CHOLSEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Cholsey Parish Council duly convened and held on Wednesday 16th July 2025 at 7.15pm at The Pavilion, Cholsey

Present were Cllr D. Bamford, Cllr P. Jenkins, Cllr G. Herbert, Cllr J. Hope-Smith (as Parish Councillor and County Councillor, until 8.20pm), Cllr L. Nixon (Chair), Cllr K. Pomlett and Cllr S. Schäfer

Also present were C. Bird (Clerk); S. Smith (Assistant Clerk and RFO); one member of public

Start time: 7.20pm
End time: 9.20pm

To receive apologies for absence
Apologies were accepted from Cllr J. Finch, Cllr J. Collins and Cllr M. Smith.

Cllr Jenny Finch is stepping down from her role as Parish Councillor for personal reasons. The Parish Council extended its well wishes and thanks to Cllr Finch for all her efforts including as Vice Chair and on the Transport Committee.

The Clerk will arrange a notice of casual vacancy.

The Parish Council currently has 10 of 13 Councillor seats filled and therefore three Councillor vacancies.

44. Public participation session: to hear questions or comments from members of the public (max. 15 mins)
One resident representing St Mary's Church attended to speak about item 10a on the agenda.

It was therefore agreed to move this item to the first point of discussion.

45. Finance

a) To agree whether to make a contribution to the costs of repairing St Mary's Churchyard walls
Cllr Nixon reminded the meeting that St Mary's Churchyard has recently been officially closed and responsibility has transferred [under Section 215 (3) of the *Local Government Act 1972*] to South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC). SODC requires a number of works to be carried out to the churchyard as part of the transfer, including some repairs to various old churchyard walls.
The Church Fabrics Committee has received two quotes for the required works in the range of £5-6K. It was confirmed during discussion that the Diocese has not been approached to help fund the required repairs and that in the absence of other funding the cost of repairs would need to be covered by the Church community. The resident then left the meeting.

It was **resolved** not to make a contribution to the costs of the churchyard wall repairs (6 votes, with one abstention). Councillors were of the opinion that funding sources within the Church of England should be investigated in the first instance.

46. To receive Declarations of Personal or Pecuniary Interest for any agenda items (*note, this does not preclude later declarations*)
There were none.

47. To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 18th June 2025 (Appendix A) and receive update on any Minute items
It was **resolved** to approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 18th June 2025 and they were signed by Cllr Nixon.

48. To receive any reports from County and/or District Councillors
Reports from County Cllr Hope-Smith and District Cllr A-.M. Simpson's were noted with thanks.

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

a) To discuss and agree whether to proceed with a new lease with Cholsey Tennis Club prepared by the Parish Council's solicitor
The draft new lease with Cholsey Tennis Club was discussed and it was **resolved** to proceed to signing.

b) To receive an update on the transfer of Cholsey Meadows Play Space and agree next steps
As minuted at the 18th June 2025 Council meeting, the play area cannot be transferred as it currently stands because it is smaller than the Play Space required by the S106 agreement to be provided by the developer. A number of Councillors had subsequently raised the possibility of providing additional community facilities for older children (e.g. multi-use games area, basketball hoop and/or table tennis table)

on the area of land adjacent to the existing younger children's play area. This would fulfil the requirements of the approved landscape plan for a larger Play Space.

Cllr Nixon and the Clerk attended the Cholsey Community Development Trust (CCDT) Trustees meeting on 8th July 2025 to discuss options and took away the following viewpoints expressed by CCDT Trustees on behalf of the community:

- a strong view that older and younger children's play areas should not be located adjacent to each other, due to concerns about antisocial behaviour, and that the land originally allocated to Play Space is not suitable for additional recreational facilities;
- a strong view that instead of being converted to Play Space as originally allocated, the area of land next to the current play area should continue to be used as overspill parking by CCDT for community events and for additional storage.

The CCDT is also concerned that the future refurbishment of the play area, while needed to improve durability and quality of play, should be carried out in a way that does not result in significantly more cars visiting the development.

It was noted that the current fenced-in younger children's play area at Cholsey Meadows is approximately the same size as the younger children's play area at the Station Road Recreation Ground.

In light of CCDT's viewpoint, it was **resolved** to pursue the option outlined by SODC's Legal and Planning teams for a new planning application to be submitted for the play area as currently implemented, and *not* to request that the developer provide a larger play area as originally approved. The Clerk will contact SODC's Infrastructure Implementation Officer regarding next steps.

Cllr Hope Smith left the meeting due to another commitment.

c) To discuss and agree response to SODC's Community Governance Review 2025/2026

Correspondence received on 9th July 2025 regarding SODC's Community Governance Review was discussed and it was **resolved** not to request changes for Cholsey at this time.

d) To receive an update on the Recreation Ground path project and agree next steps

Questions remain about the route of the proposed accessible path in terms of what is feasible. The Clerk had therefore submitted a request for pre-planning advice in May but has been informed that due to a significant IT system upgrade the SODC Planning team are not currently able to offer this service. Recommendations for landscape planning consultants will be sought to assist with a full planning application.

e) To discuss an amendment to the Burial Regulations to allow kerbs and slabs for new burials in the Council burial grounds following resident feedback

It was **resolved** to amend the Burial Regulations to allow kerbs and slabs for new burials in the Council burial grounds.

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

The Estate Manager's report was noted.

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

Cllr Schäfer gave an update in Cllr Collins' absence. The Transport Committee met on 24th June to discuss the condition and accessibility of Cholsey Station. Meeting attendees included Transport Committee Councillor and non-Councillor members, Great Western Railways, officer and councillor representatives of SODC and Oxfordshire County Council, Wallingford Town Council, and Olly Glover MP. Minutes including next actions have been published on the Parish Council's web site at: https://cholseyparishcouncil.gov.uk/past-meetings/

52. To receive feedback from Oxfordshire Food Summit event, 16th June 2025 (Cllr Herbert)

Cllr Herbert attended the Oxfordshire Food Summit event run by Good Food Oxfordshire, which has published a Food Strategy for Oxfordshire, working with multiple stakeholders including City and District Councils. A Food Poverty Action Plan is part of this work. Cllr Herbert is keen to discuss what parish councils can do, as the tier of local council most closely connected to community. It was agreed to investigate this further.

53. Finance cont.

a) To agree response to grant request from St Mary's Church towards refreshments at its Summer outreach activities

It was **resolved** to make the requested grant of £250 towards refreshments at St Mary's Church Summer activities. The organisers have provided assurance that the funding would not be used to promote religious beliefs in accordance with the Council's Grants Policy.

b) To agree response to grant request from CCDT towards insulation of the floor of the Great Hall, Cholsey Meadows

It was **resolved** to make the requested grant of £7190 (50% of the total project cost) towards underfloor insulation of the Great Hall, Cholsey Meadows, subject to confirmation of multiple quotes having been obtained. It was discussed that the Hall hosts events and activities that benefit a wide community and the project is in line with Goal 1 of the Council's Strategic Plan (objective: reduce carbon emissions). The grant will be made using Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds.

c) To receive quotes from the Pavilion Trust for replacement of the Pavilion automatic doors mechanism and to agree how to proceed

J. Wheeler, Chair of the Pavilion Trust, had obtained three quotes for the replacement of the Pavilion automatic doors mechanism. Cholsey Parish Council is owner and landlord of the Pavilion building and it was **resolved** to instruct WES Doors to replace the door mechanism at a cost of £4,168.50 excl VAT. CIL funds will be used for this work.

d) To agree whether to change the Councils' arrangements for its Payroll contractor

It was **resolved** to move from Power Team to AA Accounting and Bookkeeping with immediate effect. The cost to the Parish Council will not change.

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

The payments report was approved.

54. To consider new planning applications and planning amendments at 10th July 2025

P25/S1682/HH	Single storey detached garage and leisure room, detached greenhouse and amendments to site plan approved under P24/S3538/HH. 3 Hithercroft Cottages It was **resolved** to make no comment on this application.
P25/S1803/FUL	Erection of new medical centre and 65 dwellings, with associated access road and green infrastructure. Land north of A4130 Wallingford Bypass It was **resolved** to comment: It is important that any expansion of the medical practice should be provided with sufficient parking space even if this results in less housing being made available. It is noted that 4-storey residential buildings are not in keeping with the current development. If approved, sufficient parking is required
P25/S1845/HH	Two-storey and ground floor side extensions and new front porch. 10 Kennedy Crescent It was **resolved** to comment: The proposal removes a garage (listed as store) and therefore changes the overall parking spaces available to the property. Policies to address: CNP H7 including requirement for EV charging point for side extension CNP para CNP 149
P25/S1929/HH	Single storey side/rear extension and insertion of roof window. 70 Station Road It was **resolved** to comment: Cholsey Parish Council wishes to comment: The proposal removes access to a garage and therefore changes the overall parking spaces available to the property. Policies to address: CNP H7 including requirement for EV charging point for side extension CNP para CNP 149

55. To note planning application comments submitted under Scheme of Delegation process July 2025

P25/S1295/FUL	Sub-division of land and construction of self-build 2-storey dwelling. 14 Cross Road The following comment was submitted on behalf of the Council: The application should be in accordance with all recommendations made by the relevant teams; in particular the Environment Protection Team. As an infill, the plans should be sympathetic to the neighbour at 7 Slade Road, who has raised an objection. If approved, the build should be in line with CNP H2, H5 (charging point), and H6. Policy H2 - this policy supports new homes on infill sites within the village built up boundary Policy H6 - this policy determines that new homes of 3 bedrooms should have 2 allocated parking spaces

56. To note South Oxfordshire District Council planning decisions as at 10th July 2025

P25/S1490/HH	Extension to integral garage. The Paddock, 45 West End. **Granted by SODC**
P25/S1313/LB	Reroofing and replacement of gutters. 4 Church Road. **Granted by SODC**

57. Items for report or inclusion on next agenda

Food poverty in our community

White Cross Farm gravel extraction Public Inquiry – Cllr Pomlett reported that the Rule 6 team have been giving evidence on behalf of Cholsey Parish Council, Crowmarsh Parish Council and Wallingford Town Council, defending the County Council decision to reject this application. The Inquiry will conclude on 22nd July. We do not know when the Public Inspector's report and decision will be published but it is likely to be later this year.

Part Night Lighting poll – it was agreed there may be interest in this scheme within Cholsey

58. To confirm the date of next Full Council meeting – Wednesday 17th September 2025, 7.15pm, Pavilion, Station Road, Cholsey