

CHOLSEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Cholsey Parish Council duly convened and held on Wednesday 20th November 2024 at 7.15pm at The Pavilion, Cholsey

Present were Cllr D. Bamford, Cllr J. Collins, Cllr G. Herbert, Cllr J. Hope-Smith, Cllr P. Jenkins, Cllr L. Nixon (Chair) Cllr K. Pomlett, Cllr M. Smith

Also present were C. Bird (Clerk), two members of the public

Start time: 7.20pm

End time: 9.40pm

111. To receive apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted from Cllr V. Bolt, Cllr Finch, Cllr Ofield and Cllr S. Schäfer.

112. Public participation session: to hear questions or comments from members of the public (max. 15 mins)

Representatives of a maintenance contractor attended to introduce themselves to the Council in person.

113. To receive Declarations of Personal or Pecuniary Interest for any agenda items (*note, this does not preclude later declarations*)

There were none.

114. To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 16th October 2024 (Appendix A) and receive update on any Minute items

It was **resolved** to approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 16th October 2024 and they were signed by Cllr Nixon.

115. To receive any reports from County and/or District Councillors

District Cllr Simpson's report received by email was noted with thanks.

116. To note Clerk's report (verbal), in particular:

a) To receive update on meeting with Bluebirds and Cholsey United, 6th November 2024

The Clerk and Chair reported that a recent meeting with the Chairs of Bluebirds and Cholsey United was positive and helpful. Key topics included parking challenges on match days, pitch maintenance and the football pavilion. Bluebirds are going to begin staggering kick-off times for their matches and will continue to urge considerate parking, including the use of the Red Lion carpark by away teams. Further solutions to ease the situation will also be explored.

On other matters, the Clerk reported that Oxfordshire County Council will be planting approximately 20 trees on highway verges in the village in the coming weeks, with a focus on the Queen's Road area.

The Cholsey Environment Champions (CHEC) 'Wildlife Group', including Cllr Hope-Smith and the Environment Coordinator, met on 11th November to discuss plans for the Forty Community Meadow project. They had discussed using part of the s137 budget allocated to CHEC in 2024/2025 to purchase native wildflower plug plants for the project, and this was agreed by the Councillors in principle.

117. To note Estate Manager's report (Appendix B)

The Estate Manager's report was noted with thanks.

The next allotment plot inspections will be carried out in December.

The Estate Manager is progressing the tree works identified by the September tree survey, including urgent works on trees on the Forty and in the Recreation Ground. Quotes for the next tier of work will be obtained from tree surgeons.

The second phase of Ilges Lane hedge coppicing will take place next week

118. To receive update from the Transport Committee (Cllr Collins), in particular:

a) To discuss Public Realm preliminary proposal

It was agreed to send the preliminary high-level proposal to OCC for their views.

On other transport-related matters, Cllr Collins continues to chase for the Wallingford Road zebra crossing lights to be connected properly. This has been a very frustrating process.

Cllr Collins also continues to pursue the A329 puffin crossing with OCC, and has recently had input from County Cllr Bloomfield.

CHOLSEY PARISH COUNCIL

The campaign to improve the station's condition and accessibility continues. Cllr Finch has recently met with MP Olly Glover. Cllr Collins and two residents supporting the project will meet with a resident of Goring who was very active in improving station accessibility there.

Cllr Finch and the Environment Coordinator had recently met with OCC Transport planners regarding an active travel infrastructure project between local towns and villages.

We continue to wait for OCC to implement the agreed parking restriction changes and 20mph speed limits.

119. Finance

a) To receive update from Finance Committee meeting, 13th November 2024 (Cllr Bamford)

Cllr Bamford reported that the recent interim internal audit had been successful. 2024/2025 spending is currently on track. CIL funds have been moved to a new banking provider.

It was agreed to upgrade to Rialtas Cloud Software from January or as soon as possible, to enable the Clerk to train to use the software.

b) To discuss preliminary budget and precept request 2025/2026

The preliminary budget was noted and a final version will be reviewed at the December Council meeting.

c) To discuss the Cholsey Parish Council - Cholsey Pavilion Trust lease and agree next steps

The Council discussed next steps in reviewing the lease which is due for renewal in March 2025.

d) To agree annual allotment plot rents for 2025/2026

It was **resolved** to implement the following allotment fees for 2025/2026.

Allotment fees

Plot sizes	2024/2025	2025/2026
Full plot	£21.00	£22.05
Half plot	£10.50	£11.05
Quarter plot	£6.00	£6.30
Cholsey Meadows large	£43.50	£45.70
Cholsey Meadows medium	£23.00	£24.15
Cholsey Meadows small	£17.00	£17.85

Note: Cholsey Meadows plots are larger

e) To agree burial ground fees for 2025/2026

It was **resolved** to implement the following burial ground fees for 2025/2026.

Burial Ground fees

Service description	2024/2025	2025/2026
Burial fee, including plot purchase	£500.00	£525.00
Reservation of a burial plot	£400.00	£420.00
Fee payable on burial in a purchase plot	£100.00	£105.00
Ashes internment fee, including plot purchase	£210.00	£220.50
Reservation of an ashes internment plot	£145.00	£152.25
Fee payable on ashes internment in purchased plot	£95.00	£99.75
New burial plot headstone fee	£100.00	£105.00
New cremation plot tablet fee	£65.00	£68.25
Additional inscription fee	£40.00	£42.00
Wooden cross fee	£40.00	£42.00

f) To agree ground rents and other related fees for 2025/2026

The following were agreed:

Bluebirds ground rent: £75 (in accordance with current lease)

Tennis ground rent: £200 (a new lease will be dependent on improvements to public court access)

CHOLSEY PARISH COUNCIL

g) To agree s137 donation to the Royal British Legion

The Parish Council reuses its poppy wreath to avoid waste. It was therefore **resolved** to make an s137 donation of £50 to the Royal British Legion.

h) To approve new payments and note payments received (Appendix C)

The payments were approved and signed by Cllrs Herbert and Hope-Smith.

120. To consider new planning applications and planning amendments as at 13th October 2024

P24/S3448/HH	Ground floor front and rear extension, 17 Celsea Place It was resolved to object to this application with the following comment: The front extension is not in keeping with the current street view. CNP H7 states: the scale, height and form fit unobtrusively with the existing building and the character of the street scene. The rear extension does not impact in the same manner
P24/S3538/HH	Two storey side extension, replacement porch, 3 Hithercroft Cottages It was resolved to make no comment on this application.
P24/S2895/S73	Variation of Condition 2 to move access to the site, 75 Honey Lane The Parish Council continues to have concerns about this application, including the ground works entailed. It was agreed that Cllr Smith would write to SODC's Senior Planning Officer.

121. To note South Oxfordshire District Council planning decisions as at 13th October 2024

P24/S2588/HH	Single storey rear extension, 43 Rotherfield Road, Granted by SODC
P22/S4164/FUL	Change of use, Land east of Reading Road, Appeal dismissed by Planning Inspector

122. To consider and if thought fit, to resolve to temporarily exclude the press and public

Pursuant to Section 1 of the Public Bodies [Admission to Meetings] Act 1960 the Committee will be asked to exclude the press and public from the meeting on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted

It was **resolved** to temporarily exclude the press and public. No members of the press or public were present.

123. To discuss tenders for estate grass-cutting contract 2025/2026 and agree to appoint a contractor for this work

After discussion it was agreed to proceed with Contractor B for 2025, with the proviso that the Estate Manager works closely with them to regularly monitor and resolve any issues that needs addressing.

A report on options for managing Whitehead Meadow will be written by the officers, working with Cllr Schäfer, to enable the Council to make a decision on this. The report will be brought to a future meeting.

124. Staffing

a) To receive update from the Staffing Committee meeting held 6th November 2024

An update from the Staffing Committee was noted, including training plans.

b) To agree staff hours and hourly pay rates for 2025/2026

No change to staff hours is currently anticipated.

It had previously been agreed to move to hourly rates in line with local government NJC pay scales. The Council will set 2024/2025 hourly rates at the published 2023/2024 NJC pay rate applicable for each SCP.

It was **resolved** to adopt the following hourly pay rates for 2025/2026:

Clerk: 22 hours per week, SCP 31 upon completion of CiLCA

Responsible Finance Officer/Assistant Clerk: 16 hours per week, SCP 21

Estate Manager: 14 hours per week, SCP 16

Environment Coordinator: 12 hours per week, SCP 16

Maintenance Person: 10 hours per week, SCP 14

CHOLSEY PARISH COUNCIL

125. Items for report or inclusion on next agenda

Emergency Plan

Final 2025/2026 budget

Super User, Fix My Street (Cllr Pomlett)

Footpath accessibility project (Cllr Pomlett, Cllr Jenkins)

Environmental Coordinator update (January)

126. To confirm the date of next Full Council meeting – Wednesday 18th December, 7.15pm, Pavilion, Station Road, Cholsey