

**Minutes of the Annual meeting of Cholsey Parish Council duly convened and held on Wednesday
21st May 2025 at 7.15pm at The Pavilion, Cholsey**

Present were Cllr D. Bamford, Cllr J. Collins, Cllr J. Finch, Cllr P. Jenkins, Cllr G. Herbert, Cllr J. Hope-Smith (as Parish Councillor and County Councillor), Cllr L. Nixon (Chair), Cllr K. Pomlett, and Cllr S. Schäfer

Also present were C. Bird (Clerk)

Start time: 7.20pm

End time: 9.20pm

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

It was unanimously **resolved** to elect Cllr Lis Nixon as Chair of the Council. Proposer: Cllr Bamford; Seconder: Cllr Jenkins. Cllr Nixon signed the declaration of acceptance of office in the presence of the Clerk.

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 Jenny Finch as Vice Chair of the Council. Proposer: Cllr Nixon; Seconder: Cllr Pomlett. Cllr Finch signed the declaration of acceptance of office in the presence of the Clerk.

3. To receive apologies for absence

Apologies were accepted from Cllr K. Ofield and Cllr M. Smith.

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

There were none

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 16th April 2025 (Appendix A) and receive update on any Minute items

It was **resolved** to approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 16th April 2025 and they were signed by Cllr Nixon.

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

County Cllr Hope-Smith's verbal report as Cholsey's newly elected County Councillor was noted with thanks. Cllr Hope-Smith is looking into improving pedestrian walkway markings on the Bunk Line bridge. He reported that there is a year-long funded programme to clean and empty every gully in Oxfordshire. Cholsey's work is scheduled for August/September.

District Cllr Simpson's written report was noted with thanks.

8. To receive the minutes and recommendations from the last meeting of the Finance Committee, held on 7th May 2025 (Appendix B), in particular:

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

Cllr Bamford, Chair of the Finance Committee, reported the Parish Council's surplus of approximately £32k in 2024/2025, due to underspend, deferred action, and intended reserve building. The transfers to Ear-marked and General Reserves detailed in Minute F30 of the 7th May 2025 Finance Committee meeting were noted and agreed. The RFO will make the necessary bank transfers.

b) To agree amendments to the Internal Controls Policy (Appendix C)

Minor amendments as outlined in Minute F31 of the 7th May 2025 Finance Committee meeting were noted and agreed. The Clerk will update the Policy.

The draft Minutes of the 7th May 2025 Finance Committee meeting were noted.

9. To receive the minutes from the last meeting of the Staffing Committee, held on 6th November 2024 (Appendix D)

The draft Minutes of the 6th November 2024 Staffing Committee meeting were noted.

10. To approve Terms of References for the following Committees/Working Groups:

- a) **Finance Committee (Appendix E)**
- b) **Staffing Committee (Appendix F)**
- c) **Transport Committee (Appendix G)**

The Committee Terms of Reference were approved with no amendments.

The Clerk will arrange the review of Working Group Terms of Reference.

11. To appoint 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: VB, GH, KO***

It was **resolved** that Cllr Herbert and Cllr Ofield continue to serve on the Staffing Committee. Cllr Bolt has recently resigned from the Council. It was **resolved** to appoint Cllr Schäfer to the Staffing Committee as the third member.

- c) **Transport Committee *Previously: JC, JF, SS***

It was **resolved** that Cllr Collins, Cllr Finch and Cllr Schäfer continue to serve on the Transport Committee.

- d) **Planning Lead(s) *Previously: PJ, MS***

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

12. To approve and adopt the following

- a) **Draft revised Standing Orders based on the NALC model, updated 2025 (Appendix H)**

It was **resolved** to adopt the revised Standing Orders. The Clerk will update the website.

- b) **Financial Regulations (Appendix I) – *last reviewed February 2025***
- c) **Code of Conduct (Appendix J) – *last reviewed May 2024***
- d) **Scheme of Delegation (Appendix K) – *last reviewed June 2024***
- e) **Complaints procedure (Appendix L) – *last reviewed May 2024***
- f) **Publication scheme (Appendix M) – *last reviewed December 2024***
- g) **GDPR Data Protection Policy (Appendix N) – *last reviewed May 2024***
- h) **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. It was noted that the Employee Handbook has been reviewed by GAP HR Consultants in 2025, with no changes recommended at this time.

13. To confirm Parish Council Representatives to:

- a) **Pavilion Trust *Previously: VB, JF***

It was previously agreed (April 16th 2025 Full Council meeting) that Cllr Nixon and the Clerk will meet with the Pavilion Trust Chair on a quarterly basis. An initial meeting was held in April and the Pavilion Trust Chair was happy with this arrangement going forward.

- b) **Cholsey 1000 Plus *Previously: VB***

It was agreed not to appoint a representative at this time, but to continue with existing less formal connections with Cholsey 1000 Plus representatives.

- 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: JF***

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

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 (Power Team accountants)
- 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) HCl gov.uk domain

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 Council's expenditure in 2024/2025 incurred under S137 of the Local Government Act (Appendix O)

The Council's Section 137 expenditure, prior to adoption of the General Power of Competence, was noted.

17. To review the Council's asset register (Appendix P)

Noted – valuations need to be done e.g. for Pavilion. Add Papist Way telephone box.

The Council's asset register was reviewed. The RFO continues to review and amend insurance replacement values e.g. for the Pavilion.

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

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

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

- a) OALC: £1027 inc. VAT
- b) SLCC (Clerk's membership): £288
- c) Information Commissioners Office: £52
- d) Community First Oxfordshire: £70
- e) Parish Online: £192 inc. VAT
- f) Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management: £100 inc. VAT
- g) National Allotment Society: £84 inc. VAT
- h) Oxfordshire Neighbourhood Plans Alliance: £50

The above arrangements were reviewed and approved to continue.

20. 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 2025 (no meeting)

It was agreed to continue with monthly Full Council meetings on the third Wednesday of the Month.

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

a) Annual Community meeting preparation

Preparations for the Annual Community Meeting at the Pavilion on 7th June were discussed.

b) To receive an update on the St Mary's old churchyard closure process

St Mary's old churchyard is now formally closed and the transfer of responsibility to South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) is underway. The newer cemetery adjoining the old churchyard remains open for burials, and will continue to be owned and managed by the Parish Council as burial authority.

The Clerk had sought advice via SLCC from a member of the Ministry of Justice Burial and Cremations Advisory Group. The Parish Council's position is that it is not legally responsible or liable for repairs to the old churchyard, but does have powers at its discretion to contribute public money towards maintaining a place of interment. SODC has provided the Church Fabrics Committee with a list of defects to be corrected before transfer and the Church is working through these. It has been discussed with the Church that it can formally request Parish Council support for the more significant repairs if necessary.

c) To receive an update on the Tennis Club lease

The Clerk reported continued difficulties obtaining a response from the solicitor working on the lease. The Tennis Club's comments on the initial draft have been passed to the solicitor. The Council expressed its support in principle for a lease term of 25 years. The lease will be brought to Council for approval as soon as possible.

d) To receive an update on the Community Allotment

The Clerk reported that a Community Allotment Events Coordinator has now been appointed, funded by SODC Councillor grants. Work is underway on the polytunnel and raised beds.

22. To receive an update from the Rule 6 team on the White Cross Farm gravel pit inquiry (Cllr Pomlett)

Cllr Pomlett reported that the Parish Council's Rule 6 Party application has been accepted by the Planning Inspectorate. The Rule 6 group submitted its Statement of Case on 14th May; this was prepared by representatives of Cholsey Parish Council, Crowmarsh Parish Council, Wallingford Town Council and other interested residents. Cllr Pomlett, B.Guiver and W.Tobitt then attended the Case Management Conference held by the Inspector on 21st May. The public inquiry will be held at the Cholsey Pavilion from 15th July for three days. Interested members of public can also attend to speak at the inquiry on 15th July.

23. Finance

a) To note the 2024/2025 year-end accounts (Appendix Q)

The 2024-2025 year-end accounts were noted, including the surplus and movements to reserves (see also Minute 8). The Council expressed thanks to the Finance Committee, RFO and Clerk for strong financial management and reporting.

b) To note the reconciled bank balances as at 31st March 2025 (Appendix R)

The reconciled bank balances were noted.

c) To confirm cheque and banking signatories *At present: DB, VB, JC, LN*

It was resolved that Cllr Jenkins will become a banking signatory in place of Cllr Bolt. The RFO will make this change.

d) To approve new payments and note payments received (Appendix S)

The payments were approved and signed by Cllrs Finch and Schäfer.

The Clerk reported unanticipated expenditure on the project to install new swings in the younger children's Recreation Ground play area. Upon excavation a thick concrete base was found under the play matting of the existing swings. The swing installers quoted £3000 to remove the concrete. Instead the work is being carried out by the Parish Council maintenance person and a local contractor, for an estimated cost of £1200 (including ~£400 skip hire). Turf and topsoil were also required for the project to be completed; ~£700 costs were approved by the Chair and Finance Committee Chair.

e) To agree whether to transfer £750 from the Burial Ground Ear-marked Reserves to St Mary's Church Parochial Church Council towards the repair of the churchyard tarmac path

It was resolved to transfer £750 from the Burial Ground Ear-marked Reserves to St Mary's Church Parochial Church Council towards the repair of the churchyard tarmac path. This was the sum of money transferred to the Parish Council by the Church in 2021 from filming fees received.

24. Audit 2024/2025: to consider the 2024/2025 AGAR submission to the External Auditor

a) To receive and review the report from the Internal Auditor for 2024/2025

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.

b) To agree the Annual Governance Statement for 2024/2025

It was unanimously **resolved** to agree the Council's Annual Governance Statement for 2024/2025 and it was signed by the Clerk and the Chair.

c) To agree the Accounting Statement for 2024/2025

It was unanimously **resolved** to agree the Council's Accounting Statement for 2024/2025 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 spending of CIL reserves on projects e.g. playground equipment repairs, car park renovation.

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.

25. To consider planning applications as at 14th May 2025

P25/S1176/HH	First floor rear extension and new outbuilding to replace existing, 8 Cross Road It was resolved to comment that the extension will add to the previous extensions to this property and has increased the overall footprint of the property. Policies to address: CNP H7 – including requirement for EV charging point for side extension, CNP para 149
P25/S1143/FUL	Change of use of equestrian paddock land to become a cricket ground, associated buildings, access and parking, Land adj. Elizabeth House, Wallingford Rd It was resolved to comment that the Parish Council has concerns about safe access to the site from the Wallingford Road. The entrance point will need to be sufficiently wide to allow easy access and deter vehicles from pulling up along the roadside to drop off/pick up. The Council would also like clarification of the funding sources for a proposed 'pedestrian crossing arrangement' referenced in the planning application's Transport Statement.
P25/S1313/LB	Reroofing and replacement of gutters, 4 Church Road It was resolved to support the application and maintenance of this listed building.

26. To note planning decisions as at 14th May 2025

P25/S0590/HH	Demolition of garage. Two storey front extension, two storey side extension, second storey rear extension, 76 Station Road, Granted by SODC
P25/S0599/HH	Demolition of garden storage room. Side and rear extensions, ground and first floor. Rear garden outbuilding, 41 West End, Granted by SODC
P25/S0711/S73	Variation of condition 2 (Approved Plans) on planning application P24/S1858/HH to reduce the overall floor area; to allow retention of more of the existing building, 8 Rowland Road, Granted by SODC

27. Items for report or inclusion on next agenda

Cllr Collins has been in touch with OCC officers to review the recent implementation of new parking restrictions. She has also asked for the road markings on the Bunk Line bridge to be revisited to help improve pedestrian safety.

Visit from GWR and Network Rail to discuss Cholsey Station improvements (Cllr Collins)

Village gateway signs – the County Council is responsible for these signs; can we seek improvements?

Telephone box on the Forty (Cllr Jenkins)

State of roads in village (Cllr Jenkins)

Wallingford Road speed indicator device – needs updating with new speed limit (Cllr Collins to follow up)

Concerns re. carpet toxicology when used as weed suppressants (Cllr Schäfer continuing to seek advice)

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (Cllr Finch to share maps from recent meeting)

Strategic Action plan

28. To confirm the date of the next Full Council meeting – Wednesday 18th June, 7.15pm, Cholsey Pavilion