

CHOLSEY PARISH COUNCIL

To all members of the Council, you are hereby summoned to attend the meeting of Cholsey Parish Council on Wednesday 13th March 2024 at 7.15pm to be held at The Great Hall, Cholsey Meadows for the purpose of transacting the following business.

7th March 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 21st February 2024
5. To receive any reports from County and/or District Councillor
6. To note the Clerk's Update, in particular:
 - a. To approve and adopt the following draft policies:
 - i. Biodiversity policy
 - ii. Health and Safety policy
 - b. To discuss and approve request received to hold a Family Fun day on the Recreation Ground on 22nd June 2024
 - c. Annual Community Meeting planning update
 - d. To approve full Council meeting dates for the remainder of 2024
7. To note the Environment Coordinator's Update (verbal)
8. To receive update on developing a Community Emergency Plan (Cllrs Herbert and Smith)
9. To receive update from the Transport Lead (Cllr Collins), in particular:
 - a. To agree the formation of a Cholsey Station Working Group
10. To receive update from the Staffing Committee (Cllr Finch)
11. Finance
 - a. To discuss and agree upon S137 grant request for Cholsey Village CIC (contribution to employment of Children's Centre staff and Mental Health Support Worker)
 - b. To approve payments made and note payments received
12. To agree responses to planning applications as at 6th March 2024

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|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| P24/S0610/HH | Two storey side extension and single storey rear extension 5 Cross Road |
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13. To note planning decisions as at 6th March 2024

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| P24/S0148/HH | Side extension and porch Meadow Farm, Reading Road Granted by SODC |
| P23/S2272/HH | Dropped kerb access to property 25 Crescent Way Granted by SODC |
14. 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 21st February 2024 at 7.15pm at The Pavilion, Station Road, Cholsey

Present were Cllr D. Bamford, Cllr V. Bolt, Cllr J. Collins, Cllr J. Finch, Cllr G. Herbert, Cllr P. Jenkins, Cllr L. Nixon (Chair)

Also present were C. Bird (Clerk), SODC Cllr A.M. Simpson (7.15-7.40pm), SODC Cllr B. Manning (7.15-7.40pm), K. Blunt

Start time: 7.15pm

End time: 8.45pm

173. To co-opt new members to the Parish Council

It was unanimously **resolved** to co-opt Katy Blunt (soon to be Katy Ofield) as member of Cholsey Parish Council and a declaration of acceptance was signed before the Clerk.

174. To receive apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted from Cllr M. Smith and Cllr J. Hope-Smith.

175. To receive Declarations of Personal & Pecuniary Interest for any agenda items

There were none.

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

There were none.

177. To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 31st January 2024

It was **resolved** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 31st January and they were signed by Cllr Nixon.

178. To receive any reports from County and/or District Councillor

The SODC Councillors' report was noted with thanks.

179. To note the Clerk's Update (verbal), in particular:

a. To agree the Parish Council's response to the Joint Local Plan consultation

It was **resolved** to submit the response drafted by the Clerk on behalf of the Council following discussions at the 31st January Council meeting.

b. To discuss a response to the Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan consultation

It was **resolved** to support the Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan modifications.

c. To approve and adopt the following:

i. Complaints procedure

The Council's existing Complaints procedure was approved with minor revisions: update contact details and Code of Conduct reference; amend Chairman to Chair throughout.

ii. Publication scheme

The updated Publication scheme was approved.

180. To note the Estate Manager's Update, in particular:

a. To agree whether to introduce an allotment deposit policy in 2024/2025 for new plot holders

The Estate Manager's update on allotments was noted with thanks. It was unanimously **resolved** not to introduce allotment deposits at this time.

181. To receive update on the 5-year Strategic plan (Strategic plan subgroup)

It was unanimously **resolved** to adopt the draft Strategic Plan. This will now be shared publicly through a variety of channels, including the Annual Community Meeting on 11th May. A detailed Action Plan aligned with the Strategic Plan will be developed.

CHOLSEY PARISH COUNCIL

182. To receive update from the Transport Lead (Cllr Collins)

Cllr Collins continues to follow up on parking enforcement changes and the A329 crossing with Oxfordshire County Council officers.

A Working Group will be established to work on an initiative to improve the accessibility and condition of Cholsey Station.

183. Finance

a. To agree whether to spend up to £1500 for materials and labour to instal an outdoor table tennis table provided by SODC

It was **resolved** to spend up to £1500 on installing an outdoor table tennis table provided by SODC at the Recreation Ground, subject to the table being available. There is the possibility that it will instead be sited at Cholsey Meadows, but timing is tight to arrange this.

The Councillors also discussed working with other community organisations to improve leisure/sports facilities at Cholsey Meadows, with potential for providing CIL funding for this.

b. To agree whether to continue to receive the Parish share of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) from South Oxfordshire District Council

It was agreed to continue to receive the Parish share of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) from South Oxfordshire District Council.

c. To note expenditure against budget for 2023/2024 ytd

The expenditure against budget Apr-Dec 2023 was noted.

d. To note ear-marked reserves for 2023/2024 ytd

Current ear-marked reserves were noted.

e. To approve bank account reconciliations

The bank account reconciliations were approved and signed by Cllr Finch and Cllr Blunt.

f. To approve payments made and note payments received

The payments were approved.

184. To agree responses to planning applications as at 15th February 2024

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| P23/S0333/AG | Agricultural barn Meadow Farm, Reading Road It was resolved to make no comment. |
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185. To note planning decisions as at 15th February 2024

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| P23/S4137/FUL | Retrospective application for car park engineering 47 Reading Road Granted by SODC |
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186. Items for information or inclusion on future agenda

Vandalism of the new dog bins (Cllr Jenkins)
Lighting of Wallingford Road zebra crossing (Cllr Jenkins)
Car park improvement project
Community Emergency Plan (Cllrs Herbert and Smith)
Status of adoption of new roads (Cllr Bamford)
Station Road allotment hedge (Cllr Finch)
Graffiti wall project (Cllr Bolt)
Road surfacing on Ilges Lane (Cllr Bolt to draft letter)
Condition of trees planted by Bellway
Cholsey Station Working Group
Annual Community Meeting planning

CHOLSEY PARISH COUNCIL
RESPONSE TO THE BIODIVERSITY DUTY
March 2024

INTRODUCTION - STATUTORY DUTY

Under the 2021 Environment Act, public authorities (including town and parish councils) operating in England must consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

Government guidance published on 17 May 2023 clarifies that, as a public authority, town and parish councils must:

- consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- agree policies and specific objectives based on their consideration.
- act to deliver their policies and achieve their objectives.

Town and parish councils, unlike other authorities, are not obliged to publish a report on their actions, but the [Government guidance](#) requires all public authorities to complete their first consideration of what action to take for biodiversity by 1 January 2024. They must agree their policies and objectives as soon as possible after this and must reconsider the selected actions within five years of completing their previous consideration, or more frequently if they choose.

To comply with the guidance, town and parish councils could as a minimum:

- have biodiversity as an agenda item for a meeting before the end of 2023.
- note what action they are already taking to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- agree what further steps they should take to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

Such steps may include:

- reviewing what biodiversity or nature recovery plans are already in place from other local authorities
- making contact with local voluntary groups working on nature conservation
- carrying out a biodiversity audit of council landholdings and/or the whole council area
- gathering expert advice on possible actions in support of biodiversity
- drafting an action plan that covers action that the council will take itself as well as support for the actions of other local bodies.

Whatever action is agreed, as a minimum local councils could ensure they address biodiversity concerns when commenting on planning applications.

These steps have informed the agreed biodiversity policy below.

BIODIVERSITY POLICY

BACKGROUND

In accordance with the duty imposed on town and parish councils by Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, updated by Section 102 of the Environment Act 2021, **Cholsey Parish Council** (hereinafter referred to as the Council) which has any functions exercisable in relation to England must from time to time consider what action the authority can properly take, consistently with the proper exercise of its functions, to further the general biodiversity objective.

This duty also means that town and parish councils can spend funds in conserving biodiversity.

DEFINITION

According to Defra (Biodiversity 2020), biodiversity is the variety of all life on Earth. It includes all species of animals and plants – everything that is alive on our planet.

Biodiversity is important for its own sake and has its own intrinsic value. A number of studies have shown this value also goes further. Biodiversity is the building block of our 'ecosystems' that in turn provide us with a wide range of goods and services that support our economic and social wellbeing. These include essentials such as food, fresh water and clean air, but also less obvious services such as protection from natural disasters, regulation of our climate, and purification of our water or pollination of our crops. Biodiversity also provides important cultural services, enriching our lives.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The object of this policy is to work towards conserving and enhancing the biodiversity of the Council's area.

The Full Council and any committees of the Council will consider sustainability, environmental impact and biodiversity when making decisions and will develop and implement policies and strategies as required.

In particular, the Council will aim to improve the biodiversity of the area in the following ways:

- consider the potential impact on biodiversity represented by planning applications.
- manage its land and property using environmentally friendly practices that will promote biodiversity.
- support local businesses and council operations in the adoption of low impact / nature positive practices.
- encourage and support other organisations within the village to manage their areas of responsibility with biodiversity in mind.
- support residents and local organisation activities to enhance and promote biodiversity.

ACTIONS

Planning applications

The Council will:

- when commenting on planning applications, support site and building design that benefits

biodiversity through the conservation and integration of existing habitats or provision of new habitats.

- support protection of sensitive habitats from development and will consider whether the development would mean the loss of important habitats for wildlife in respect of all applications.
- consider what each proposed development might make in terms of biodiversity net gain.
- include policies in support of biodiversity within the neighbourhood plan.

Land and property management

The Council will:

- carry out a biodiversity audit of its landholdings.
- consider the conservation and promotion of local biodiversity with regard to the management of its open spaces. This will include adopting beneficial practices with regard to cutting and removal of vegetation, application of chemicals and timing of maintenance work, paying attention to the Government's [regulations for plant protection products](#).
- take special care in the specification of grounds maintenance contracts to ensure that the work, whilst reaching acceptable standards, does not harm the natural environment.
- source sustainable materials when procuring supplies for the Council's use
- consider biodiversity issues and the implementation of changes when managing its buildings.

Local community

The Council will:

- raise public awareness of biodiversity issues, including through its website and newsletters.
- engage with local businesses and residents regarding biodiversity in the community and how members of the community can assist and make a difference.
- where feasible, involve the community in biodiversity projects on its land including for example tree planting, wildflower meadows, birdbox making.

Partners

The Council will work in partnership with other organisations to protect, promote and enhance biodiversity within the council area.

It will review any local nature recovery strategies, species conservation strategies, or protected site strategies in respect of local Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and consider how it may become more involved in implementing the strategies' recommendations.

MONITORING

This policy was adopted on **xx (Minute reference yy)** and will be reviewed in two years or sooner should legislation dictate. A summary of how the policy has been implemented will be published annually.

CHOLSEY PARISH COUNCIL

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

1. Introduction

This policy sets out the general principles and approach that the Parish Council will follow in respect of Health and Safety legislation for premises and activities for which the Council is responsible. It is the responsibility of all Councillors' and employees of the Council to be aware of the following policy statements on Health and Safety and of the organisational arrangements made to implement these policies.

2. The Parish Council's Health and Safety Policy Statement

- 2.1. Cholsey Parish Council, in accordance with the requirements of The Health and Safety at Work Act (1974), and The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations(1999), accepts its duty to provide and maintain both physically and mentally, safe and healthy working conditions for all its employees. It also accepts its duty of care to other persons such as volunteers and contractors who work on behalf of the Council.
- 2.2. The Parish Council will take all reasonable steps to ensure that it complies with the law on Health, Safety and Welfare and any relevant Regulations, Approved Codes of Practice and Guidance. It will provide the resources to ensure the safety of its employees and others affected by its work.
- 2.3. The Parish Council will take all reasonable steps to ensure that:
 - 2.3.1. The information, instruction, training, supervision, equipment and facilities necessary to achieve a safe working environment for employees, members of the public, contractors and volunteers are provided.
 - 2.3.2. Its work, in all its forms, is carried out in ways so that members of the public are not put at risk. Where necessary the Council will obtain specialist technical and Health and Safety advice for any projects or pieces of work that could affect the general public.
 - 2.3.3. Arrangements are in place for the safe use, handling, storage and disposal of all substances and equipment that may endanger health or welfare.
 - 2.3.4. This policy is brought to the attention of employees, members of the public, contractors, volunteers and Councillors and is reviewed periodically.
 - 2.3.5. The Council will actively involve employees in completion of risk assessments connected to their respective roles and encourage employees to raise any health and safety concerns they have with their line manager.
 - 2.3.6. When necessary, there is consultation and negotiation with employees on health,safety and welfare at work to ensure continuing improvement.

CHOLSEY PARISH COUNCIL

2.4. The Parish Council is responsible for managing health and safety, based on the Council's Health and Safety policy.

2.5. The Clerk is responsible for monitoring and reporting to the Council any Health and Safety issues. Day-to-day matters of Health and Safety are dealt with by the Clerk acting on behalf of the Council. The Clerk shall keep copies of all risk assessments, method statements and Health and Safety documents.

2.6. All Councillors, employees/contractors and volunteers have a duty to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of any persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions.

3. Risk Assessments

3.1. The Parish Council will carry out risk assessments of its activities as and when necessary and review these annually.

3.2. The Parish Council will set up and monitor policies and procedures to reduce any risks that are identified.

3.3. The Parish Council requires contractors (and venue hirers, where applicable) to supply Risk Assessments, written Method Statements and Safe Systems of Work as appropriate, prior to starting any major works on behalf of the Council.

4. Reporting Accidents

All accidents, no matter how small, must be reported in the first instance to the Clerk and details entered in the Accident Book. Thereafter, all such accidents will be brought to the attention of the Council. In the event of a serious injury or dangerous occurrence, the Chair, or in their absence the Vice Chair will be informed immediately.

5. Review

This document was approved for use at the meeting of the Parish Council on **xx (Minute reference yy)**, and shall be reviewed at regular intervals and at least annually.

Date of meeting....13/03/2024.....

Signatures of authorising councillors:

| Payments made between meetings | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Cholsey CIC | Feb 2024 wage donation | £2,600.00 | Authorised at a previous PC meeting |
| Didcot Plant | Shredder hire | £458.70 | Authorised by the Clerk |
| Cantwell Hemmingway | Monthly payroll provider | £54.00 | Authorised via email by Finance Committee on 26/02 |
| OALC | Clerk training | £60.00 | Authorised via email by Finance Committee on 26/02 |
| Shield Maintenance | Monthly dog & general waste collections | £252.20 | Authorised via email by Finance Committee on 26/02 |
| Swift | Printer charges | £6.00 | Authorised via email by Finance Committee on 26/02 |
| Carline Creative | Strategic Plan artwork & design | £280.00 | Authorised by the Clerk |
| M&S Water | Leak detection survey at Churchyard | £201.60 | Authorised by the Clerk |
| Bendcrete Leisure | New Skatepark sign | £444.00 | Authorised by the Clerk |
| Staff expenses | Mileage & parking at training course | £14.00 | Authorised via email by Finance Committee on 29/02 |
| CHEC clothes rails | Supplies for clothes swaps | £65.98 | Authorised by the Clerk - CHEC expenditure budget |
| Castle Water | Cemetery water | £10.53 | Authorised via email by Finance Committee on 06/03 |
| ASAP computer services | Monthly IT support & email provision | £258.36 | Authorised via email by Finance Committee on 06/03 |
| Hawthorn | Monthly pest control - Feb 2024 | £168.00 | Authorised via email by Finance Committee on 06/03 |
| Hawthorn | Monthly pest control - Nov 2023 (Invoice not received) | £168.00 | Authorised via email by Finance Committee on 06/03 |
| J.Drewe | Grass cutting at cemetery and C.Meadows playground | £565.00 | Authorised via email by Finance Committee on 06/03 |
| | TOTAL | £5,606.37 | |
| Automatic payments | | | |
| Staff salaries | Feb-24 | £3,543.78 | |
| Gap HR | Monthly HR support | £56.40 | Inc VAT |
| Virgin Media | Monthly phone & broadband | £83.15 | £29.85 being charged back to Happy Hub for their supply |
| Nest | Monthly staff pensions | £85.86 | |
| Grundon | Waste collection at cemetery | £64.50 | Inc VAT |
| | TOTAL | £3,833.69 | |
| Payments for agreement | | | |
| | TOTAL | £0.00 | |
| <u>Income received</u> | | | |
| | TOTAL | £0.00 | |
| <u>Income expected</u> | | | |
| | TOTAL | £0.00 | |