ASTONS RECREATION COMMITTEE | MEETING MINUTES

ASTONS RECREATION COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

12 October 2026 | Microsoft Teams

Meeting detail	Record
Chair	Gillian Golding
Minutes prepared from	Teams transcript, meeting agenda and September finance statement
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	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Apologies	Yes					Yes	Yes			Yes

- The meeting was transcribed in Microsoft Teams.

1. Executive summary

- The September financial statement was accepted. The closing balance at 30 September 2026 was £19,689.07.
- The committee agreed in principle to replace all failed emergency lights and the nine obsolete main hall lights, subject to Parish Council approval.
- The preferred future model is an advisory and delivery group operating with the Parish Council retaining responsibility for finance and insurance. Members will comment on the proposed process before terms of reference are drafted.
- Bonfire Night preparations were reported as in hand. The event risk assessment will be transferred to the Parish Council for review and approval.
- The committee supported, in principle and subject to Parish Council approval, the £400 fence-panel works and £173 clock repair. Replacement of the main gate will be considered for next year, including the possible addition of a pedestrian gate.

2. Previous minutes

- The minutes of 7 September 2026 were approved. Members and the Parish Council considered them a helpful and comprehensive record, while noting that future drafts could be shortened by removing repetition and informal material.

✓ **DECISION** Approve the minutes of 7 September 2026 without amendment.

3. Finances

3.1 ARC Finances for September 2026

Current balance: £19,689.07 (£19,955.03) at 30 September 2026.

Payments out

Item	Amount
Mrs A Le Conte, hire deposit return	£100.00
Rustic Management, mow and strim playground	£65.00
Everflow water	£408.12

Item	Amount
MHL Ltd, boiler service	£480.00
Bank service charge	£4.25
Jeremy Imbush, work carried out over the summer	£150.00
Grundon bins	£16.19
British Gas, gas to 8 September	£36.79
British Gas, electricity to 8 September	£66.36
E Machin, hire deposit return	£100.00
A Sabberton, hire deposit return	£100.00
Total payments out	£1,526.71

Payments in

Item	Amount
Cranford House, Astonbury donation	£150.00
Susan Pallett, Safari Supper	£590.75
C Sabberton, Pavilion hire	£140.00
E & D Machin, Pavilion hire	£140.00
T & D Coates, Pavilion hire	£140.00
T & D Coates, Pavilion donation	£100.00
Total payments in	£1,260.75

- Payment pending: Rustic Management, purchase and installation of playground gate, £230.00.
- Deposit pending: VAT reclaim for 2025-26 to be reimbursed by the Parish Council, £1,927.08.
- Meter readings on 8 September 2026: gas 77,511 (77,484); electricity 8,301 (8,117). Readings were taken by smart meter and confirmed on site.

3.2 Treasurer and budget

- Jo will continue providing the financial information during the transition. The future need for a separate ARC treasurer will be reviewed once the new Parish Council processes are defined.
- The 2027 budget will broadly follow the current budget, adjusted for the absence of Astonbury. ARC may need to support the Parish Clerk in preparing it.
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✓ **DECISION** Accept the September financial statement and continue the current finance arrangements during the transition.

4. Health, Safety and Maintenance Updates

4.1 Routine checks and testing

- The smoke alarm check was completed on 29 September 2026.
- The playground check was completed on 14th Oct 2026
- The boiler service and fixed electrical testing were passed.
- Several portable electrical items failed PAT testing and will either be repaired or recycled.
- Monthly emergency light checks cannot resume until the failed fittings have been replaced.
- A quotation for playground equipment maintenance remains outstanding.
- Fire-safety and playground-safety documents have been uploaded to the village website. https://www.theastons.net/local-councils/parish-council/parish-council-policies

4.2 Emergency and main hall lighting

- The prolonged discharge test found that almost all emergency lights failed. Replacement is required for fire safety.
- The quotation for replacing the failed emergency lighting, including separate emergency downlights in the pavilion room, was £1,564 inclusive of VAT.

- The nine main pavilion-room lights are obsolete and wired as a linked system. Replacing them while the electrical contractor is on site would add £761.
- Gavin, the regular electrical contractor, understands the building and was considered an appropriate sole supplier. Joanna will place the proposal on the Parish Council agenda for approval.
- For Bonfire Night, use of the main pavilion area will be restricted where practicable, with access focused on the kitchen, side doors and toilets. The committee noted that the works are unlikely to be complete before the event.

✓ **DECISION** Recommend replacement of the failed emergency lighting and the nine main hall lights, subject to Parish Council approval.

4.3 Fencing, clock and gates

- Tom quoted approximately £400 to replace five damaged fence panels, two posts and associated fixings on the cricket-net side. The committee supported the work in principle, subject to Parish Council approval.
- The clock repair was quoted at £173 and was supported in principle, subject to Parish Council approval.
- The main entrance gate is expected to require replacement after winter, with an indicative gate cost of about £200 plus installation. The final design should also consider a separate pedestrian gate without restricting service access.
    - Gillian will discuss pedestrian-gate options with Jeremy and obtain an updated quotation before the gate proposal is finalised.

4.4 Trees

- Review by First Class Tree Surgeons postponed to 20th October – aim to complete work before end of financial year

4.5 Water efficiency

- Liz received an offer from Thames Water and Groundwork for a free water-efficiency visit to the pavilion. The visit would review internal water systems, take a meter reading and identify possible water wastage or qualifying leaks.
    - Liz will forward the offer to Gillian, who will arrange the visit and attend.

✓ **DECISION** Support the £400 fence works and £173 clock repair in principle, subject to Parish Council approval. Defer the gate decision pending an options review and updated quotation.

5. Standing Items

5.1 Recreation Ground and Pavilion Bookings

- No specific new bookings were reported.

5.2. Fundraising and Social

5.2.1 Bonfire Night

- Preparations were reported as in hand. Vicky and Steve are joining the team, with succession planning under way for next year. The fireworks team has completed its training.
- The event may face competition from Wallingford and Blewbury events. Food stock will therefore be set above 2024 levels but below the amount sold in 2025, to limit surplus.
- The Parish Council holds the insurance and the insurers have covered previous Bonfire Nights, so we expect them to again, once informed (Sarah will ask the Clerk to do this). No event cancellation insurance is currently in place (and hasn't been in previous years).
- Gillian will ask Andrew about expiry, return or supplier-storage arrangements for unused fireworks, and when physical preparation of the fireworks begins.
- Wood should be delivered or collected as close to the event as practicable. Christian will be consulted on collection arrangements, including possible trailer availability. Bonfire building to start week of 31st October
- Amberley has prepared the Temporary Event Notice and the event risk assessment and will remind activity leads to check their sections. Sarah will then send the completed assessment to the Parish Council for review and approval.
- Laura is arranging SIMs for the dongles for the SUMUP machines

✓ **DECISION** Proceed with Bonfire Night preparations and submit the completed risk assessment to the Parish Council for approval.

5.2.2 Safari Supper and volunteer recognition

- The committee records its thanks to everyone who contributed to the Safari Supper which was a very enjoyable event. Raised £1181.50 in total, £590.75 to ARC and £590.75 to the Didcot food bank
- A year-end summary of events, funds raised and volunteer contributions should be drafted for the December Astons News.

6. AOB

6.1 Future of ARC

- The group reviewed the proposed advisory and delivery group approach. The Parish Council would retain responsibility for finance, insurance and the formal legal framework, while the group would retain flexibility in how it operates.
- This model was preferred to a formal Parish Council subcommittee or CIO.
- Members considered the proposed group approach to be broadly consistent with current ARC practice, but with clearer financial approvals. Advance approval through the PC should allow suppliers to be paid promptly once invoices are received.
- Joanna has drafted a proposal outlining the new relationship between ARC and the PC
  - ARC members will submit comments by the end of the following week, with further comments accepted to the end of October.
  - The Parish Council will then test the proposal in principle and take responsibility for formally drafting the terms of reference, with suitable legal review.
- The intention is to complete the transition to advisory/delivery group before the start of the new financial year on 1 April 2027.

✓ **DECISION** Proceed on the basis of an ARC advisory and delivery group, subject to Parish Council agreement, member comments, formal terms of reference and legal review.

6.2 Christmas mince pies for the village at the Pavilion

- Members supported a Christmas village event at the pavilion as a thank-you to volunteers and supporters, and as a way to demonstrate winter use of the pavilion.
- A Sunday afternoon event, potentially from 16:00 to 18:00, was suggested. Gillian will circulate possible dates. A spring thank you linked to the work day may also be considered separately.

6.3 Grants and multi-use court

- The South Oxfordshire District Council has announced an upcoming grant round (identified by Susan).
  - Gillian will contact Adam and send him the relevant grant information for review.
- Any proposal for accessible play equipment should be treated separately and should be based on a clear needs assessment, defined scope, location and likely use by village residents.

7. Items not discussed

The outstanding ARC maintenance list for information

8. Next meeting

- The next meeting will be held on Microsoft Teams on 2 November 2026. Liz will set up the meeting and enable transcription.

✓ **DECISION** Next meeting: 2 November 2026, Microsoft Teams.

10. Action register

Ref	Owner	Action	Timing / status
A01	Gillian	Confirm and record the current treasurer arrangement during the transition.	Before next finance update
A02	Joanna	Add the emergency lighting and main-light replacement proposal to the Parish Council agenda.	Next PC meeting
A03	Gillian	Confirm the full lighting quotation and arrange works after Parish Council approval.	After approval
A04	Amberley / Sarah	Complete the Bonfire Night risk assessment and send it to the Parish Council.	By end of October
A05	Gillian	Ask Andrew about fireworks expiry, returns/storage and preparation timing.	Before Bonfire Night
A06	Gillian	Reply regarding wood delivery and coordinate collection arrangements with Christian/others.	Before Bonfire Night
A07	All members	Comment on the proposed future ARC processes.	By end of next week; final comments by end of October
A08	Parish Council / Joanna	Confirm the advisory/delivery model in principle and arrange formal terms of reference and legal review.	Before 1 April 2027
A09	Joanna	Seek Parish Council approval for the fence-panel and clock works.	Next PC meeting
A10	Gillian	Discuss pedestrian-gate options with Jeremy and obtain an updated gate quotation.	Report back
A11	Gillian	Circulate possible dates for a Christmas village event.	Before next meeting
A12	Gillian	Contact Adam about the court quotation and relevant grant opportunity.	Report back
A13	Liz	Forward the Thames Water/Groundwork water-efficiency visit email to Gillian.	Immediate
A14	Gillian	Arrange and attend the water-efficiency visit.	When scheduled
A15	Liz	Set up the Teams meeting for 2 November 2026 and enable transcription.	Before next meeting

Record note: These minutes are based on the meeting transcript, agenda and September 2026 finance statement. Names are recorded where a speaker or attendee was identifiable. The meeting was transcribed.

Jobs Calendar

Month	Health & Safety	Process	Social
January	Playground/smoke alarm/emergency lighting checks Fire extinguisher check	Meter Readings	
February	Playground/smoke alarm/emergency lighting checks	Meter Readings	
March	Playground/smoke alarm/emergency lighting checks (inc. ROSPA checklist) Review roles and responsibilities	Ensure payments up to date Final VAT return before mid-March Visual Inspection of Pavilion and facilities in recreation ground. Meter Readings	
April	Playground/smoke alarm/emergency lighting checks	Prepare FY accounts Weed & feed grass Meter Readings	
May	Playground/smoke alarm/emergency lighting checks	AGM Internal Audit Meter Readings	
June	Playground/smoke alarm/emergency lighting checks (inc. ROSPA checklist)	Meter Readings	Astonbury
July	Playground/smoke alarm/emergency lighting checks Annual RoSPA playground check Arrange & carry out PAT test	Meter Readings	
August	Playground checks	Meter Readings	
September	Playground/smoke alarm/emergency lighting checks (inc. ROSPA checklist) Boiler Service Full discharge test of emergency lighting	Review recreation ground risk assessment. Prepare budget for next year Meter Readings Review Gas & Electricity contracts	Autumn Work Day
October	Playground/smoke alarm/emergency lighting checks	Present budget to PC Meter Readings	Safari Supper
November	Playground/smoke alarm/emergency lighting checks	Meter Readings	Bonfire Night
December	Playground/smoke alarm/emergency lighting checks (inc. ROSPA checklist)	Fire Extinguisher checks Meter Readings	