

CHOLSEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Cholsey Parish Council duly convened and held on Wednesday 15th January 2025 at 7.15pm at The Pavilion, Cholsey

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

Also present were C. Bird (Clerk), V. Beardall Richards (Environment Coordinator; until 8.25pm)

Start time: 7.20pm

End time: 9.10pm

142. To receive apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted from Cllr V. Bolt, Cllr J. Collins and Cllr S. Schäfer.

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

There were none.

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

There were none.

145. To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 18th December 2024 (Appendix A) and receive update on any Minute items

It was **resolved** to approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 18th December 2024 and they were signed by Cllr Nixon.

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

County Cllr Bloomfield's email report was noted.

147. To note Clerk's report (verbal)

The Clerk's report was noted.

148. To receive update from the Environment Coordinator, including:

a) To discuss a proposal to plant additional cherry trees along the Station Road entrance to the Recreation Ground and agree expenditure if appropriate

The Environment Coordinator presented an update on the Cholsey Environment Champions (CHEC) groups (Energy, Food and Growing, Waste Not Want Not, and Wildlife), her activities as part of the Transport Committee, and the Spring Line project funded by Mend The Gap, including how these initiatives fit with the Parish Council's Strategic Plan.

It was **resolved** to plant up to seven new cherry trees, at an estimated planting cost of £140 per tree, along the Station Road entrance to the Recreation Ground, whilst ensuring space for continued vehicle access. It was agreed to ask local businesses if they would like to sponsor a tree.

149. To discuss and approve the draft Biodiversity Action Plan (Appendix B)

It was **resolved** to adopt the draft Biodiversity Action Plan.

Linked to this, it was noted that the Council's communication and engagement methods will be reviewed in 2025.

150. To note Estate Manager's report (Appendix C), in particular:

a) To discuss quotes for removal and replacement of swings in the younger children's play area on the Recreation Ground and agree expenditure for this work, in light of new information received

Following the 18th December 2024 Parish Council meeting, it has now been confirmed that the model of swing quoted for by Contractor A is the same as the model in Contractor B's quote. Councillors were concerned that the design of this swing equipment may encourage climbing of the structure and present a safety risk.

The December Estate Manager's report was therefore revisited and it was **resolved** to proceed with Contractor C's quote (£8560.80 to remove the existing swings and matting adjacent to the allotment hedge

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in the younger children's play area, and replace with new swings and safety matting further from the birch tree roots). It was **resolved** to use Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds for this work.

b) To discuss quotes for renovation of the Pavilion car park and agree expenditure for this work

Three fixed-price quotes from local contractors were considered by the Council. It was **resolved** to proceed with contractor C's quote (£49,720.00 excl. VAT to renovate the left entrance side of the Pavilion car park, to improve drainage and surfacing). This decision was based on advice from a resident engineering expert and their view that Contractor C's proposed solution will drain more quickly than Contractor B's proposal. It was **resolved** to use Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds for this work.

151. To receive update from the Transport Committee (Cllr Collins)

It was agreed to move this item to the February meeting.

152. Finance

a) To agree the Parish Council's precept request for 2025/2026

Based on the 2025-2026 budget approved at the 18th December 2024 Parish Council meeting, it was unanimously **resolved** to request a precept of £211,973 for 2025/2026.

This equates to a Band D council tax of £117.79 (Parish Council element) in 2025/2026 compared to £112.18 in 2024/2025 – a 5% increase.

b) To discuss the Cholsey Parish Council – Cholsey Pavilion Trust lease and agree next steps

It was **resolved** to renew the existing lease between Cholsey Parish Council and Cholsey Pavilion Trust for a further six-year period. It was agreed that the lease should be reviewed annually. Cllr Nixon and the Clerk will arrange to meet with the Chair of the Pavilion Trust to discuss maintenance plans and a schedule for reporting to the Parish Council going forward.

c) To approve new payments and note payments received (Appendix D)

It was **resolved** to approve the payments and they were signed by Cllrs Ofield and Hope-Smith; payments received were noted.

153. To consider new planning applications and planning amendments at 9th January 2025

There were none.

154. To note South Oxfordshire District Council planning decisions at 9th January 2025

There were none.

155. Items for report or inclusion on next agenda

Date and format for the Annual Community meeting

Emergency Plan

Updated Financial Regulations

Whitehead Meadow management plan

Verge management plan

Forty Community Meadow trial

Old Churchyard formal closure

156. To confirm the date of next Full Council meeting – Wednesday 19th February 2025, 7.15pm, Pavilion, Station Road, Cholsey