

COLESHILL PARISH COUNCIL

Monday 7th July 2025

Meeting held at the Old Timber Store, Carpenter's Yard, Coleshill at 6.30pm

MINUTES

1. Present

Councillors Vicki Mace-Benson (in the chair), Jo Jameson & Oliver Fox; Keith Assirati-Wilkie, Charles Leather (National Trust); Duncan Clarke, Gemma Fox, Katherine Hearn, Sue Homersham, Julie Jupe, Verity Manners.

2. Apologies

Councillors Rory Souter and Rachel Knight, County Councillor Bethia Thomas, District Councillors Katherine Foxhall and Viral Patel, Guy Jordan, Mandy Painter and Rosamund Webster sent apologies for their absence.

3. Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes of the meeting on 7th April 2025 were approved by the PC and those present.

4. Matters arising

a) Traffic, road closures and repairs:

The PC welcomed the news that the section of the B4019 in the lower half of the village will be resurfaced in early September, as reported by Bethia Thomas. This will be welcomed by those living along this section of the road. Vicki Mace-Benson offered temporary parking in a field for residents who would need to move their vehicles.

b) Old Hayes Solar Farm proposal:

Katherine Hearn gave a comprehensive summary of the work and meetings of the Solar Farm Focus Group which has met three times since the last PC meeting, minutes are available for anyone who is interested.

The focus group has been working on a number of activities in advance of the expected planning application, including taking part in a community walk in early June and putting up banners around the village. The focus group has a website which contains lots of material relevant to the solar farm proposal, such as descriptions of the impact on various aspects including flooding, ecology, farming and disturbance. The website hosts information about the risks associated with solar farm installations and other relevant details which can be referred to in responses to the forthcoming planning application. The focus group reiterated support for solar installation in brownfield sites and roofs of warehouses etc. This agrees with the Vale of White Horse District Council report

which concludes that these areas of farmland are not ideal for new solar installations.

A flier is being prepared which will be circulated to all local residents, in Coleshill and neighbouring towns and villages, once a planning application is submitted. Funding is being sought for covering costs of planning consultant and/or legal representation who will assist with the responses to the forthcoming planning application.

Vicki Mace-Benson said it was important to keep the momentum going and make sure that everyone was prepared when an application is submitted.

Charles Leather reported that planning consultants from the National Trust had met with ABEI Energy and they had updated their visual impact report but were awaiting reports on the ecological and flood impact. He suggested that ABEI Energy were intending to submit a proposal in July.

5. Finances

Jo Jameson summarised the payments from the PC account which have included 7 cuts of the cemetery grass, a new insurance agreement with Zurich and costs of the PC website. Funds have been received from a burial in the cemetery.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2024/25 was completed and submitted in June 2025 following an audit of the PC account by Jo Jameson in May 2025. The AGAR submission and account summary are available on the PC website.

6. National Trust Liaison Committee

Verity Manners reported discussions with Sarah Hannis concluded that the Liaison Committee may need restructuring to allow more interaction between the group and the NT. It was hoped that the monthly coffee mornings could continue.

7. National Trust Report

Charles Leather introduced Keith Assirati-Wilkie, General Manager at the National Trust, who discussed his role. Charles then discussed the main points of the National Trust report, attached to these minutes, including:

- a) Updates on the let estate where there is extensive upgrade works underway on a number of properties in Buscot, Eaton Hastings and Coleshill. A new building surveyor has joined the team at Coleshill, covering NT properties in West Oxfordshire. New tenants have moved into 14 Coleshill. Vicki Mace-Benson asked about the changes to Energy Performance Certification (EPC) and exemptions for listed properties. Charles Leather discussed that changes to the legislation could lead to significantly higher costs for landlords such as the NT. Julie Jupe asked about registering interest for properties before they are advertised on Rightmove. It was discussed that informing letting agents about connections to the village was important during an application. Sue Homersham raised the issue of decreasing community engagement from village residents and the aim to encourage this in new tenants. Charles

Leather recommended that any interested tenants are welcome to contact him directly to register interest although all applications would need to be via Rightmove once properties were advertised there. Duncan Clarke raised the issue of window openings being painted over on some properties which could be a safety risk. Charles Leather said he would investigate.

- b) The countryside update is included in the report describing works in the Coleshill Parkland and surrounding woodland, such as the replaced estate railings and restoration of the ha-ha. Felling of areas of Spruce and thinning of woodland would be undertaken in autumn, requiring some walks and areas to be closed while works take place.
- c) Forthcoming planning applications for works on the Granary expected in the near future, repairs to the water mill and other estate works were summarised.
- d) A review of visitor access has provided information on the walks across the estate. Keith Assirati-Wilkie reported that feedback had included a lack of way-marking and difficulties with accessing some areas. Improvements will be made including reinstating some paths and linking up with surrounding towns and villages. The use of mown walkways and the impact on the plant life in the Coleshill Park was discussed.

8. Local Government Reports: District and County Councillors

District Councillors Kat Foxhall and Viral Patel have shared a report which is circulated with these minutes.

Oliver Fox summarised a report from Bethia Thomas, also attached, which covers the road resurfacing works in the village, as well as issue with road damage along the B4019 and Holloway leading to Great Coxwell.

10. Planning applications

No planning applications received.

11. Any other business

- a) Sue Homersham informed those present about the visit by the Bishop of Dorchester on Sunday 13th July. One topic to discuss is the intended removal of the Pleydell-Bouverie pews in Coleshill church which will allow a community space to be constructed and open up the church to new uses. Vicki Mace-Benson suggested that the PC would gladly support any creation of community space and would be able to write to the diocese in support of any proposals. Sue Homersham said she would put together a set of proposals which the PC could support.
- b) It was reported that the one-way system for traffic was working around the model farm in reducing the issues with vehicles getting congested.

The next meeting will be held on Monday 6th October 2025 at 6.30 pm at the Old Timber Store unless otherwise notified.