

CHOLSEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Transport Committee of Cholsey Parish Council (CPC) duly convened and held on Tuesday 24th June 2025 at 7.30pm at The Pavilion, Cholsey

Committee members present were Trevor Bedeman (from 7.55pm), CPC Cllr Judy Collins (Chair), CPC Cllr Jenny Finch, Robert Ford, CPC Cllr Steffi Schäfer, Reto Schmucki

Also present were

Vicky Beardall Richards (CPC Environment Coordinator), Claire Bird (CPC Clerk), Louise Dell (Transport Planner, South Oxfordshire District Council), Bryan Evans (Rail Project Manager, Oxfordshire County Council), MP Olly Glover, CPC Cllr Ginnie Herbert, CPC and County Cllr Johnny Hope-Smith, Wallingford Town Cllr Mark Hoskins, Rosie Lawrence (Transport Planner, Oxfordshire County Council), County Cllr Judy Roberts, District Cllr Crispin Topping, Deborah Whelan (for Mobility Issues Wallingford), Eleanor Wills (Great Western Railway), one member of the public

Start time: 7.30pm

End time: 9.20pm

T1. To receive apologies for absence

H. Cooke has stepped down from his role working with the Transport Committee. The Committee expressed sadness for the recent passing of B. Cooke who with her husband have been strong advocates for improving the accessibility of Cholsey Station.

Apologies were received from Network Rail and the Wallingford and Cholsey Heritage Railway.

T2. To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 18th February 2025 (Appendix A) and receive update on any Minute items

It was **resolved** to approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 18th February 2025 and they were signed by Cllr Collins.

T3. To receive Declarations of Personal and Pecuniary Interest for any agenda items *(note, this does not preclude later declarations)*

There were none.

T4. To hear questions or comments from members of the public concerning topics on the agenda (limited to 10 mins)

There were none.

T5. To discuss the accessibility, building condition and parking provision of Cholsey Station with key stakeholders, including invited representatives of Great Western Railways, Network Rail, South Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council, and MP Olly Glover.

Cllr Collins, Chair of the Parish Council's Transport Committee, outlined progress so far since meeting with E. Wills (Regional Development Manager - East, Great Western Railway) in April 2024. Small works have been carried out to improve the condition of the station. The ticket office has reopened following closure for damp treatment during the winter months. Unfortunately, the station was not one of the fifty chosen for the latest round of Access for All funding.

Cholsey's is a well-used, valued station. Footfall in 2024 was approx. 240K and is on an upward trend. We are also lucky to have the Wallingford and Cholsey Heritage Railway using the Station.

Major concerns are the building's overall poor condition, lack of accessibility (there are no lifts or ramps; access is by stairs to both platforms), parking provision (commuters arriving by car regularly report the carpark being full and must park on surrounding streets causing

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problems for residents), poor bus connections and insufficient cycle parking provision. These challenges are increasingly exacerbated by housebuilding in the wider area; the proximity of the station providing a direct link to London is a major selling point for developers.

E. Wills echoed Cllr Collins' points and emphasised that GWR is keen to work with the community to develop Cholsey Station, which is an important station for the network. Her presentation is attached to these Minutes. Recent improvements have included installing parcel lockers, funding for a volunteer gardening group, and installation of a cycle maintenance station through GWR's 'Customer and Community Improvement Fund'. GWR has successfully worked with other authorities to open up funding for larger works and E. Wills believes this is key for Cholsey. She described GWR's role in relation to Network Rail. Network Rail is the owner/landlord of the station and responsible for major maintenance and improvements; GWR manages the station as lease holder and can carry out routine maintenance, provide small community grants, and support promotion of the local area. Network Rail had been asked if a representative could attend the meeting but no one had been available.

O. Glover noted that the advent of Great British Railways will bring significant change; talks have been ongoing since 2019 but the legislation will take time to move through Parliament.

Building condition:

- Damp issues are causing a significant challenge. E. Wills said that in 2025/2026, work will be undertaken to strip back plaster, repaint and replaster in GWR Heritage colours. As part of this work, GWR will arrange for Network Rail to look at the damp walls under the plaster and press for further action as necessary. Committee members raised concerns that the underlying damp issue must be addressed, otherwise replastering and repainting will not help. Cllr Finch raised a question about the building's guttering and drainage. District Cllr Topping has expertise in this area; it was agreed to arrange for him to visit the station during these works to assess the damp penetration and possible solutions.
- E. Wills will discuss with colleagues whether she is able to share the Condition Report for the station building.

Accessibility:

- It was noted that if a station is inaccessible, GWR's Passenger Assist service can provide a taxi to the nearest accessible station (Didcot). However, D. Whelan raised feedback that railway users eligible for this assistance have sometimes needed to wait for an hour or more for an accessible taxi to be available. L. Dell will seek input from the SODC Taxi Licensing Officer on this point.
- The possibility of opening ramp access to Platform 4 was discussed. However, L. Dell noted that the accessway to the upper carpark area is a narrow, steep road without a pavement and could not currently provide safe access e.g. for wheelchairs. E. Wills will contact Tom Law (GWR) regarding this.
- Cholsey Station met some of the Access for All scheme's programme criteria available at <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/communities/passengers/access-for-all-improving-accessibility-at-railway-stations-nationwide/> but was not selected for the latest round of funding (300+ stations bid for this). The next round of funding will be in 2029.
- It was agreed that a smaller group of representatives – including Olly Glover, District, Town and Parish Councillors – should discuss potential funding opportunities including the use of developer CIL funds.
- E. Wills will share case studies of successful station development projects including funding sources

Travel to the Station:

- GWR was not aware of customer complaints about parking problems and so this is important feedback

CHOLSEY PARISH COUNCIL

- It was discussed that a balance needs to be found. It is important to encourage sustainable travel to the station by active travel and public transport. This is a strategic priority. However, it is acknowledged that this is complex, requiring other significant changes (safer cycling routes; improved public transport links), and some commuters will continue driving to the Station. A multi-pronged approach is needed.
- Car parking provision is limited by the land available and funding. It was confirmed that Network Rail does not own land beyond the existing carpark. It was commented that there is a need to better understand the capacity and use of the existing car park.
- Cycle parking provision is currently insufficient and further provision of covered, secure facilities is limited by space. The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for Wallingford and surrounding area, currently under development and led by R. Lawrence, was discussed as important in this context. Match funding for cycle parking may be available through GWR's Integrated Transport Fund. It was agreed that Cllr Collins would contact Nick Reid, GWR's Integrated Transport Manager, regarding this.
- Bus connections (timings and frequency) are also insufficient and cannot be relied on for commuter use. B. Evans noted that Oxfordshire County Council is currently reviewing bus provision. It was suggested that CPC and Wallingford Town Council remain in close contact on this matter, involving County Cllr James Barlow also. D. Whelan noted that bus services must also be accessible.

It was agreed that a Working Group is needed to maintain momentum and collaboration on what is a complex project to improve Cholsey Station. CPC's Transport Committee will continue to lead on this.

T6. Items for report or inclusion on next agenda

Village gateways (R. Ford)

Ancient pathway between Moulsoford and Cholsey (R. Ford)

LCWIP update (T. Bedeman)

A4074/A4130 speed limit reductions (T. Bedeman)

T7. To agree next meeting date

TBC

Appended: E. Wills presentation on behalf of GWR

The Future of Cholsey Station: A Journey with the Community

Cholsey Parish Council, 24 June 2025

Eleanor Wills
Regional Development
Manager (East), GWR

eleanor.wills@gwr.com



First stop...an
introduction to GWR



GWR Intro & Network Map

- We are a team of over 6000 colleagues, delivering over 537 000 train services a year and managing 199 stations.
- That's 82.6m customer journeys a year, delivered working in partnership with Network Rail.
- We're on a National Rail Contract with our date for nationalisation not yet known.
- We receive high satisfaction scores for service at stations and on-board is 91% and 94% respectively.
- 82% of our stakeholders surveyed consider GWR to be a trusted partner while 4 579 stakeholders attended consultation and engagement events in the last year.



GWR Services

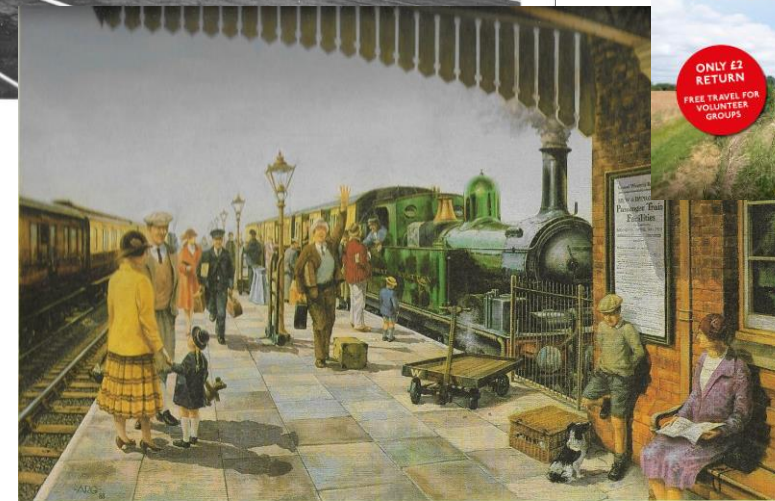
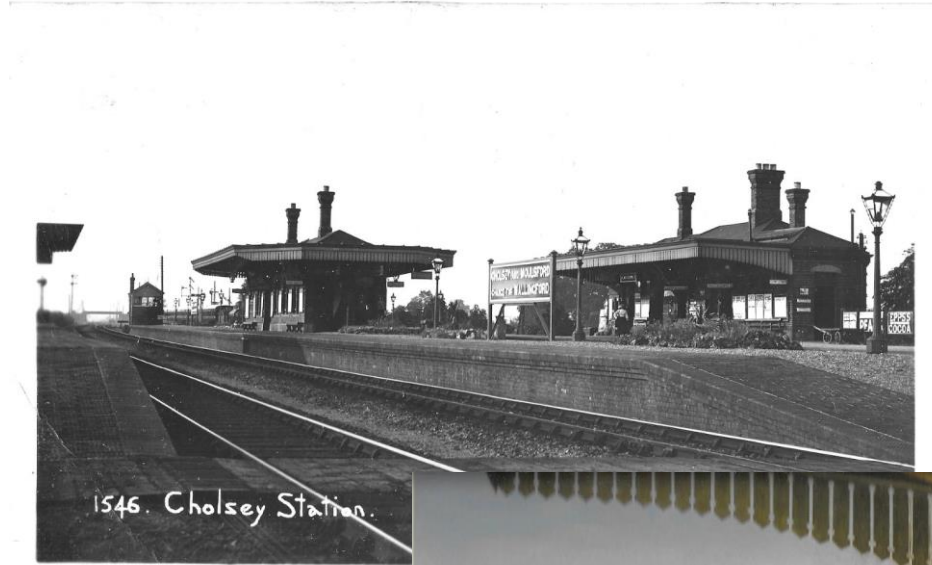


Cholsey station: Looking to today and the future



Cholsey Station: An Overview

- Opened in 1892.
- 240 646 entries/exits per year (2023/24).
- 41% of all journeys made are between Cholsey and London Paddington.
- Also home to the Cholsey & Wallingford Heritage Railway – a railway with a wealth of history.
- GWR manage the station; Network Rail own the station (acting as our landlord).



19 BRANCH LINE STEAM – THE BUNK AT CHOLSEY AND MOULSFORD 1929 · A.GUNSTON

CHOLSEY & WALLINGFORD

RAILWAY WEEK

CELEBRATING 200 YEARS OF RAILWAYS

To celebrate 200 years of railways, we are restoring a full train service, connecting Wallingford with the national network, for a limited time only! What's more, you can travel on as many trains as you like for no more than £2 per day. We would also like to invite all volunteer and educational groups in Cholsey and Wallingford to travel for **FREE**, pre-booking required.

THURSDAY 19th & FRIDAY 20th JUNE

THE WALLINGFORD COMPUTER
Travel to work by train. Hourly departures from the morning 08:00 to the evening 18:00. Coffee and meeting rooms available to purchase from the Coffee Shop. Evening departure until 20:00 with bar available on the train. Travel for only £2 return.

THE VOLUNTEER
Hourly trains throughout the day, will take you to work, school, university and educational groups in Cholsey and Wallingford to make a free journey with us during the day. Maximum group size 30. Tickets must be purchased. Please purchase or volunteer individually to book your ticket.

THE AMWELL AMBLER
Friday 20 June, travel to Amwell Springs between 10:00 and 18:00 with bar on the train.

SATURDAY 21st JUNE 2025 – WALLINGFORD CARNIVAL
The longest established of Wallingford's major outdoor events, there will be plenty to see and do in the town during the day. Avoid the congestion and let the train take you there from Cholsey.

SUNDAY 22nd JUNE 2025 – WALLINGFORD BY TRAIN
A special heritage service.

FOR TRAIN TIMES AND TO BOOK TICKETS VISIT:
WWW.CHOLSEY-WALLINGFORD-RAILWAY.COM

ONLY £2 RETURN
FREE TRAVEL FOR VOLUNTEER GROUPS

200
HERITAGE DIESEL, SUBBLE CAR HAILED TRAINS

Some recent changes at Cholsey...

- As per Oxfordshire County Council's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, smaller stations like Cholsey are well placed to become mobility hubs.
- We will continue to seek opportunities to layer up improvements to our stations to reach this outcome.
- We also have a station volunteer group.



New YEEP! parcel locker



New cycle facility unveiled at Cholsey Station

South Oxfordshire District Council

A new cycle maintenance facility has been unveiled at Cholsey Station. The project, funded by Great Western Railway's Customer and Community improvement fund in partnership with South Oxfordshire District Council, makes it easier for people to choose two wheels when travelling to and from the station. Featuring a bike pump and a variety of tools, the repair station allows cyclists to make quick fixes on the go. It is hoped the new repair station will encourage more people to use active travel such as cycling alongside public transport.

New cycle service station (c.£6k)

Problem Identification Cholsey station improvements

Each improvement required will need collaborative working to address the key issues. GWR remains committed to playing its part to help make progress at Cholsey station.



Maintenance improvements

to deliver a better, more welcoming station environment. Includes the need for re-paint, new decoration and other customer-focused changes.



Accessibility improvements,

which deliver physical changes to the station. These schemes typically include lift bridges between platforms.



Expansion of the car park

to mitigate customers parking in the local area.



Supporting local communities to promote the Cholsey & Wallingford area,

including funding and supporting OxCRP or other community projects. We also want to ensure our project delivery involves local community views.

1

Maintenance improvements



Maintenance improvements

to deliver a better, more welcoming station environment. Includes the need for re-paint, new decoration and other customer-focused changes.

- GWR are working with partners, including Oxfordshire County Council, to progress a heritage re-paint of the station.
- This will include removing the plaster as it stands today, to help better understand the issues and ask Network Rail to tackle the longer-term damp issues.
- The re-paint and re-plaster will happen this financial year.
- GWR is not funded beyond this.
- We will continue to ask Network Rail to assess the viability of funding to improve the station and address the more structural damp issues, which are leading to the peeling.
- GBR will help drive better outcomes.



2

Accessibility improvements



Accessibility improvements, which deliver physical changes to the station. These schemes typically include lift bridges between platforms.

- GWR has had its busiest year ever delivering **Passenger Assistance**, to over 200,000 assistance requests, approximately **25% more than last year**.
- GWR will collect customers from **their home to the nearest accessible station (e.g. Didcot Parkway)**.
- Wider, structural issues typically come under 'Access for All', a national scheme where projects in a field have to bid for funding – GWR and Network Rail included Cholsey in the most recent bids
- Recent Network Rail figures show 310 nominations in the last round, and 50 successful stations (although this has now been delayed).
- One of the key criteria currently missing for Cholsey station is third-party investment – lifts would be a multi-million pound scheme



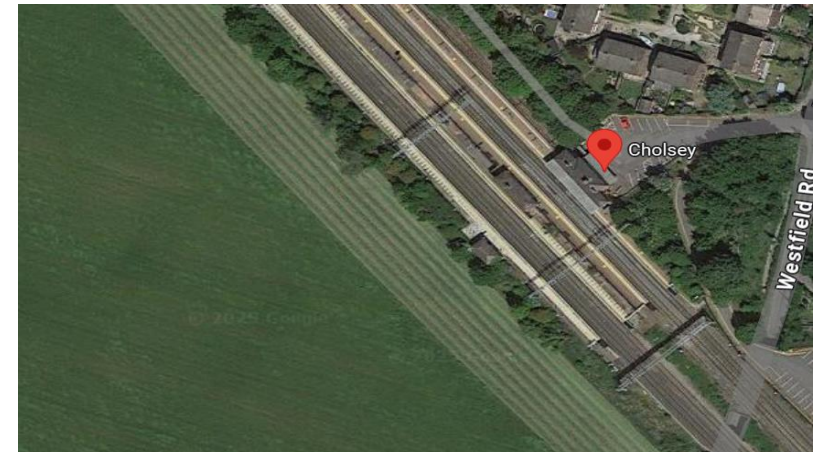
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Expansion of the car park



Expansion of the car park
to mitigate customers
parking in the local area.

- Currently 53 car park spaces provided, alongside 22 bike stands.
- Land to expand the car park is limited, unless considering adjacent greenfield.
- Any car park expansion would need a third-party contribution, or a decision to wait to develop a scheme using a future funding option.
- DfT would be the source of any capital.



4

Supporting local communities to promote the Cholsey & Wallingford area



Supporting local communities to promote the Cholsey & Wallingford area, including funding and supporting OxCRP or other community projects. We also want to ensure our project delivery involves local community views.

- GWR has a community marketing officer, alongside a marketing partnerships colleague.
- We also offer an annual Customer and Communities Improvement Fund (CCIF).
- Oxfordshire Community Rail Partnership act as a great link between the railway and the community, offering new travel maps and leaflets to promote sustainable days out.



Oxfordshire railway plans 16 return trips a day and £2 fares for Railway 200



Victoria Thompson Posted: 4 days ago Add a comment
Last updated: 18th June, 2025 at 12:40 pm

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How you can help

Meaningful actions,
together



Improvements to Cholsey need collective work

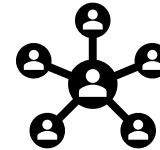
To improve Cholsey station beyond the maintenance plans set out earlier, a partnership approach will improve the likelihood that individual schemes, all part of a much broader picture, can be delivered over the medium-long term.



Regular communication across multiple partners is key to making progress, taking forward the energy and interest from the local community but with the influencers around the table.



Railway station improvements need to be considered within the appropriate planning and policy documents, which enables us to make representations in future planning applications or apply for strategic CIL.



Recognising that the railway should be treated in the same way that local bus services are shifts mindset, with bus services and facilities regularly funded as part of development.



As the local government picture changes, retaining energy around the importance of improving Cholsey station will keep it on the priority list as new opportunities come forwards.

A Statement from Network Rail for Tonight's Meeting

We recognise the concerns raised regarding Cholsey Station. We're currently conducting structural monitoring in order to understand more about the long-term condition of the building. In the meantime, GWR are exploring the feasibility of repainting the subway and stairs to improve their appearance.

We look after 2,500 stations nationally and a lot of them are approaching 200 years old. In this time a lot has changed about what we value, including crucially accessibility at stations; however, the process for reaching full accessibility is an expensive process, particularly with competing demands for taxpayer funding.

Our accessibility improvements at stations are funded through the Government's Access for All scheme. The programme was launched in 2006 to address the issues faced by disabled passengers and passengers facing mobility restraints, such as heavy luggage or pushchairs when using railway stations in Great Britain.

Every five years all stations are ranked based on a set of criteria; including total accessibility, nearest accessible station, number of passengers using or changing at the station, local population, potential for third party investment and other metrics. From this prioritisation the Government select which stations are to have accessibility funding for the next five years.

A list of 50 stations have been selected by the Government for initial feasibility work in Control Period 7, our current funding cycle (2024 - 2029), and Cholsey hasn't been selected on this occasion.



Thank You

Any questions?

