ASTONS RECREATION COMMITTEE | MEETING MINUTES

ASTONS RECREATION COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

2 November 2026 | Microsoft Teams

Meeting detail	Record
Chair	Gillian Golding
Minutes prepared from	Teams transcript, meeting agenda, October finance statement and draft 2027–28 budget
Previous minutes	Approved without amendment

PURPOSE OF THESE MINUTES

A concise formal record of the discussion, decisions and agreed actions. Informal conversation has been omitted, and transcript wording has been normalised for clarity.

Attendees

Name	Susan Pallett	Amberley Diamond	Joanna Hart	Liz Pattison	Maria Martin	Jo Walshe	Laura Haigh	Gillian Golding	Sarah Munro	Adam Bere
	SP	AD	JH	LP	MM	JW	LH	GG	SM	AB
Role		Events & Fundraising	PC	Joint Chair & Bookings	Play areas & meters	Treasurer	Treasurer	Joint Chair & Maintenance	PC	ACC rep
Present	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Apologies	Yes						Yes			Yes

- The meeting was transcribed in Microsoft Teams.

1. Executive summary

- The October financial statement was accepted. The balance at 31 October 2026 was £18,984.43, with £1,440.05 paid out, £425.00 received, a £55.13 payment pending and a £1,927.08 VAT reclaim pending.
- The draft 2027–28 budget, forecasting income of £7,700 and expenditure of £9,110, was approved for submission to the Parish Council.
- Electrical items that failed testing have been repaired, removed or taken out of service. Parish Council approval has been obtained for replacement emergency and main pavilion lighting, and a work date is awaited.
- The committee supported the £1,680 including VAT tree-work quotation, subject to Parish Council approval, and agreed to treat tree surgery as planned annual maintenance.
- Bonfire Night arrangements, insurance requirements, risk controls, parking and volunteer arrangements were reported as in hand.
- ARC will consult the Parish Council and local users on a possible kissing gate at the Chalk Hill entrance before obtaining quotations.
- The committee agreed to hold village Christmas mince pies and drinks on 6 December 2026. ARC member Christmas drinks were provisionally set for 17 December.
- The multi-use court resurfacing proposal will be developed further, including funding options, quotations and potential pickleball markings.

2. Previous minutes

- The minutes of 12 October 2026 were approved without amendment.

✓	**DECISION** Approve the minutes of 12 October 2026 without amendment.

3. Finances

3.1 ARC finances for October 2026

Current balance: £18,984.43 (£19,689.07) at 31 October 2026.

Payments out

Item	Amount
Connect Installations, PAT testing and fixed electrical testing	£704.64
Amanda Porter, cleaning in August and September	£135.00
Bank service charge	£4.25
Grundon bins	£39.80
Jeremy Imbush, work and materials for October	£326.36
Rustic Management, purchase and installation of playground gate	£230.00
Total payments out	£1,440.05

Payments in

Item	Amount
Astons Cricket Club rent	£425.00
Total payments in	£425.00

- Payment pending: Jo Walshe, replacement soup kettle for Bonfire Night mulled wine, £55.13.
- Deposit pending: VAT reclaim for 2025–26 to be reimbursed by the Parish Council, £1,927.08.
- End-of-contract meter readings on 12 October 2026: gas 77,526 (77,511); electricity 8,549 (8,301). The readings were sent by smart meter and confirmed on site.
- No payment was taken for gas and electricity in October as we are in the process of changing supplier. End of contract invoices will be paid in November.

✓ **DECISION** Accept the October 2026 financial statement, subject to the minor amendment identified by Jo.

3.2 Draft budget proposal 2027–28

- The committee reviewed the budget for the year ending 31 March 2028. The budget deliberately forecasts expenditure above income because ARC holds a significant cash balance and uses cautious assumptions for variable fundraising income and potential expenditure.
- No Astonbury income is included because the event is not currently planned for 2027.

✓ **DECISION** Approve the draft 2027–28 budget for submission to the Parish Council.

Budget for April 2027- March 2028					
	Budget Year to 31.3.28		Budget **Year to 31.3.27**	Actual Year to 31.3.26	Budget Year to 31.3.26
INCOME					
Donations & hire	1000		1000	1,165	1000
Refundable deposit					
Fund Raising					
Astonbury			3000		
Fireworks	5000		3000	6,154	3500
Safari Supper	600		600	800	600
Ladies Summer Supper	400			350	550
Astonathlon/	700		900	963	900
SODC Grant /PC support					
	7700		8500	9,432	6550
EXPENDITURE					
Ground					
Mowing & Strimming	250		250	50	250
Hire of rollers and other matters	225		225	188	225
Maintenance	2500		2500	4610	2500
Tree surgery	1500		3000		
Machinery & Equipment					
Service & Diesel/Repair	500		500		400
Pavilion					
Water	1000		1000	1001	600
Gas	700		900	700	1000
Electricity	680		1000	696	1300
Grundon bins	400		360	326	350
Cleaning costs	500		500	613	500
Consumables	200		200	95	150
Servicing					150
Bank service sharges	55		60	90	
Health & Safety (not covered by PC)					
Playground					
Safety check (now paid by PC)					
Fixed Assets - Pavillion	600		700	75	750
- Machinery					
	9110		11195	8444	8175

4. Health, Safety and Maintenance Updates

4.1 Routine checks

- The smoke alarm check was completed on 31 October 2026.
- The playground had been checked recently (14 October 2026) and no material change was identified. Depressions in the impact area around the slides should be filled or levelled re-using playground-grade bark. Gillian will fill holes and redistribute suitable bark where needed. A reliable supplier will be used for a further bark delivery next year.
- Monthly emergency lighting checks will restart once the non-functioning lights have been replaced. 4.2 Electrical items and lighting
- All items that failed the fixed electrical or PAT testing have been repaired, removed, disconnected or taken out of use. Obsolete items will be removed from the testing register.
- The Parish Council has approved replacement of the emergency lighting and the obsolete pavilion-room ceiling lights. Gavin's installation date is awaited. [update: Fri Nov 27 2026]

✓ **DECISION** Record that all failed electrical items have been made safe and that the approved lighting works may proceed once a date is confirmed.

4.3 Playground maintenance quotation

- Wicksteed quoted for a cableway finger guard and replacement of the basket-swing bearing assembly. The replacement bearing item was £1,402 and the combined labour charge was £630.
- The committee did not support replacing a functioning bearing assembly. Gillian has asked whether Wicksteed can inspect or service it instead, in line with the RoSPA recommendation. [Update: Wicksteed advise that the assembly cannot be serviced, the only option is to replace it at intervals determined by the committee]
- The finger guard itself is relatively inexpensive, but the committee will await a revised, proportionate labour proposal before authorising work.

✓ **DECISION** Defer the Wicksteed works pending clarification of a servicing option and a proportionate quotation for the finger guard.

4.4 Trees and planned maintenance

- The trees behind the cricket nets were reported to be in good condition, with no identified defect making them unusually vulnerable in a storm. One limb over a neighbouring shed can be reduced as part of the planned work in early 2027.
- The quotation is £1,400 plus £280 VAT, totalling £1,680, for dead-wooding along Chalk Hill, reducing the large sycamore behind the garage and trimming the limb overhanging the neighbouring garden.
- The preferred timing is late January or early February 2027, before trees come into leaf. Ivy should also continue to be cut during work days to reduce wind loading. [Update: 4 Feb 2026]
- The formal five-year tree survey remains in date (March 2023). Annual tree work will now be treated as planned maintenance.

✓ **DECISION** Recommend the £1,680 tree-work quotation to the Parish Council for approval and plan annual tree maintenance thereafter.

4.5 Water-efficiency review and maintenance list

- The Thames Water efficiency visit found no dripping taps, leaking toilets or other action required. Monthly meter monitoring will continue.
- The maintenance list will remain a live record. Members should send Gillian any additional items for inclusion. The committee considered that a plan is in place for all current safety-related items.

5. Standing Items

5.1 Recreation Ground and Pavilion bookings

- No additional bookings were reported beyond Bonfire Night.
- No new dates provided for games for Blewbury Amazons
- Two provisional dates have been reserved for the village plant sale in 2027. The pavilion may offer more outdoor space and parking than the village hall, and ARC may explore complementary community or volunteer activity if the event proceeds.

5.2 Fundraising and Social

Bonfire Night

- Preparations were reported as well advanced. The bonfire was substantially built, sufficient pallets had been sourced and new volunteers had joined the team.
- Children's refreshments and activities will be operated in-house, including baked goods and hot chocolate. Additional tray bakes would be welcome.
- The risk assessment will be updated for hot chocolate service and the relevant temperature and handling controls.
- The Parish Council insurer issued stipulations covering risk assessment, training and briefing. The committee confirmed that the requirements had been addressed and circulated to those involved.
- Parking is available at the Manor paddock, with village hall overflow parking available from 17:00. Supplier and volunteer invoices should be submitted promptly for Parish Council processing.

✓ **DECISION** Proceed with Bonfire Night, recording that the insurer's stipulations, risk assessment and training requirements have been addressed.

6. Any Other Business

6.1 Future of ARC

- The Parish Council supports moving ARC to a clearer advisory and delivery group arrangement. A suitable name, operating process and terms of reference are still required.
- The terms of reference should be reviewed by the internal auditor or a lawyer to avoid ambiguity.
- Discussion continues with the Parish Clerk about transferring financial responsibility. Once that is agreed, the remaining transition of ARC is expected to be more straightforward.

6.2 Chalk Hill pedestrian access

- The main vehicle gate at the Chalk Hill entrance requires replacement. The committee considered whether a separate pedestrian gate should also be installed without reducing service access.
- Members recognised security concerns but considered that access and security should be balanced pragmatically. A kissing gate may provide a reasonable compromise, although it would not provide wheelchair or pushchair access; accessible access remains available elsewhere.
- Gillian will check the proposal with Donna, seek Parish Council views and, if supported, obtain quotations over the coming months.

✓ **DECISION** Consult on a possible kissing gate at the Chalk Hill entrance before obtaining quotations or committing expenditure.

6.3 Disabled-access information and pavilion hire terms

- ARC will participate in the Mend the Gap accessibility website by describing and photographing the access arrangements currently available at the recreation ground and pavilion.
- The hire terms should make clear that pavilion exits involve step access and that hirers are responsible for nominating assistance for any guest with restricted mobility in an emergency.
- A portable ramp is stored with the chairs in the store room and can be used at the main doors when those doors are open, principally in summer. Liz will review the hire terms to ensure the responsibility is stated clearly.

6.4 Multi-use court resurfacing and grants

- A quotation of £8,960 excluding VAT was received for resurfacing the court with basketball markings. Pickleball markings would add £225, giving £9,185 excluding VAT. Fencing would add nearly £8,000 and was not supported because it would restrict access and significantly increase cost.
- The councillor grant deadline is 4 December 2026, with an internal target of 27 November. Individual district councillors can award up to £7,500, but awards are commonly spread across villages and a separate village-hall application has already been submitted.
- The Parish Council should be the applicant and provide final approval. Other options may include sports grants, landfill-community funding, Community Infrastructure Levy funds and an ARC contribution.
- The available quotation should be updated and a third quotation sought where practicable; if suppliers decline because the project is too small, the attempts should be documented.

✓ **DECISION** Develop the court resurfacing project further, including preferred markings, refreshed quotations, Parish Council approval and a blended funding plan.

6.5 Cricket Club nets

- Feedback will be sought from the cricket club before any cricket-nets/surface refurbishment is added to the scope.

✓ **DECISION** Adam to discuss with cricket club if practice nets/surface is fit for purpose.

6.6 Pavilion heating

- A kitchen radiator was found hot despite mild weather and no recent bookings. The boiler had been serviced in early September.
- Amberley will monitor the heating during the Bonfire Night weekend and check whether switching on the building power is causing the heating to activate. Maria will compare the next meter reading with the previous month.

6.3 Christmas events

- Village mince pies and drinks at the pavilion will be held on Sunday 6 December 2026.
- ARC member Christmas drinks were provisionally agreed for Thursday 17 December 2026, subject to Gillian circulating final details.

✓ **DECISION** Hold the village Christmas event on 6 December and provisionally set ARC Christmas drinks for 17 December 2026.

9. Next meeting

- The next meeting will be held on Microsoft Teams on 7 December 2026.

✓ **DECISION** Next meeting: 7 December 2026, Microsoft Teams.

10. Action register

Ref	Owner	Action	Timing / status
A01	Jo	Amend the October finance statement before it is appended to the final minutes.	Before issue
A02	Jo	Format and submit the approved draft 2027–28 budget to the Parish Council.	Next PC meeting
A03	Gillian	Confirm the installation date for approved emergency and pavilion lighting works with Gavin.	As soon as available
A04	Gillian	Fill recurring holes and redistribute suitable playground bark; arrange a reliable bark delivery next year.	Ongoing / 2027
A05	Gillian	Obtain Wicksteed clarification on servicing the basket-swing bearing and a proportionate finger-guard quotation.	Report next meeting
A06	Joanna	Seek Parish Council approval for the £1,680 tree-work quotation.	Next PC meeting
A07	Gillian	Arrange approved tree works for late January or early February 2027.	After approval
A08	Amberley / Sarah	Complete and maintain the Bonfire Night risk controls, including hot chocolate service.	Before the event
A09	All event leads	Submit Bonfire Night invoices promptly for Parish Council processing.	Before PC meeting where possible
A10	Joanna	Progress discussion with the Parish Clerk about transfer of ARC financial responsibility.	Report back
A11	Joanna / ARC	Develop draft terms of reference and arrange appropriate independent review.	Before transition
A12	Gillian	Check the kissing-gate proposal with Donna and seek Parish Council views.	Before quotations
A13	Gillian	Obtain kissing-gate quotations if consultation supports the proposal.	Coming months

Ref	Owner	Action	Timing / status
A14	Gillian	Circulate final arrangements for ARC Christmas drinks on 17 December.	Before the event
A15	Gillian	Complete the Mend the Gap accessibility information and photographs.	Report back
A16	Liz	Review pavilion hire terms on emergency assistance for guests with restricted mobility.	Before next revision
A17	Joanna	Discuss court-grant appetite and timing with district councillors at the Parish Council meeting.	Next PC meeting
A18	Adam / Gillian	Refresh court quotations, document attempts to obtain a third quote and develop funding options.	Before application
A19	Adam / Jeremy	Seek cricket club feedback on the cricket-nets and surface.	Report back
A20	Amberley	Monitor pavilion heating when power is switched on during the Bonfire Night weekend.	Immediate
A21	Maria	Compare the next meter reading with the previous month for unusual consumption.	Next reading

Record note: These minutes are based on the meeting transcript, agenda, October 2026 finance statement and draft 2027–28 budget proposal. Names are recorded where a speaker or attendee was identifiable. The meeting was transcribed.

ARC | 2 November 2026