg Pearce. 5 Members of the public No Apologies were received County Councillor P Hodgkinson and District Councillor Richard Keeling attended</p>
2.	<p>Declaration of Interests for any interests on matters of the agenda – Councillors Nicholas and Pearce declared interest on planning item Field Ways and Sundance House.</p>
3.	<p>Council approved the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd December 2020; 18th December 2020 and 4th January 2021</p>
4.	<p>Verbal Report from County Councillor Hodgkinson was received. Covid and vaccination update. “No Crash” road safety meeting update including Whiteshoots Hill.</p> <p>Broadband speeds in the Whiteshoots area have been brought to the attention of County Councillor Anyone who is interested in Fastershire should go online to register.</p> <p>A438 is currently closed and A429 by Whiteshoots will be closed from 17th April for patching and repair”.</p>
5.	<p>Verbal Report from District Councillor Keeling was received. Valley View planning application (matters are ongoing). Noted the Appeal decision for: 19/01155/FUL Site address: Land North East of Hazelton -Fosseway Bourton-On-The-Water Gloucestershire. Also noted planning protocol changes on the system of District Councillors asking for applications to be considered by Committee. The matter of Neighbour notification notices is being followed up.</p>
6.	<p>Payments approved Monthly standing order for salary Expenses for clerk £78.92 (working from home Dec Jan and Feb 3 x£26 printing £3.70 and postage 2 x 46p) Tree surgeon as per minutes of 18/12/20 – on receipt of invoice Notice board repair £75 -C Holder -reimbursement via Y Nicholas</p>
7.	<p>Financial reports as attached approved Cash book Budget against actual</p>

8.	Council approved renewal of ALLOTMENT insurance policy in the sum of £83.64
9.	Council approved appointment of independent internal auditor – Dr B J Saunders
10	Correspondence from PM regarding 20mph project was discussed and it was noted that the Council carried out a survey 5 years ago which showed there was little appetite for change. Following the survey it was decided to paint 30 mph on the approach to the village from Notgrove and increase the size of the village sign to make people aware they are entering a village. Average speeds just before the 30 mph sign into the village (i.e in the 60 zone) were registered at 33 mph. The original survey will be put on the website to seek parishioners’ comments
11	Highway and PROW matters “No Crash” meeting update from Cllr Marchant. Litter pick possibly to be organised in March 21 as a community event. Cllr Nicholas to lead. Verges damaged by vehicles as raised by members of the public. It was reported that verges are getting damaged as a result of building work either by the contractors’ cars or by traffic driving on the verge because a contractor has not left enough space to get by. It was felt either the residents concerned or their contractor should be responsible for making good any damage. It was decided a standard letter would be drafted to be sent to households where building work is about to start. Council will also investigate if repairing verges can be made a condition of planning in the future Drains and culverts to be reported Thanks to residents for the work done at Christmas at the time of heightened water table Tree works to prevent touching cables
12	Update from residents working party regarding Village map. Agreed that a digital map will be prepared and the aim is to link back to the parish council website. Cllr Nicholas reported that the information pack now on website
13	Update from residents working party regarding Chapel Lane sign. Written consent has been obtained from residents to allow 2 signs to be installed. Contact with Glos Highways manager has confirmed that Glos Highways have no issues and signposted to Planning Dept to confirm if there are issues. Estimate of £130 per sign (and fixing costs). Subject to planning approval, residents will order signs
14	Council considered planning applications received and distributed via email Where Councillors have declared an interest, they are not allowed to take part in the decision-making process and in this case the Council will be non-quorate for these items and will not be allowed to make a decision. Parishioners are advised to make representations to the District Council via the planning portal, should they wish to comment on these applications. Applications have been distributed to data base 20/03560/FUL – Longbrook Barn Farm – conversion of agricultural building – no comment 20/04543/FUL – Fieldways – Raising of garage roof and replacement of entrance to port- Council not quorate due to declaration of interests 21/00005/TCONR – The Garden House – Tree works – no comment 21/00077/TCONR – Aston Lodge – Tree works – no comment Sundance house- Council not quorate due to declaration of interests Council would like to ascertain the planning protocol for letters for neighbouring properties- Council will draft letter for Clerk to ascertain specifically and generally. District Councillor looking into this matter.
15	Allotments matters were discussed Update on tree works noted. Works completed. Gate post has been repaired. Correspondence from residents VB and JK- development of wildlife areas. While the PC accepts there is scope to encourage wildlife in the allotments we need to consider the fact paths must be kept clear and we must have a clear idea who will maintain the project

	Clerk to ask JK to submit a paper which can be distributed in the public domain. Then with the permission of author, letter is to be emailed to plot holders and to be attached to agenda and carry forward to April agenda. Allotment holders to be part of consultation process.
16	Council noted update on Notice Board repairs have been completed
17	Council noted Charitable trusts for winter fuel support annual bank statement received -closing balance 4/1/21 £907.09 (Note this is not a Parish Council account)
18	Council discussed bio-diversity project overview which is being prepared by DR and is to be put on the website – received just prior to the meeting. A precise to be put on the website.
19	Council noted update relating to Ash Trees project -Cllr Nicholas has forwarded to Nurture Nature group who has submitted an application for 2 Oak trees, 2 Crabs trees and 2 Rowans closing date was end of January 21
20	Bramble in the holly bush in Chapel Lane will be removed before bird nesting by volunteers
21	CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS – DATA PROTECTION OF EMPLOYEE MATTERS – matter agreed
22	Council agreed date of next meeting as 14th April 2021 (2nd Wednesday as being previously agreed by Council) at 6.45pm via zoom
23	<p>Any other business for information purposes –</p> <p>The council commented that they have been very lucky to receive the help from a number of villagers and thanks in particular went to:</p> <p>Andrew, Ben and Toby for clearing the roads on Christmas Eve</p> <p>Stuart for the website</p> <p>Martin for clearing the culverts and the village information pack</p> <p>Mark for the Chapel Lane sign</p> <p>Mandy, Mark & Martin for the village map</p> <p>Ollie for clearing the verges</p> <p>Diana for helping to create our wildlife verges and for looking into trees to replace the Ash trees.</p> <p>Meeting closed at 19.50</p>

Financial reports

Payments for approval

Monthly standing order for salary

Expenses for clerk £72.39 (working from home March and April x£26 , printing £2.70 and postage 5 x 46p) Mileage £15.39 (cheque signing to take place after this meeting)

Grass Cutting CSG £66.00 invoice 31/3/21

National Allotment Society annual membership £66.00

GAPTC annual membership £68.42

PATA payroll £69.75

I Thompson £157.80- allotment gate repair (paid via Cllr Nicholas)

HMRC year end balance

BANK RECONCILIATION					
01/04/2020	OPENING BANK BALANCE		24183.07		
	EXPENDITURE FOR PERIOD	6001.83			
	INCOME FOR PERIOD	12919.10			
	NET INCOME		6917.27		
31/03/2021	BANK BALANCE		31100.34		
26/02/2021	BAL PER S/M			32120.61	
	u/presented	cheques			
	s jackson	241	23.25		
	salary	so	155.58		
		246	600.00		
		247	157.80		
		248	83.64		
				1020.27	
	Reconciled balance			31100.34	0.00
Un reconciled bank balance a/c 22516168	community fund			closed	31100.34
last statement 13 dated 1/1/15					

Cash book to 31/3/21

01/04/2019	O/BALANCE	
17/04/2020	precept	
27/04/2020	salary	
26/05/2020	salary	
25/06/2020	expenses	222
26/06/2020	salary	
07/06/2020	cgs	223
07/06/2020	boyle & grimes	224
30/05/2020	BHIB	225
27/07/2020	PATA	229
27/07/2020	HMRC	228
27/07/2020	CGS	230
27/07/2020	GAPTC	231
27/07/2020	expenses	232
31/08/2020	HMRC	233
28/07/2020	salary	SO
28/08/2020	salary	SO
28/09/2020	salary	so
28/09/2020	allotment	
11/09/2020	allotment	
24/09/2020	precept	
30/09/2020	hmrc	234
30/09/2020	expenses	235
30/09/2020	pata	236
28/10/2020	salary	so
28/11/2020	salary	so
28/12/2020	salary	so
28/01/2021	salary	so
24/11/2020	expenses	237
25/11/2020	hmrc	238
24/01/2021	expenses*	239
04/12/2020	YN dog bag	240
04/12/2020	sj website	241
04/12/2020	pata payroll	242
04/12/2020	HMRC	243
04/12/2020	ab agriculture	244
04/12/2020	cgs	245
18/11/2020	from deposit	income
18/11/2020	allotment inc	income
24/01/2021	allotment inc	income
28/02/2021	salary	so
31/03/2021	salary	
21/02/2021	LM Garden	246
01/03/2021	I Thompson	247
28/02/2021	Marsh commercial	248

<u>BUDGET/ACTUAL ANALYSIS</u> <u>31/03/21</u>	<u>BUDGET</u>	<u>Y TO</u> <u>DATE</u>	<u>BALANCE</u> <u>AVAILABLE</u> <u>TO SPEND</u>	<u>NOTES</u>
PRECEPT	4250	-4250	0	
inter acc transfer (reserves)	0	-8445	-8445	reserves
allotment income	190	-224	-34	
INCOME	4440	-12919	8479	
EMPLOYMENT COSTS	2350	2295	55	
HIRE OF VENUE	25	0	25	
SUBSCRIPTIONS	175	66	109	
AUDIT	250	0	250	
INSURANCE	380	354	26	
USE OF HOME / mileage/ stationery etc	440	308	132	Reduction in mileage expend.
WEBSITE /PAYROLL COSTS	100	93	7	
GRASS MOWING	1300	594	706	Transfer to verge mowing
VERGE MOWING	195	682	-487	
ALLOTMENTS expenditure	350	241	143	includes excess income
TRAINING	0	0	0	
MAINTENANCE OF ASSETS	250	769	-519	pump
TREES	850	600	250	
deficit EXPECTED	-2225	-1528	-697	underspend
reserves		8445		
EXPENDITURE YEAR TO DATE				
TOTALS	4440	12919	0	

Wildlife and the allotments

1. Introduction
2. Shared areas and paths
3. Nesting sites for birds
4. Trees
5. The common lizard colony
6. The ivy question
7. Finally

1. Introduction

Questions concerning the future direction of the allotments continue to exercise the parish council and allotmenters. A wide range of views have been expressed, from those who would prefer by far the allotment patch to be neater and tidier than it is now, to those who see the area primarily as a wildlife haven. Opinion has polarised around these positions but it is my aim here to show that there is a middle path.

The primary purpose of an allotment is to grow food. On a well-run allotment, yields can be achieved of about a pound weight per square foot of ground cultivated, placing allotments among the most productive land in the parish. (This value is equivalent to very slightly under 20 tons per acre, far above agricultural yields which are about 4 tons per acre in the parish). Locally-grown food has well-known benefits in terms of carbon footprint, food miles, freshness and nutrient content.

There are as many styles of horticulture practised on the allotments as there are allotment holders. At the extremes, some practise conventional horticulture using pesticides and synthetic fertilisers whereas others use organic methods which employ natural controls and composts. At first sight these two approaches have little in common; this is not true.

Even the most conventional horticultural system relies on wildlife to some extent, and particularly upon pollinators. All soft fruit (raspberries, blackcurrants, strawberries, etc) and all top fruit (apples, pears, plums, etc) are insect-pollinated - particularly by bees. Many crops flower too early to be pollinated by honeybees and so we must rely on wild bees to pollinate them. Also, fruit-set on later-flowering crops is usually superior if wild bees rather than honey bees do the pollinating. As for vegetables, legumes (all beans but not peas, they are self-pollinated), cucurbits (squashes, courgettes etc) and solanaceous (peppers, tomatoes etc) crops among others are bee-pollinated. In every case we must `borrow` wild bees from nearby habitats because they do not live on the allotment plots themselves.

But, we cannot merely supply some pollen and nectar in spring and early summer and expect the bees to hang around. If their needs are not supplied they will – if they can - go elsewhere at the very least or may even be driven to local extinction. They need to collect pollen and nectar when our crops no longer provide any and also need places to nest and to hibernate too. Every useful bee has slightly different requirements; some collect pollen from a very few kinds of flower, some nest in bare soil, some in short turf and others nest in timber and in old, dead stems. There are over 250 species of wild bee in Britain, all with different requirements.

Very similar arguments apply to predatory insects (ladybirds – 43 species; hoverflies – 286 species; solitary wasps – over 7,000 species, and yes, that last figure is correct) that help to control pests (aphids, thrips, mites etc) even in conventional systems.

Wildlife is thus an integral part of small-scale horticulture. The allotmenters all need beneficial insects - it is just that the organic growers need them more because they do not use chemical props - and we need to provide diverse habitats in which all our insect friends thrive. Ecologists have found repeatedly that the imposition of anthropocentric values such as neatness and tidiness only serve to reduce diversity and thus the number of beneficial insects available to us. A certain amount of wildlife-friendliness is essential to the well-being of the allotments.

The allotments generally made a giant leap towards environmental friendliness with the installation of the rainwater harvesting system. It works, despite teething problems, and improvements are under consideration. I suggest that the following simple steps can also be taken easily to further improve the environmental credentials of the site generally.

2.Shared areas and paths.

Paths are of course the responsibility of the allotment holders, but shared areas which are not often or never used for foot traffic can be used to encourage wildflowers, further encouraging beneficial insects. A few years ago, rather uncommon plants such as hound's tongue (*Cynoglossum officinale*) could be found on the allotments; it is a wonderful plant for bees, but has not been seen for some years.

3.Nesting sites for birds.

Birds too are useful predators of pests but there are few suitable nest sites on the allotments. Nest boxes could be erected but the long-term aim should be to encourage plants in which birds will nest naturally. A productive blackberry bush on one of the allotments is home every year to blackbirds and occasionally dunnocks.

4.Trees.

NB. THE PARISH COUNCIL'S TREE REPORT IS NOT ACCESSIBLE. THE LINK DOES NOT WORK.

Trees generally are excellent for wildlife but are not necessarily altogether desirable on an allotment site because they compete with crop plants for light, water and nutrients. However, some of our native species - and apple trees - support hundreds of invertebrate species many of which play a role in pest control.

Unused areas could also be planted with fruit trees further enhancing productivity. The idea, suggested at the on-site meeting, of planting hazel (which is not a tree, it is a shrub) would in just a few years generate a supply of bean poles, pea sticks and plant supports for allotmenters and would reduce the use of high-footprint bamboo. Also, the simple fact that hazel is harvested on a five- or six-year rotation would serve to eliminate light obstruction of nearby dwellings. The conifers in the corner take a great deal of light from the nearby allotments and houses; the removal and replacement of these non-natives would help all round. At the moment, from the allotments' point of view all they do is provide some physical shelter for wildlife. If an evergreen replacement were desired one could do far worse than yew, which has a great advantage - among conifers – in that it

regenerates from mature wood and can thus easily withstand major pruning, as well as having native status and providing both food and shelter for birds.

5.The common lizard colony.

The common lizard is a protected but declining native species. Advice should be sought from specialists such as the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust on helping the colony to thrive. At the moment vegetation is encroaching on the site of the colony.

6.The ivy question.

Ivy generates heated debate. On one side, ivy is considered to be pernicious and therefore best removed; on the other, ivy is seen as harmless and a great boon to wildlife for its late flowers, winter berries and all-year provision of shelter. This controversy about ivy has rumbled on in Britain for decades. Received opinion today is that ivy only takes hold in trees that are stressed in some way or have open canopies allowing light to percolate down, such as ash. In this view the growth of ivy is more a consequence of poor tree health, rather than the ivy growing and causing poor tree health, in other words a reversal of the view so commonly held. One only has to look at trees in the parish to see that most ivy in trees occurs in either ash with its naturally open canopy or other trees in which the canopy is open or rather small for some reason, such as poor pruning or very packed plantings. Almost any arboricultural website will explain the issue more fully. The Arboricultural Association – the official trade body – has a good site.

7.Finally

The overall aim for the allotments should therefore be one of productivity with enhanced wildlife diversity. With their productivity, the rainwater harvesting system, some existing highly diverse areas and the lizard colony the allotments are already more than halfway to achieving excellent environmental credentials.

It is not unusual for successful community projects to receive recognition officially. There is even a series of awards run by the CPRE for small environmentally-friendly schemes (partially replacing the Bledisloe cup).

Jo Kirby

14 January 2021