

# CHOLSEY PARISH COUNCIL

To all members of the Council, you are hereby summoned to attend the meeting of Cholsey Parish Council on Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024 at 7.15pm to be held at The Pavilion, Station Road, Cholsey for the purpose of transacting the following business.

25<sup>th</sup> January 2024  
Claire Bird, Clerk to the Council

1. To receive apologies for absence
2. To receive Declarations of Personal and Pecuniary Interest for any agenda items
3. To hear questions or comments from members of the public (max 15 mins)
4. To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2024
5. To receive any reports from County and/or District Councillor
6. To discuss Local Planning (led by planning experts B. Guiver and J. Neville)
  - a. To discuss next steps for the Cholsey Neighbourhood Plan
  - b. To agree a response to the Joint Local Plan consultation
7. To note the Clerk's Report (verbal)
8. To note the Estate Manager's report
9. To receive update from the Transport Leads (Cllr Worley and Cllr Collins)
10. Finance
  - a. To agree amendments to the Financial Regulations as recommended by the internal auditor
  - b. To approve payments made and note payments received
11. To agree responses to planning applications as at 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024

P24/S0148/HH	Side extension and porch Meadow Farm, Reading Road
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12. To note planning decisions as at 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024

P23/S2710/HH	Single storey side extension 29 Honey Lane <b>Granted by SODC</b>
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13. Items for information or inclusion on future agenda

# CHOLSEY PARISH COUNCIL

## **Minutes of the meeting of Cholsey Parish Council duly convened and held on Wednesday 10th January 2024 at 7.15pm at The Pavilion, Station Road, Cholsey**

**Present were** Cllr D. Bamford, Cllr V. Bolt (7.15-8.30pm), Cllr J. Collins, Cllr J. Finch, Cllr G. Herbert, Cllr J Hope Smith, Cllr P. Jenkins, Cllr L. Nixon (Chair), Cllr C. Worley

**Also present were** C. Bird (Clerk), SODC Cllr A.M. Simpson (from 7.30-7.45pm), one member of public

Start time: 7.15pm

End time: 9pm

### **147. To receive apologies for absence**

Apologies were accepted from Cllr M. Smith.

### **148. To receive Declarations of Personal and Pecuniary Interest for any agenda items**

Cllr Bolt has an interest in item 156b due to her involvement with Cholsey 1000 Plus; Cllr Jenkins' also has a personal interest in this item as his wife is the Treasurer of the organisation.

Cllr Finch has an interest in item 156c due to her involvement with Cholsey Community Library

### **149. To hear questions or comments from members of the public (max 15 mins)**

The Parish Council expressed thanks to Clive Miners for his organisation of the Christmas tree for the village.

### **150. To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

It was **resolved** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> December and they were signed by Cllr Nixon.

### **151. To receive any reports from County and/or District Councillor**

Cllr Simpson's report was noted with thanks.

The Clerk will promote the Joint Local Plan consultation via social media and posters. The deadline for responses is 21<sup>st</sup> February.

### **152. To note the Clerk's Report (verbal), and in particular:**

The Clerk reported that the Cholsey Community Support Services (Happy Hub and Mental Health Support Worker) have now successfully transferred to the Cholsey Village CIC. This transition was necessary because the Parish Council no longer has a power under which it can provide these services.

Two new defibrillators purchased with matched funding have been received and will be installed by a local electrician, outside Tesco on the Forty and at the Cholsey Meadows cricket Pavilion.

Phase 1 of the Ilges Lane hedge coppicing project has been completed.

#### **a. To agree next steps in the proposed transfer of Cholsey Meadows Play Area to the Parish Council**

It was agreed to continue progressing the transfer process, subject to the replacement of the play area fence by the developer Vistry. The Clerk will liaise with SODC's legal team and the solicitor appointed by CPC to manage the transfer.

#### **b. To discuss response to Joint Local Plan consultation**

This will be included on the 31<sup>st</sup> January agenda, in conjunction with Neighbourhood Plan discussions. The deadline for responses is 21<sup>st</sup> February.

## CHOLSEY PARISH COUNCIL

### **153. To receive update on the 5-year Strategic plan (Strategic plan subgroup)**

The Clerk reported that the 5-year Strategic plan is currently with a local graphic designer, who is helping to prepare it for publication.

### **154. To note the Estate Manager's update, and in particular:**

#### **a. To agree how to proceed with allotment plot clearances and any expenditure involved**

It was unanimously **resolved** to accept the quote from Contractor C and to go ahead with the works at a cost of up to £2500. The Council would like to introduce deposits for new allotment plot holders to help minimise such expenditure in the future.

#### **b. To agree how to proceed with playground equipment repairs and any expenditure involved**

It was unanimously **resolved** to go ahead with the quoted repairs (with the exception of the Tornado Carousel which will not be reinstated) at a cost of up to £4500.

Cllr Finch will work with the Parish Office team on a proposal to add more recreation ground facilities for older children, based on 'The Cholsey We Choose' community input.

### **155. To receive update from the Transport Leads (Cllr Worley)**

Cllr Worley reported that the parking enforcement company contracted by Oxfordshire County Council had recently fined a number of residents in error. Single yellow line fine enforcement is currently suspended pending the outcome of an OCC parking review in the village. The single yellow line fines will be cancelled or refunded, and the contractors have been reminded not to enforce these for the time being. Double yellow line enforcements continue.

Cllr Worley reported that OCC's public consultation on the parking review has concluded, with 69 responses which are now being analysed by OCC. Cllr Worley had received an initial summary of the responses and said that in general only ~10% of respondents had raised objections. Based on this he was happy for the changes proposed by OCC to go ahead, and asked Councillors to confirm whether they remained in support of the proposals. Those present indicated that they were, based on Cllr Worley's viewpoint and pending more detail from the consultation. There will be an OCC Transport Committee meeting to discuss the parking review on 25<sup>th</sup> January, which members of the public will be able to attend.

A query had been received regarding the East End estate. It is believed that this will become an adopted Highway and therefore included in the village 20mph speed limit proposal.

Cllr Worley continues to pursue the A329 pedestrian crossing project with OCC and will be writing to David Johnston, MP, on behalf of the Parish Council.

We are also awaiting a response from SODC Planning on the requirement for planning permission for a possible recreation ground path project.

Cllr Worley has received the go ahead for planters at the station. Councillors strongly agreed that the accessibility and general state of Cholsey Station is of high priority to address. Cllr Worley has been pursuing this and the Councillors discussed possibilities for involving the community in this project.

### **156. Finance**

#### **a. To agree the Parish Council's Precept request for 2024/2025**

Version 3 of the 2024/2025 was included in the agenda pack and based on this, it was unanimously **resolved** to request a precept of £198,019 for 2024/2025.

This equates to a Band D council tax of £112.18 (Parish Council element) in 2024/2025 compared to £106.03 in 2023/2024 – a 5.8% increase.

## CHOLSEY PARISH COUNCIL

### b. To agree response to 2023/2024 grant request from Cholsey 1000 Plus for The Forty Magazine

It was unanimously **resolved** (with abstentions due to personal interests: Cllr Bolt and Cllr Jenkins) to make a grant in 2023/2024 to Cholsey 1000 Plus of £1250 to assist with increasing costs of producing the Forty Magazine.

Council wishes to support the continued provision of a newsletter for the village and will seek to work with Cholsey 1000 Plus to make the magazine sustainable going forward.

### c. To agree response to 2024/2025 S137 grant request from Cholsey Community Library

It was unanimously **resolved** to approve the annual grant to Cholsey Community Library, of £3400 for 2024/2025.

### d. To approve payments made and note payments received

The payments were approved.

## 157. To agree responses to planning applications as at 4<sup>th</sup> January 2024

P23/S4137/FUL	Retrospective application for car park engineering 47 Reading Road It was <b>resolved</b> to make no comment.
P23/S4339/HH and P23/S4341/LB	Renovation of western range of building 2 Ilges Lane It was <b>resolved</b> to support this application.

## 158. To note planning decisions as at 4<sup>th</sup> January 2024

P23/S3380/HH	Single and two storey extensions Wellfields House, Caps Lane <b>Granted by SODC</b>
P23/S3468/HH	Single and two storey extensions, and front porch 2 Brentford Close <b>Granted by SODC</b>
P23/S3469/HH	Air source heat pump installation Kentwood House, Station Road <b>Granted by SODC</b>
P23/S3609/HH	Annexe outbuilding Little Lollingdon, Westfield Road <b>Refused by SODC</b>

## 159. Items for information or inclusion on a future agenda

Financial Regulation amendments (advised by internal auditor)  
Neighbourhood Plan  
Local Plan consultation  
Transport update – parking review  
Collaborative growing initiative - Community meeting 6<sup>th</sup> February.  
Office revamp plan  
Leases/fees – Bluebirds, Cholsey United, Tennis club  
Emergency plan

Next meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> January, 7.15pm, The Pavilion

## Estate Manager's Report to Parish Council January 2024

### Hedges

Cutting back the hedges is continuing throughout the winter months.

Hedging at the Station Road entrance -all dead wood and ivy has been removed and new native hedging whips have been planted by a group of volunteers.

Hedging along Station Road by the footpath – again all dead wood, brambles and ivy has been removed. I will monitor how this hedge recovers and if needed, plant some native hedging whips into gaps.

### Allotments

The allotment plot clearance. The contractor has been hired and the work will be completed by the end of March if not sooner.

### New allotment tenants – deposits

I have researched the situation in other parish, town and city council's policies with regard to asking for a deposit upon signing the tenancy agreement for allotment plots.

My findings are as follows:

At the commencement of the tenancy a bond of an amount of money defined by the Council and recorded on Part II shall be paid to the Council. The bond will be repayable to the Tenant on termination of the tenancy subject to the Allotment Garden being returned to the Council in the same or better state as it was when the tenancy commenced.

(Wantage Town Council)

A £40 Returnable Deposit is required before signing a tenancy agreement. This is returned when the tenancy is terminated, providing the plot is given back to us in the same condition as it was given to you.

(Didcot Town Council)

A tenancy bond - Deposit Bond - £50.00.

1. Upon initially taking up an allotment plot the tenant shall place a Deposit Bond of £[.] with SAS. This shall be returned to the tenant upon release of the allotment plot, if agreed to be in good order, and return the access key to a committee member. If the plot is not left in an adequately clear and tidy condition SAS will carry out any work needed to bring it into a reasonable state and then recover the costs from the tenant's Deposit Bond held by SAS. This could include the cost of removing debris, repairing structures, or rotovating the land. SAS reserves the right to seek full financial redress should expenditure in excess of the Deposit Bond be required to return a plot to a good condition, as determined by SAS and whose decision shall be final, when left in a poor condition by the tenant.

(Goring and Streatley)

When relinquishing their plot, or upon having their tenancy terminated by the Council, remove all belongings / arisings from their allotment plot or the Council will charge a fee for clearing the plot if it is left in an untidy state;

(Newbury TC)

Oxford City Council, Henley Town Council and Abingdon Town Council have numerous allotment sites, each run by a committee of volunteers, I couldn't find, in the site information, anything about paying a deposit.

The Cholsey Parish Council tenancy agreement for allotment holders states;

7. For its part the Council agrees:

7.1d) To the best of it's ability, to maintain vacant plots in a tidy condition.

The plots which are requiring clearance have historically, for some years, been left to get into such an overgrown state that potential tenants are put off taking on the vacant plots. Once the plots have been cleared and let out, along with a regular inspection schedule and consequences, I am hoping that if a plot becomes vacant and is not let immediately, the maintenance person will be able to keep weeds to a minimum.

Historically, allotments were given to 'the labouring poor' and after the wars to servicemen's families, in order to help with the cost of living in those days. Council needs to consider, when deciding about requesting a refundable deposit from new tenants, the affordability from families for such a deposit.

#### Allotment Communications

All tenants will be invited to the collaboration meeting to be held on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February in the Pavilion.

#### **Recreation Grounds and Play Areas.**

##### Cholsey Bluebirds Football

The three replacement floodlight posts have been installed on Whitehead Meadows as close to where the original posts were located. One post had to be moved further because of the growth of the trees.

The information I have to date, is that the electrical engineers will need to undertake a scan to find where the underground cables lie, on Whitehead Meadow, and there may be a need to dig trenches to access these cables. I have received reassurance from Cholsey Bluebirds that this will be made good. The electricians will then re-establish an electrical supply to the floodlights.

##### Recreation Ground

Fortunately, after storm Isha, Cholsey village didn't seem to have suffered to the extent from previous storms, with damage to trees. I completed a visual check and found one branch of the beech at the Pavilion entrance to the recreation ground, which is lodged in the tree, I have asked the maintenance person to remove if possible.

### Outdoor Gym

The outdoor gym equipment has been included in the annual inspection of the play equipment which is taking place in February this year.

### Playgrounds

#### Cholsey Meadows Play Area

The weekly visual checks for this play area continue to be made and the rubbish bin is emptied weekly by our contractor.

The toddler swings have been replaced and new seats have been installed on the other 2 junior swings. Also the post on the Balance Trail has been replaced and the other posts secured into the ground so are no longer wobbly.

Vistry have stated that they will ask their Maintenance contractor to look at the boundary fencing and gate. This is awaiting completion.

#### Recreation Ground Play Area.

Hags have been commissioned to undertake the repairs to the play equipment. They have indicated that because parts need to be ordered, the work on repairs will begin in 4 – 6 weeks.

Feedback from the young people of the village received during work on the strategy plan will be used to inform what could replace the carousel.

### The Forty

Another old bollard has broken/pulled up and will be replaced.

### Millennium Wood Bridge

The bridge is now in full use and we have received several compliments and thanks.

### Dog Waste Bins

New dog waste bins have been installed on Papist Way by Silly Bridge track and at the top of the recreation ground by the Pavilion. The dog waste bin at the top of Ilges Lane, by the vets, has been re-installed in an upright position, as it was probably hit by a vehicle.

### Defibrillators

A local electrical company have been commissioned to install the new cabinets and power supply for the cabinets. Once this has been completed the new defibrillators can be placed in the cabinets and be available for use as necessary.

## Cholsey Parish Council

<b>Report subject</b>	Proposed changes to financial thresholds in CPC's Financial Regulations
<b>Meeting</b>	Full Council
<b>Meeting date</b>	31 <sup>st</sup> January 2024
<b>Report author</b>	Sophie Smith (RFO) and Claire Bird (Clerk)
<b>Report contact details</b>	assistantclerk@cholseyparishcouncil.gov.uk clerk@cholseyparishcouncil.gov.uk

### 1. Background information

It was recommended by our internal auditor at an interim audit meeting on 14th November 2023 that we make a number of changes to sections 4.1, 11, 14.2 and 14.5 of the current Financial Regulations (available online at: 2019-NALC-model-financial-regulations-england-july-2019-Cholsey-2023.pdf (cholseyparishcouncil.gov.uk))

Proposed changes are detailed below. These have been approved by the Finance Committee and it is recommended that the Council resolve to adopt these changes.

### 2. Detailed consideration

#### Section 4.1:

##### Current regulations:

*4.1. Expenditure on revenue items may be authorised up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget. This authority is to be determined by:*

- *the council for all items over £5,000;*
- *a duly delegated committee of the council for items over £500; or*
- *the Clerk, in conjunction with Chairman of Council or Chairman of the appropriate committee, for any items below £500.*

*Such authority is to be evidenced by a minute or by an authorised invoice duly signed by the Clerk, and where necessary also by the appropriate Councillors. Contracts may not be disaggregated to avoid controls imposed by these regulations.*

##### Recommended amendment for approval by Council:

4.1. Expenditure on revenue items may be authorised up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget. This authority is to be determined by:

- the council for all items over £5,000;
- **a duly delegated committee of the council for items over £2500**



- the Clerk, in conjunction with the Chair of Council or Chair of the Finance Committee for items over £500
- the Clerk for any items below £500.

Such authority is to be evidenced by a minute or by an authorised invoice duly signed by the Clerk, and where necessary also by the appropriate Councillors. Contracts may not be disaggregated to avoid controls imposed by these regulations.

### Section 11:

#### Current regulations:

*11h) When it is to enter into a contract of less than £25,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk or RFO shall obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply); where the value is below £3,000 and above £250 the Clerk or RFO shall strive to obtain 3 estimates. Otherwise, Regulation 10.3 above shall apply.*

*Note, 10.3 states: All members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. An officer issuing an official order shall ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction, usually by obtaining three or more quotations or estimates from appropriate suppliers, subject to any de minimis provisions in Regulation 11.1 below.*

#### Recommended amendment for approval by Council:

11h) When it is to enter into a contract of less than £25,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk or RFO shall obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply); where the value is **below £5000 and above £2500** the Clerk or RFO shall strive to obtain 3 estimates. Otherwise, Regulation 10.3 above shall apply.

### Section 14.2:

#### Current regulations:

*14.2. No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law, save where the estimated value of any one item of tangible movable property does not exceed £250.*

#### Recommended amendment for approval by Council:

Change £250 to £500 to match the Clerk's authorisation.

Note: Tangible moveable property refers to Fixed Assets of the Council, rather than payments for contractors e.g. grass cutters.

**Section 14.5:**

Current regulations:

*14.5. Subject only to the limit set in Regulation 14.2 above, no tangible moveable property shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council with a full business case.*

Recommended amendment for approval by Council:

14.5. Subject only to the limit set in Regulation 14.2 above, no tangible moveable property be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council with a full business case for purchases **above £5000**.

**3. Recommendation**

- 3.1. It is recommended that the Council **RESOLVES** to make the above changes to the Financial Regulations of Cholsey Parish Council

Date of meeting....31/01/2024..... Signatures of authorising councillors:

Payments made between meetings			
Hawthorn	Monthly pest control	£168.00	Authorised by Finance Committee on 10.01.2024
Cantwell Hemmingway	Monthly payroll (Dec)	£54.00	Authorised by Finance Committee on 10.01.2024
Parish Online (Geosphere)	Digital mapping subscription	£192.00	Authorised by Finance Committee on 10.01.2024
Shield Maintenance	Monthly dog & general waste bin collections	£252.20	Authorised by Finance Committee on 10.01.2024
ASAP Computer Services	Monthly IT support & email provision	£254.76	Authorised by Finance Committee on 10.01.2024
Amazon	Paper	£22.75	Authorised by Finance Committee on 10.01.2024
Amazon	Pens & maintenance person equipment	£61.72	Authorised by Finance Committee on 10.01.2024
Amazon	CHEC rabbit guards for trees	£30.99	Authorised by Clerk on 18.01.2024
Amazon	CHEC plant supports for trees	£15.29	Authorised by Clerk on 18.01.2024
B&M	Gravel for allotment	£10.98	Authorised by Clerk on 18.01.2024
Assistant Clerk - mileage	For trips to archives	£24.00	Authorised by Clerk on 22.01.2024
Swift	Quarterly printing charges & annual support charge	£241.59	Authorised by Finance Committee on 22.01.2024
Cholsey CIC	S137 donation for staff (1/3 of total due)	£2,600.00	Agreed by Council at meeting on 06.12.2023
National Allotment Society	Annual membership fee	£66.00	Authorised by Finance Committee on 22.01.2024
Cholsey 1000 Plus	Grant towards Forty magazine	£1,250.00	Agreed by Council at meeting on 10.01.2024
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£5,244.28</b>	
Automatic payments			
Virgin Media	Monthly phone & broadband	£82.62	
Nest	January pensions	£88.06	
HMRC	January PAYE	£217.09	
Gap HR	Monthly HR support	£56.40	
Grundon	Monthly waste collection from Burial Ground	£62.82	
Staff salaries	January salaries	£3,773.89	
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£4,280.88</b>	
Payments for agreement			
Cantwell Hemmingway	Monthly payroll	£54.00	
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£54.00</b>	
Income expected			
Tennis Club lease		2023	£150.00
Bluebirds lease		2023	£75.00
Happy Hub phone/broadband		Jan-24	£29.85
	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>£254.85</b>