

CHARNEY HALL & FIELD TRUST (CHAFT)

(CHARITY NO. 294765)

CHARNEY FIELD: SAFETY POLICY & PROCEDURES

Land Title (ON 229496/TP/132)



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 includes the Bridle Path, bridleway 158/5 (which has an awarded width of 3 metres) footpath 158/8 (which runs close to the western boundary with an awarded width of one metre) and the two footpaths 158/2 (short footpath from the Bridle Path onto the field) and 158/3 (which runs along the eastern boundary)

1.3 Legal advice obtained in 2022/23 clarified ownership and management issues. Consequently, action has been 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 CHAFT is an unincorporated charity and as such has no legal entity. The title deeds for the land are held on its behalf by the Parish Council as the appointed custodian trustee. The Parish Council does not own the land or have any management responsibilities. However, it can assist the charity within its wider community remit.

1.5 In summary, 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 the governing document and charity law.

1.6 Given the increased responsibilities now being undertaken (Bridle Path, Charney Wick Ditch and the woodland area) the Charity Commission has recently approved amendments to the governing document which change the constitution of the Management Committee to give greater flexibility and permit the appointment of sub-committees/ working groups.

1.7 What follows fulfils the charity's obligation to provide an appropriate safety policy for Charney Field. The Management Committee will be guided by the contents of this document and assisted by the appointment of a Charney Field Sub-Committee operating to approved terms of reference.

1.8 The document supersedes previous safety policies for the field and will be reviewed annually to assist compliance with relevant legal and insurance requirements

2. SAFETY & THE GRASSLAND AREA (including the fenced children's playpark)

2.1 An annual inspection and risk assessment of the play area, grassland area and installed equipment is carried out by an approved, independent inspection company. Any matters requiring action are documented and the implementation of corrective action monitored.

2.2 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 corrective action monitored. Copies of the weekly inspection sheets form for the play area are forwarded to the supplier of the children's play equipment if required by the guarantee.

2.3 The grassland area is cut on a regular basis by an experienced neighbouring land user.

2.4 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

2.5 The grassed areas surrounding the goal nets, benches and picnic table is cut by CHAFT volunteers on a rota basis.

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

2.7 Maintenance of the Bridle Path and bridleway 158/5 and footpaths 158/3 (along the eastern edge of the field) and 158/8 (along the western edge of the field) is the responsibility of the County Council. The track running alongside footpath 158/8 from Buckland Road onto the field must be kept in a condition suitable for vehicular access (responsibility shared with the leaseholder of the land to the west of the footpath.)

2.8 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.

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

3. SAFETY & THE BRIDLE PATH/ BRIDLEWAY

3.1 Bridle Path runs from Main Street in a westerly direction until it meets bridleway 158/5 (and footpath 158/2) and then along the southern edge of the field.

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

3.3 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.

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

4. SAFETY & CHARNEY WICK DITCH

4.1 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.

4.2 Riparian responsibilities for the watercourse are as follows

- Oxfordshire County Council is responsible for the culvert under Main Street
- Properties 4 and 5 Barnfield have riparian responsibility for 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)

4.3 CHAFT is committed to fulfilling its riparian responsibilities based on expert advice from Oxfordshire County Council and the Environment Agency. In liaison with other relevant riparian owners where appropriate it will seek to

- agree and implement an annual maintenance plan based on what needs to be done, how it should be done, when it should be done and if necessary who pays by Autumn 2023
- thereafter undertake a Joint inspection with other relevant riparian owners of the watercourse on an annual basis
- undertake a risk assessment on access to the watercourse from Charney Field taking into account the advice received from the Environment Agency.

5. SAFETY & THE WOODLAND AREA

CHAFT will

- comply with the conditions of the felling licence obtained by the Parish Council in 2019 for the stipulated period of ten years.
- undertake and record weekly safety inspections of pathways record potential safety concerns, including broken branches and trip hazards and arrange for remedial action to be taken.
- undertake an annual 'in house' check on the condition of the trees and arrange for remedial action to be taken, if necessary
- arrange for a five-yearly inspection of the woodland by a suitably qualified specialist.

6. WHOLE FIELD DEVELOPMENTS

CHAFT will develop and implement appropriate maintenance and safety procedures for any future field environment improvement initiatives not covered in this document.

7. 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.

8. PUBLIC NOTICES

Large safety and policy notices are posted at the four entry points to the field as follows

'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'

9. 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

10. 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 referred to the Field Subcommittee for action if and as appropriate.

11. INSURANCE

The Charity has public liability insurance for the field and employer's liability insurance for volunteers undertaking tasks in accordance with approved safety procedures and take account of the wider responsibilities now being undertaken.

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

12. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS (to be reviewed by subcommittee)

Governing Document (updated 2022)

Land Registry Document

CHAFT/ PARISH COUNCIL MOU/Joint statement

Field Sub-Committee - terms of reference

Role of field safety Officer(s) & weekly inspection sheets (grassland and children's play area)

Annual independent risk assessment and Inspection

Incident report form

Safeguarding policy and incident report form

Oxfordshire Playing Field Association (OPFA) guidance leaflets.

Play Safety Advice- legal aspects (ROSPA)

APPROVED 05.04.23

