

CHOLSEY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Cholsey Parish Council duly convened and held on Wednesday 18th February 2026 at 7.15pm at The Pavilion, Cholsey

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

Also present were C. Bird (Clerk), S. Smith (Assistant Clerk), District Cllr C. Topping (District Councillor) until 7.45pm; three members of the public

Start: 7.20pm

End: 9.15pm

135. To receive apologies for absence

Cllr K. Pomlett has resigned from his role as Parish Councillor due to other commitments. 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.

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

A member of the public spoke in support of planning application P26/S0184/FUL.

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

There were none.

138. To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 21st January 2026 (Appendix A) and receive update on any Minute items

It was **resolved** to approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 21st January 2026 and they were signed by Councillor Nixon.

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

Reports from the County and District Councillors were noted with thanks.

District Cllr Topping highlighted South Oxfordshire District Council's Community Infrastructure Levy Grant Fund which is currently open. He updated the Council on a planning enforcement case on Sandy Lane. The Parish Council's frustration with retrospective planning applications was discussed.

County Cllr Hope Smith updated the Council on challenges with potholes. Nationwide problems are extreme this year due to very wet weather and years of underfunding for infrastructure. He explained that the type of repairs that can be made are constrained by wet conditions but that the number of repair teams has been doubled. The Councillors discussed that Station Road and Wallingford Road are particularly bad at this time. County Cllr Hope Smith emphasised the continued importance of reporting via Fix My Street, particularly via resident Super Users, including repairs that have failed soon after being repaired.

Cllr Schafer asked about the gully clearing which has recently been completed by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) contractors across the county. She noted that many of the gulleys are blocked again because the material removed from them was left very nearby and so has washed back into them.

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

a) To agree date for the 2026 Annual Community Meeting

After discussion, it was agreed that rather than the Parish Council Chair opting to convene a Parish/Community meeting in May 2026, the Council would focus resources this year on community events and consultations for a specific purpose, guided by project timelines. Upcoming priorities where community input will be vital include a street parking review (with OCC) and the Neighbourhood Plan. Activities including a new website, adopting a communications plan, introducing a regular newsletter, councillor surgeries etc. will also continue to build on the Council's communication and accountability.

141. To note Estate Manager's report (Appendix B), in particular:

a) To discuss restoration of the Council's two telephone kiosks

The two telephone kiosks are Parish Council assets and require maintaining – this will involve specialist restoration off site. The Estate Manager has provided an initial sense of what is possible and likely costs.

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The Council agreed that if possible both kiosks should remain in their current locations once restored. If due to ground conditions, the kiosk on The Forty cannot remain in its current location, it should be relocated elsewhere on The Forty. The Papist Way kiosk should continue to be a defibrillator station. Ideas for future use of the Forty kiosk will be discussed at a later stage. The Estate Manager will prepare a comparable summary of the quotes received for the March meeting.

b) To discuss siting of benches on the Forty

It was agreed that at least two benches should be provided on the Forty – one undercover in the memorial shelter, and one on the Forty itself nearby wildflower planting and/or a tree. This will be part of a wider project to install benches at other key points on village routes.

142. To receive update from the Transport Committee (Cllr Collins), in particular:

a) To discuss the Council writing to Oxfordshire County Council regarding the state of the roads in the village and the future resurfacing of key routes (Cllr August)

It was agreed to write to OCC on this matter. It was noted that several key routes in the village require full resurfacing; Station Road for example is increasingly busy with commuters from the wider area. Cllr August has drafted a letter which she will share with the Clerk and Chair. County Cllr Hope Smith requested that he be copied.

Cllr August has also submitted the Parish Council's action list to the OCC Highways Asset Response Team (HART). Where actions identified are not within HART's remit, Cllr August will add them to Fix My Street (she noted that many are already there).

b) To receive update on Cholsey Station following a meeting with GWR and OCC representatives on 22nd January 2026

Cllr Collins reported that a meeting on 22nd January 2026 with GWR (Z. Bailey) and OCC representatives (P. Brunskill and B. Evans) was positive. Cllr Collins, Cllr August and Cllr Hope Smith attended for the Parish Council. Improved signage to the car park and anti-slip surfacing for the underpass were requested. Cllr Collins has subsequently submitted a grant application to GWR for a feasibility study to improve cycle parking provision. Evidence for the car park being at capacity on weekdays was presented. GWR are now actively looking at acquiring land to expand the car park. Observations about the local bus timetable, including changes that would improve commuter connections, have been forwarded to OCC. Medium to long-term improvements were also discussed including a drop-and-go area, step-free access funding bid, and improved walkways for pedestrians.

c) To receive update on A329 puffin crossing consultation

OCC's formal consultation for the A329 puffin crossing is now live, with a deadline of 13th March. The Clerk has contacted those who responded to the Parish Council's informal survey to encourage them to respond.

143. To receive update on Neighbourhood Plan (Cllr Nixon), in particular:

a) To appoint members to a Neighbourhood Plan Working Group

b) To agree response to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) consultation open until 10th March 2026

Cllr Nixon noted that the Cholsey Neighbourhood Plan is due to be renewed by October 2027. The District Council Neighbourhood Planning team have recently published templates and are keen to provide support. Councillors were asked to contact Cllr Nixon and the Clerk asap if they are able to join the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group.

Before the Working Group convenes, a priority is to submit a response to the National Planning Policy Framework consultation. Cllr Nixon had circulated a draft, and Councillors are requested to provide any further input by 3rd March so that it can be submitted by the Clerk on behalf of the Council.

144. Finance

a) To note 2025/2026 accounts at the end of the third quarter (Appendix C)

The 2025/2026 ytd accounts were noted and Cllr Bamford confirmed these are on track. The Council extended thanks to the Assistant Clerk for her detailed explanatory notes and continued strong financial management.

b) To discuss proposals received from consultants to provide project management support for the Recreation Ground all-weather path and Skatepark extension projects and agree expenditure for this work

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The Clerk approached four external consultants, recommended by OALC, regarding project management support for two potential projects: a Recreation Ground all-weather path and Skatepark extension. Phases of project work include planning application, public consultation, funding applications, and tendering through to contract.

The first consultant confirmed that they do not manage Skate Park projects.

The second consultant met on site with Cllr August and the Clerk on 29th February 2026 but has since confirmed by email that they are unable to provide support for all aspects of the projects.

Proposals were received from the remaining two consultants contacted.

Based on these, it was **resolved** to appoint Local Council Consultancy (LCC) to manage and deliver the projects (subject to Council approving these to proceed) at a maximum cost of £6935, excluding VAT and mileage expenses, as outlined in their proposal. The consultant anticipates the need for two in-person site visits. They will act as first point of contact for all matters, including preparing reports for Council, liaising with the Clerk as needed. The decision was made based on LCC's competitive, itemised quote to deliver the requirements in full, and a recommendation from a neighbouring Parish Council.

c) To note receipt of a Soha Community Fund grant to support the Ilges Lane Community Allotment Project

The Council has been awarded a grant of £2900 by Soha, to run weekly sessions at the Community Allotment Spring-Autumn 2026. A job description and advert for a Community Coordinator to deliver the sessions has been approved by the Staffing Committee.

d) To agree whether to continue to receive the Parish share of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) from South Oxfordshire District Council

It was **resolved** to continue to receive the Parish share of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) from South Oxfordshire District Council.

e) To approve bank reconciliations (Appendix D)

The bank reconciliations were approved and signed by Cllrs August and Schäfer.

f) To approve new payments and note payments received (Appendix E)

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

145. To consider new planning applications and planning amendments at 11th February 2026

P26/S0184/FUL	Change of use of agricultural land to provide dog exercise area, including area for car parking and turning (retrospective). Bypass Field, Bosley Way It was resolved to comment: Cholsey Parish Council does not support retrospective applications; this is against the spirit of the planning application process. The Council does not object in principle to the change of land use, but concerns about safe vehicle entry/exit to the site should be addressed (particularly for those exiting to the right). The business website states prices for up to 12 dogs using the site at one time, which suggests multiple vehicles may be accessing the site per hour session.
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146. To note South Oxfordshire District Council planning decisions as at 11th February 2026

P25/S3826/HH	Single storey rear extension. 19 Papist Way. Granted by SODC.
P25/S3842/HH	Two storey rear extension, detached outbuilding and alterations (part retrospective). The Dower House, Hithercroft. Granted by SODC.

147. Items for report or inclusion on next agenda

Local Government Reorganisation consultation

Telephone kiosks

Village gateways

Feedback from Connecting Local Action event, 11th March – Cllr Herbert

148. To confirm the date of next Full Council meeting – Wednesday 18th March 2026, 7.15pm, Pavilion, Station Road, Cholsey