



MEND the GAP

Cholsey Parish Council Community Consultation



CHILTERNS

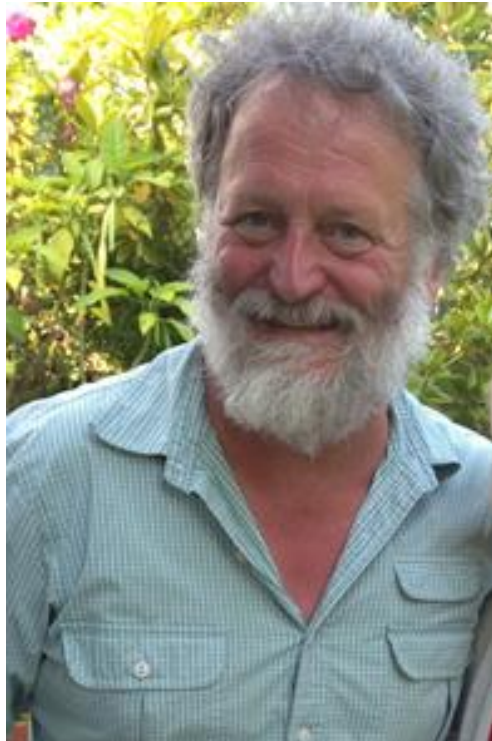
AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY



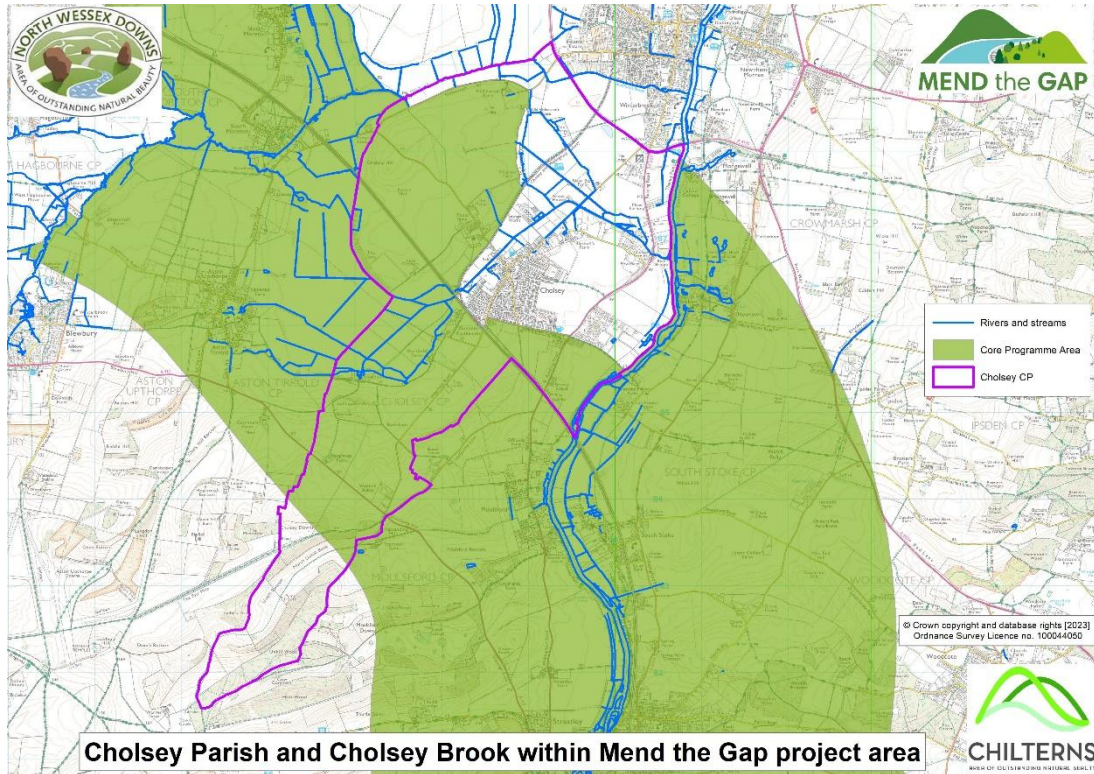
FOREWORD

by Dr Stephen Head

As a long term Cholsey resident I am delighted that the Mend the Gap programme can be active in our area. Cholsey is a classic south Oxfordshire parish “with its feet in the clay and its head in the chalk” and we have a rich mix of habitats and species. In a time of severe wildlife decline and prospective climate change, the scheme provides a wonderful opportunity to take stock of what we have, to plan to maintain and improve it, and undertake new habitat creation projects fit for the future.



*Dr
Stephen
Head*



Consultation structure

The consultation was held at the Cholsey Pavilion on 12th October 2023 and promoted locally using email, social media and word of mouth.

The following document summarises the feedback that we had from the 31 local people that attended, this is not meant to be a formal delivery document but a summary of the points of view of members of the local community.

Outline of the event held

Meeting Date 12th October 2023

Meeting Time 19.00-21.00

Meeting Location Cholsey Pavilion

Audience People from the local community

AIM: To inform and consult the communities of Cholsey and neighbouring parishes and put a proposal together for the Mend the Gap Programme

AGENDA

7.20 Welcome from Vicky Beardall-Richards

7.25 Introduction to Mend the Gap (10 mins) Ruth Staples-Rolfe Mend the Gap programme manager

7.35 Introduction to the consultation (5mins)

Refreshments

8.35 Conclusion led by Dr Steve Head

Sum up what we have learnt from the consultation and what our next steps might be

8.50 Closing comment Vicky Beardall-Richards

9pm Finish

Where are sites of wildlife interest and why?

The following table summarises the feedback that we had from the 31 local people that attended, this is not meant to be a formal delivery document but a summary of the points of view of members of the local community.

	Site of interest	Reason for interest
	Moulseford Viaduct	Otters sighted near here
	Cholsey Marsh Nature Reserve	Desmoulin whirl snail and birds
	Westfield Road and surrounding fields	Hares
	Brick sheds	Barn owls
	Chalk streams connecting villages (Amwell) Wetland mosaics	Voles, weasels, brown trout, and signal crayfish
	Lollington Hill	Birds, butterflies
	Cholsey Churchyard	Butterflies
	Aston reedbeds	Over 50 years of harvest mice records
	The Lees (the long ditch) conservation area	Water vole, lapwing,
	Blewberry hill	chalk grassland
	South Moreton	Lapwing on grassland
	Manor farm	Barn owls
	Bow bridge	Woodland
	Caps' lane to the Thames River	Rewilding meadow, rich with insects
	Thames river	Kingfisher, perch, Thames wood
	River Meadow opposite Caps Lane	Exceptional grassland flora and butterflies – I think this the same place as two above?

Where are there other sites of interest and why?

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	Site of interest	Why
	Thames and National trail	National trails with access to wider areas WW2 pillboxes
	Ridgeway National trail	National trails with access to wider areas Access to Grimms ditch
	Lollingdon	Poets John Masfold Edward Thomas
	Recreation field	Sports
	Cholsey hill	Never enclosed, needs interpretation
	Cholsey Long barn	Longest of its type
	Monastical Fish ponds at the school	Medieval importance to use of the water for food and beer
	Cricket club	Sports
	Fairmile hospital	Former psychiatric hospital, developed into housing and community space.
	Cholsey Church	Historic saxon origin, Agatha Christie grave

Where are the wet places that might create wet habitats?

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	Site of interest	why
	Manor Farm	Two areas that might be suitable for ponds
	Thames flood plain (upstream from Ferry Lane)	To reopen the scrapes that were dug in the 1990's but lost during the building of Cholsey meadows (particularly important to many of those attending)
	Amwell spring	Chalk stream currently used for brewing local beer
	Freshwater mosaic of streams	Nesting birds
	Old monastery fishponds	
	Aston Upthorpe – area by the tunnel needs reviving (writing suggests Bliccs Lane??)	
	Upthorpe farm drainage	Harvest mice and reed buntings and sedge warblers
	The Lees and the farmland around that area	Create water ponds for waders (very popular with those attending)
	North Moreton	Land North of street floods
	Corridor from Cholsey to the Astons	Wildlife corridor

Who might we need to get involved (landowners)

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Any additional feedback from those unable to attend is also welcome.

	Landowner	To possibly discuss
	Greenlands farm, Moulsford	To discuss possible wildlife corridors and (accessible fencing)
	Lollingdon Geoff Ryman and son	Brook restoration, water voles, lapwings
	Westfield Farm David Gibbons	Chalk stream restoration potential
	Wellbarn Estate Hugh Osmond	Wildfowl and wetland habitat creation
	BBOWT Charlotte Newberry	Cholsey Marsh Nature Reserve
	Manor farm Stephen Bitmead	Pond creation
	Blewburton Hill Mr Allen	Hill fort and chalk grassland

Proposal ideas that you want us to explore.

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	Proposal
Chalk grassland	Link to the big chalk project chalk grassland restoration project through AONB's
	Blewberry hill chalk grassland restoration connect to Dawn(? Talk to Ann Dillon about this)
Farmland and Water	Green Corridors to connect the villages (very popular with those taking part)
	Enable owl habitat and boxes
	Reduce water pollution
	Clear silted reedbeds
	Lapwing habitat project
	Bird hide near to wetland created
	Regeneration of Amwell chalk stream
	Acheological assessment of the fish ponds
	Improve hedging for birds along railway
	Hedge laying
	Miyawaki Forest
	Wetland/pond creation
Monitoring and evaluation	Creating management plans for key sites Linking research and monitoring (base line and long term to set the sustainability criteria including: Biological records, water, soil and soil carbon Citizen science. Not just number of hectares and people engaged with.
Other	Education promotion of the wildlife around Cholsey area. Many residents don't know what is there
	Awareness raising of aggressive fencing that impacts wildlife movement
	Money for Vicky or Ruth to Coordinate the project
Outside Mend the Gap area	Agatha Christie trail Cholsey to Wallingford, transport project under tourism
	Green corridors from Cholsey to Wallingford

This short report was produced by the Mend the Gap programme manager after the event.

If you wish to comment on this report or be involved in any way, please contact:

Vicky Beardall-Richards
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Cholsey Parish Council
ec@cholseyparishcouncil.gov.uk



Or
Ruth Staples-Rolfe
Mend the Gap Programme Manager
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Mend the Gap - is a joint programme of Chilterns Conservation Board, North Wessex Downs AONB and the Railway Action Group (a group of local community members who were instrumental in highlighting the harm being done to the AONBs and in the campaign to reduce these impacts) and will involve working with landowners, the local community and partner organisations to identify and deliver projects that will collectively enhance the affected areas.

