

DRAFT

CHARNEY HALL & FIELD TRUST (CHAFT)

(CHARITY NO. 294765)

CHARNEY FIELD: SAFETY POLICY & PROCEDURES

Land Title (ON 229496/TP/132)

(TO BE ADDED- MAP OF FIELD)

1. FOREWORD

1.1 The Parish Council purchased Charney Field from the County Council in 2001 with a grant from the Trust for the Oxfordshire Environment. The following year the Charity Commission agreed changes to the governing document for 'Charney Village Hall' to include the field as a recreation ground. The charity was renamed Charney Hall & Field Trust (CHAFT)

1.2. Charney Field consists of the Bridle Path, the short footpath from Bridle Path to the grassland, the grassland area, the woodland (including the bridleway) to the edge of the watercourse (Charney Wick Ditch)

1.3 Legal advice has clarified ownership and management issues and action is being taken to amend the land registry document to make it clear CHAFT is the registered proprietor and the Parish Council the custodian trustee

1.4 The Field is held by the trustees of the charity in trust as a recreation ground for the local community. Trustees have individual and collective legal responsibility for the management and financial control of the charity and its properties. In fulfilling their management responsibilities they must have regard to their governing document and guidance provided by the Charity Commission

1.5. CHAFT is unincorporated and has no legal entity. The Parish Council as custodian trustee holds the title to the land on its behalf but does not own the land or have any management responsibilities. However, it can assist by fulfilling its wider role as a Parish Council.

1.6 The Management Committee of Trustees is responsible for the whole parcel of land except for the maintenance of the Bridle Path, bridleway 158/5 and the two footpaths 158/2 and 158/3 which are the responsibility of Oxfordshire County Council (see also para. 3) Additionally, CHAFT has shared maintenance responsibility with the leaseholder of the land to the west of the field for keeping the access to the field from Buckland Road suitable for vehicular access.

1.7 CHAFT is also waiting for the Charity Commission to approve changes to its governing document which will amend the constitution of the Management Committee. Other planned changes are to permit the appointment of sub-committees/ working groups necessary for the effective management of the charity.

1.8. What follows takes account of the above and fulfils the charity's obligation to identify, approve, implement and monitor appropriate safety policies and procedures. Lead trustee(s) appointed on an annual basis will be guided by the contents of this document and assisted by such sub-committees or working groups as might be approved (para.1.7 refers)

1.9. This document supersedes previous safety policies for the field and will be reviewed at least annually to assist compliance with relevant legal and insurance requirements

2. THE GRASSLAND AREA INCLUDING THE FENCED CHILDRENS PLAYPARK.

An annual inspection and risk assessment of the play area, grassland area and installed equipment is carried out by an approved, independent inspection company. Their report is considered by the Management Committee at the next meeting (or earlier if any urgent safety issues are identified) Any agreed actions are documented and implementation is monitored by the Management Committee.

Weekly inspections of the play area, grassland area and field equipment are carried out by an appointed Field Safety Officer (or deputy) using an approved checklist. Issues requiring attention are recorded on an inspection sheet and if necessary reported to the next meeting of the Management Committee. Those requiring immediate attention are drawn to the attention of the Secretary, Chair

or a member of the Management Committee for action. Copies of the weekly inspection form are forwarded to the supplier of the children's play equipment if required by the guarantee.

The grassland area is cut by an experienced local landowner free of charge.

The grass in the fenced area of the children's play park is cut by a contractor employed by the Parish Council and paid for by CHAFT

The grassed area surrounding the goal posts and nets is cut by CHAFT volunteers on a rota basis

Other maintenance tasks are undertaken by prior agreement with 'Charney Army' (a group of volunteers accountable to and insured by the Parish Council) or by CHAFT volunteers (insured by the Charity)

Maintenance of footpaths 158/3 (along the eastern edge of the field) and 158/8 (along the western edge of the field) are the responsibility of the County Council. Maintaining the track running alongside footpath 158/8 from Buckland Road onto the field in a condition suitable for vehicular access is shared with the leaseholder of the land to the west of the footpath.

Rabbit incursions present an ongoing safety hazard. Present policy focuses on encouraging neighbouring landowners to take such action as is necessary to minimise potential risks, in accordance with government guidance.

Horse riding is not permitted other than on the Bridle Path and bridleway.

3. THE BRIDLE PATH

The Bridle Path runs from Main Street in a westerly direction until it meets bridleway 158/5 and then along the southern edge of the field.

Oxfordshire County Council is responsible for maintaining the Bridle Path and bridleway 158/5 in a condition suitable for use by pedestrians and horse riders.

The three houses on the northern side of Bridle Path, west of house number 5 are responsible for maintaining the Bridle Path in a condition suitable for their vehicular access

CHAFT has no direct management and safety responsibilities for the Bridle Path itself other than some riparian responsibilities

(CHAFT has a right of vehicular access onto the field from the Bridle Path should that be needed in the future but approved policy is to utilise the entrance from Buckland Road)

4. CHARNEY WICK DITCH

The watercourse (CHARNEY WICK DITCH) runs from Main Street on the south side of the Bridle Path and then along the southern bank of Charney Field.

Riparian responsibilities for the watercourse are understood to be as follows

- Oxfordshire County Council has responsibility for the culvert under Main Street
- properties 4 and 5 Barnfield have riparian responsibility for the full width of the ditch at the rear of their properties.
- CHAFT has shared responsibility with Bridle Cottage and Bridle Farm Cottage (to the midpoint of the ditch)

The Charity is committed to fulfilling its riparian responsibilities, taking into account advice from Oxfordshire County Council and the Environment Agency. It is in liaison with the Parish Council and has proposed early joint discussions with other riparian owners with a view to

- producing an annual maintenance plan based on what needs to be done, how it should be done, when it should be done and who pays
- agreeing Joint inspections of the watercourse on at least an annual basis

5. WOODLAND AREA AND WHOLE FIELD DEVELOPMENTS

A draft maintenance plan for the woodland area has been drawn up which

- includes actions necessary to comply with the conditions laid down in the felling licence obtained by the Parish Council in 2019.
- proposes weekly inspections to identify any potential safety concerns, including broken branches, pathway trip hazards e.g. rabbit and badger holes.
- commits the charity to an annual 'in house' check on the condition of the trees and a ten yearly inspection by a suitably qualified specialist.
- covers the use of volunteers, in liaison with the Parish Council when necessary
- requires liaison with contractors on health and safety matters, if and as appropriate.
- Identifies ongoing financial implications.

Additionally an outline plan has been prepared which proposes environmental improvements for the whole field.

Once the Charity Commission has approved changes to the governing document (para.1.7 refers) consideration will be given to the

- appointment of lead and shadow lead trustees for the whole field
- approval of a sub-committee/ working group necessary for the effective maintenance and development of the whole field

6. BONFIRES

Field maintenance duties necessitate the occasional burning of wood and associated combustible waste and this is normally undertaken near the woodland area. CHAFT has recognised the potential environmental and safety implications and the following controls apply

- Bonfires should be authorised by and management arrangements put in place by a lead trustee for the field
- The number of bonfires should be limited so they do not become a nuisance to householders in the vicinity
- Care must be taken not to injure or kill hibernating wildlife
- Care must be taken to avoid smoke drifting over the village and/or across the road network.
- Household waste or very damp wood should not be burnt. Combustion accelerants should not be used.

- Care should be taken to avoid the fire spreading to other areas and, action taken, as far as is reasonably practical, to ensure the embers do not present a danger to users of the field.

7. PUBLIC NOTICES

Large safety and policy notices are posted at the four entry points to the field stating:

- Young children must be supervised by a responsible adult while using the play equipment
- No motor vehicles are allowed on the field without permission of CHAFT
- Horses are only permitted to use the bridle path
- All dogs must be kept under control
- Dogs are not allowed in the children's play area
- Please clear up your dog's mess and dispose of it at home or in a bin
- Please take your litter home with you
- Charney Field is regularly inspected, but if you spot a fault or any damage please report it by email to: charneychaft@gmail.com

There is no public telephone in Charney Bassett. The nearest postcode to Charney Field is Bridle Path, OX12 0EW. In emergency the nearest A & E Unit is at the John Radcliffe Hospital OX3 9DU.

There is a Minor Injuries Unit at Abingdon Community Hospital, OX141AG.

8. HIRE OF THE FIELD.

The playing field is an open public space providing safe recreation facilities for all. The Management Committee is unlikely to approve applications for sole use of part or all of the field for an activity which:

- significantly interferes with the public's right of safe access and use and/or
- appears to be organised primarily for personal or business gain unless the activity is seen to be of general benefit to the local community.

An application to hire the field will need the specific approval of the Management Committee and should an application be granted it reserves the right to impose such conditions of hire as it thinks

9. INCIDENT REPORTING.

Safety related incidents, accidents or concerns made known to a member of the Management Committee are recorded on an incident report form and reported to their next meeting. Urgent matters are actioned immediately. .

10. INSURANCE

The Charity has public liability insurance for the field and employer's liability insurance for volunteers.

The Parish Council has public liability insurance and employer's liability for Charney Army volunteers when working on agreed projects.

11. FINANCE

The Management Committee has an approved outline 5 year policy and budget plan for the field and the village hall (for which the Charity is also responsible) Reserve funds are held for the two properties.

A field maintenance, development and equipment budget will be agreed annually and the Parish Council invited to provide an annual grant (or subvention) as appropriate. Grant funding from other sources will be pursued.

12. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS (to be developed)

Governance

Governing Document

Land Registry Document

Legal advice -Governance

Legal advice- Land Registry

Charity Commission advice - land registry and governance.

Management and maintenance.

Oxfordshire Playing Field Association (OPFA) guidance leaflets 2017

Managing Charitable Playing Fields (OPFA)

Risk Assessments and Risk Benefit Judgements. (OPFA)

Playground Inspections (OPFA)

Play Safety Advice- legal aspects (ROSPA)

Sub-Committee/ Working Group - terms of reference

Maintenance and development plan 22/23

Felling Licence 2019

Riparian responsibilities - OCC

Bridle Path (Parish Council/OCC positional statement)

Role of Safety Officer(s)

Weekly inspection sheet (grassland and children's play area)

Annual risk assessment and Independent Inspection (sample document)

Incident report form

Safeguarding policy and incident report form

Goalmouth grass cutting rota

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