

**Minutes of the Annual meeting of Cholsey Parish Council duly convened and held on Wednesday
20th May 2026 at 7.15pm at The Pavilion, Cholsey**

Present were Cllr J. August, Cllr D. Bamford (Chair), Cllr C. Fox, Cllr P. Jenkins, Cllr G. Herbert, Cllr J. Hope-Smith (as Parish Councillor and County Councillor), Cllr S. Schäfer and Cllr M. Smith

Also present were C. Bird (Clerk); District Cllr A.-M, Simpson (until 7.35pm), one member of public (until 8.30pm)

Start: 7.20pm

End: 10.05pm

1. To elect a Chair for the year ahead and to receive their Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Cllr Nixon had contacted the Clerk to indicate her willingness to act as Chair for the year ahead. There were no other nominations. It was unanimously **resolved** to elect Cllr Lis Nixon as Chair of the Council. Proposer: Cllr Smith; Seconder: Cllr Bamford. The Clerk will arrange signing of a declaration of acceptance form.

2. To elect a Vice Chair for the year ahead and to receive their Declaration of Acceptance of Office

It was unanimously **resolved** to elect Cllr Judy Collins as Vice Chair of the Council. Proposer: Cllr Smith; Seconder: Cllr Bamford. The Clerk will arrange signing of a declaration of acceptance form.

3. To receive apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted from Cllr J. Collins and Cllr L. Nixon.

It was **resolved** that Cllr Bamford would act as Chair for the meeting.

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

A member of public attended to understand more about the Parish Council's operations.

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

There were none.

6. To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd April 2026 (Appendix A) and receive update on any Minute items

It was **resolved** to approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd April 2026 and they were signed by Cllr Bamford.

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

District and County Councillor reports were noted with thanks.

8. To receive the minutes and recommendations from the last meeting of the Finance Committee, held on 5th May 2026 (Appendix B), in particular:

a. To agree transfers to Ear-marked and General Reserves

Cllr Bamford, acting as Chair of the Finance Committee, reported the Parish Council's surplus of approximately £60k in 2025/2026. This is due to a combination of increased burials income and bank interest, underspend (e.g. churchyard grass cutting), deferred action on planned projects, and intended reserve building. The transfers to Ear-marked and General Reserves detailed in Minute F30 of the 5th May 2026 Finance Committee meeting were noted and agreed. The Responsible Financial Officer will make the necessary bank transfers.

b. To review and adopt a draft Investment Policy (Appendix C)

It was **resolved** to adopt the draft Investment Policy.

c. To discuss and agree investment of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds held by Unity Trust Bank in appropriate Instant Access and Notice accounts

The Council currently holds approx. £260K in Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds. Active projects which may draw on these funds in 2026/2027 include a potential all-weather Recreation Ground path and skatepark extension. It was agreed to make the following transfers of CIL funds:

£100K from Current account into Instant Access account (1.95% interest)
£100K from Current account into a 32-day notice account (2.70% interest)
£45K from Current into a 95-day notice account (2.90% interest)
£15K to remain in Current account

The draft Minutes of the 5th May 2026 Finance Committee meeting were noted.

9. To receive the minutes and recommendations from the last meeting of the Staffing Committee, held on 25th March 2026 (Appendix D)

The draft Minutes of the 25th March 2026 Staffing Committee meeting were noted.

10. To approve Terms of References for the following Committees/Working Groups (Appendix E):

- a. Finance Committee
- b. Staffing Committee
- c. Transport Committee
- d. To note that Terms of Reference are required for new Neighbourhood Plan Working Group

It was **resolved** to approve the existing Committee Terms of Reference with no amendments.

The Clerk has prepared a draft Terms of Reference for discussion at the forthcoming Neighbourhood Plan Working Group meeting. It will then be brought to Full Council.

11. To appoint Councillor members to serve on the following Committees/Working Groups:

a. Finance Committee Previously: DB, JC, PJ, MS

It was **resolved** that Cllr Bamford, Cllr Collins, Cllr Jenkins and Cllr Smith continue to serve on the Finance Committee.

b. Staffing Committee Previously: JA, CF, GH, SS

It was **resolved** that Cllr August, Cllr Fox, Cllr Herbert and Cllr Schäfer continue to serve on the Staffing Committee.

c. Transport Committee Previously: JA, JC, JH-S, SS

It was **resolved** that Cllr August, Cllr Collins, Cllr Hope-Smith and Cllr Schäfer continue to serve on the Transport Committee.

d. Neighbourhood Plan Working Group Previously: JA, CF

It was **resolved** that Cllr August and Cllr Fox continue to serve on the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group. It was noted that more members are needed for the Working Group.

e. Planning Lead(s) Previously: PJ, MS

It was **resolved** that Cllr Jenkins and Cllr Smith continue to act as Planning Leads.

12. To approve and adopt the following (Appendix E)

- a. **Standing Orders – last reviewed May 2025**
- b. **Financial Regulations – last reviewed May 2025**
- c. **Code of Conduct – last reviewed May 2025**
- d. **Scheme of Delegation – last reviewed May 2025**
- e. **Complaints procedure – last reviewed May 2025**
- f. **Publication scheme – last reviewed May 2025**
- g. **GDPR Data Protection Policy – last reviewed May 2025**
- h. **Health and Safety Policy – last reviewed April 2024**
- i. **Employment policies and procedures**
 - i. **To approve delegating this item to the Staffing Committee**

It was **resolved** to approve and adopt the above Council policies and procedures.

It was **resolved** to delegate approval of the Employment policies to the Staffing Committee.

13. To confirm Parish Council Representatives to:

a. Pavilion Trust *Previously: DB*

It was **resolved** that Cllr Bamford will continue in this role.

It was previously agreed that Cllr Nixon and the Clerk will meet with the Pavilion Trust Chair on a quarterly basis. The next update meeting is due to be arranged.

b. Cholsey 1000 Plus *Previously:*

It was agreed to contact S. Jeffs to ask whether Cholsey 1000 Plus would like a CPC representative (previously V. Bolt) and what would be helpful.

c. CCDT *Previously: JC*

It was **resolved** that Cllr Collins will continue in this role.

d. Grundon *Previously: DB*

It was **resolved** that Cllr Bamford will continue in this role.

e. Defibrillator checking *Previously: PJ*

It was **resolved** that Cllr Jenkins will continue in this role.

It was agreed that Cllr August would approach Cholsey Volunteers to ask if they would like a representative from the Council.

14. To review arrangements with other local authorities, not-for-profit bodies and businesses

- a. **Grass cutting (J. Drewe) and verge cutting (Tactical Facilities Management)**
- b. **Waste services (Shield Group; Grundon)**
- c. **HR consultant (GAP HR)**
- d. **IT support (ASAP Computer Services)**
- e. **Payroll accountants (AA Morgan)**
- f. **Office rental (Cholsey Pavilion Trust)**
- g. **Finance and allotment software (Rialtas)**
- h. **Internal auditor (Mulberry Local Authority Services)**
- i. **Phone and Broadband (Virgin Media)**
- j. **Website and gov.uk domain (Aubergine)**

The above arrangements were reviewed and approved to continue.

15. To note that this Council has adopted the General Power of Competence as of 18th December 2024

The Council's GPC status was noted.

16. To review the Council's asset register

The Council's asset register was reviewed and noted.

17. To agree arrangements for the Council's insurance cover

It was **resolved** to continue insurance cover with Zurich; this will be the third year of a three-year agreement.

18. To review Council and/or staff memberships to other bodies

- a. OALC: £1056 inc. VAT
- b. SLCC (Clerk's membership): £253
- c. Information Commissioners Office: £52
- d. Community First Oxfordshire: £70
- e. Parish Online: £192 inc. VAT
- f. Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management: £105 inc. VAT
- g. National Allotment Society: £84 inc. VAT
- h. Oxfordshire Neighbourhood Plans Alliance: £50

The above arrangements were reviewed and approved to continue.

19. To agree dates of ordinary meetings of the Full Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council: on the third Wednesday of the Month at 7.15pm, except for August 2026 (no meeting)

It was agreed to continue with monthly Full Council meetings on the third Wednesday of the Month. There will be no meeting in August 2026.

20. To note Clerk's report (verbal) including:

- a. **To consider correspondence from Cholsey Tennis Club (21st April 2026) seeking the Council's endorsement for a District Council grant application towards court resurfacing**

It was resolved to write to the Tennis Club confirming the Council's support for their grant application to SODC.

- b. **To note the expiry of the 25 year ground lease dated 3rd July 2002 between the Council and Cholsey Bluebirds Football Club relating to the Jubilee Field Sporting Pavilion, and to agree to engage a qualified solicitor to review the lease arrangement.**

It was agreed to engage a qualified solicitor and begin the process of reviewing the lease.

21. To note Estate Manager's report (Appendix F)

The Estate Manager's report was noted. Councillors were encouraged to support the Estate Manager in the next allotment inspections, as this gives a valuable insight into the allotment sites and communities.

22. To consider a proposal from a resident (10th May 2026) to support community food growing in Cholsey and discuss whether to explore funding opportunities for such a project.

Cllr Herbert and the Clerk had met with a resident on 30th April. The resident is an experienced food grower and could offer practical sessions, workshops and talks for allotment holders and other residents wishing to successfully grow their own food. This could support a number of Strategic Plan goals. Councillors had an initial discussion, including about how this potential project overlaps with the community allotment offering. The impact on internal staff resources would also need to be considered. It was agreed that next steps should be to establish whether there is interest within the community and investigate potential sources of grant funding.

23. To receive update from the Transport Committee, in particular:

- a. **To receive an update on Electric Vehicle charger installation in the Pavilion car park, as part of Oxfordshire County Council's EV Microhubs scheme, and agree whether to proceed with a site feasibility study for the project (Clerk)**

It was **resolved** to sign a Letter of Intent to proceed with a non-binding site feasibility study for the EV Microhubs scheme. The Clerk confirmed that there is no cost to the Council of participating in the scheme, except for officer time liaising with Connected Kerb and Oxfordshire County Council prior to launch.

24. Finance

a. To note the 2025/2026 year-end accounts (Appendix G)

The 2025-2026 year-end accounts were noted, including the surplus and movements to reserves (see also Minute 8).

b. To note and approve the reconciled bank balances as at 31st March 2026 (Appendix H)

The reconciled bank balances were noted and signed by Cllrs Herbert and Schäfer

c. To confirm cheque and banking signatories *At present: DB, JC, PJ, LN*

The existing cheque and banking signatories were approved to continue.

d. To agree response to grant request from Cholsey Horticultural Society towards entertainment at the Cholsey Village Show in August 2026

It was **resolved** (5 votes for; 1 vote for a higher figure; 1 vote for a lower figure; 1 abstain) to make a grant of £500 to Cholsey Horticultural Society towards entertainment at the Cholsey Village Show.

e. To agree response to grant request from Cholsey Community Library towards blinds and remote openers for roof windows

The grant request was discussed. Councillors asked the Clerk to discuss this further with the Library Committee, to ensure that opening the roof windows would make sufficient difference to the space, and to check whether other potential solutions have been considered.

f. To approve new payments and note payments received (Appendix I)

The payments were approved and signed by Cllrs August and Fox.

25. Audit 2025/2026: to consider the 2025/2026 AGAR submission to the External Auditor

a. To receive and review the report from the Internal Auditor for 2025/2026

The report was noted with thanks to the RFO and Clerk. The Internal Auditor's opinion is that the systems and internal procedures at Cholsey Parish Council are well established and followed. However the Clerk explained that the Council will not be able to select 'YES' to the new Assertion 10 on the AGAR form for 2025/2026. This is because we do not currently have a WCAG 2.2 AA-compliant website. We approached our current website provider about this in November 2025 and shortly after this they gave us notice to discontinue their website offering. At the 17th December 2025 meeting, Council therefore resolved to appoint Aubergine (who are accessibility compliance experts in our industry) to develop a new website for the Council. The Clerk continues to work with Aubergine on this and the new website is expected to launch in June.

It was noted that other aspects of Assertion 10 compliance are in hand – including gov.uk email addresses, GDPR policies and data audit, IT policy.

b. To agree the Annual Governance Statement for 2025/2026

It was unanimously **resolved** to agree the Council's Annual Governance Statement for 2025/2026 and it was signed by the Clerk and the Chair. The Council has selected 'NO' for Assertion 10 because it did not have a WCAG 2.2 AA-compliant website during 2025-2026. The Council has selected 'YES' to all other assertions.

c. To agree the Accounting Statement for 2025/2026

It was unanimously **resolved** to agree the Council's Accounting Statement for 2025/2026 and it was signed by the Chair.

d. To consider the draft Statement of Variance

The Statement of Variance was noted. Key variances included the receipt of less CIL money, and the receipt of more burial fees income and bank interest.

e. To agree dates for the Notice of Public Rights

The dates for the Notice of Public Rights were agreed, commencing on Tuesday 3rd June and ending on Monday 14th July. The Clerk will publish the notice on the Council website and notice boards.

26. To consider planning applications as at 14th May 2026

a. P26/S1094/HH, The Elms West End: Erection of storage building.

It was **resolved** to make no comment on this application.

- b. P26/S1111/FUL, Laurence Hall Church Road: Removal of existing buggy shelter and construction of a new single storey meeting room extension with 900mm wide access door from the corridor linking the toilets to the main hall. Demolition of existing external chimney breast at front of building and construction of new main entrance doors with covered porch and ramped access. Remodelling of existing toilet accommodation to provide two unisex toilets with disabled access and baby changing facilities. Removal of existing constriction in access to the toilet area. Removal of existing toilet ceiling and installation of insulation and new ceiling. Removal of the stud wall between the parish office and storage space and conversion to one space with toilet access from office. Insulation to the walls and roof in this area. Replacement of existing 'time expired' roofing and replacement with new matching slates and retention of existing ridge terracotta tiles. New enclosing walls to original entrance porch to create additional storage space. External appearance to match existing. New open sided buggy shelter to replace existing storage shed. Remodelled vehicle entrance and car park with a separate pedestrian access. Remodelled fencing and planting alongside the roadway footpath.**

It was **resolved** to support this application provided all planning rules and guidance are adhered to, including comments by the Highways Agency.

c. P26/S1184/LB, 4 Church Road: Installation of remedial support/restraint to SE elevation chimney stack.

It was **resolved** to support this application, as necessary work to ensure the safety and integrity of a Listed Building.

d. P26/S1196/HH, 27 Lapwing Lane. Single-storey rear extension and associated internal layout changes.

It was **resolved** to make no comment on this application.

e. P26/S1246/HH, 4 The Rowans: Front porch

It was **resolved** to make no comment on this application.

27. Items for report or inclusion on next agenda

Whitecross Farm – outcome of appeal (permission granted) for sand and gravel extraction

Neighbourhood Plan Working Group update

Cholsey Brook update

28. To confirm the date of the next Full Council meeting – Wednesday 17th June, 7.15pm, Cholsey Pavilion