

CHARNEY BASSETT PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 12 JANUARY 2000

PRESENT:

Mr G Beer (Chairman)
Mrs B Douglas
Mrs E Dahele
Mr J Harper

Mr P G Davies (Clerk)

Mr Terry Cox, District Councillor attended, together with four members of the public.

AGENDA

1. Minutes of the meeting on 10 November 1999.
2. Matters arising from meeting on 10 November 1999.
3. Clerk's Financial Report.
4. Charney Field.
5. Charney Mill
6. Clerk's Correspondence.
7. Ten minutes for Residents' Questions.
8. Any Other Business.

1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 10 NOVEMBER 1999.

These were approved and signed by the Chairman.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING ON 10 NOVEMBER 1999.

1. **The Clerk** had obtained the address of the Oxfordshire Historic Buildings Trust but had yet to write to them about Mount Pleasant.
2. The Clerk had again reported the state of the pavement in Orchard Close; no action has yet been taken.
3. The Clerk had carried out all the financial actions placed on him at the last meeting.
4. The Clerk had placed an order for restoration of the war memorial and had received notification of a Vale Village Improvement grant, which would reduce the Council's outlay for this work to £80.
5. The Clerk had notified OCC of his interest in "Communities in Touch" but had had no response to date.
6. The Clerk had established that Green Boxes would start being delivered "next week".
7. The Clerk had confirmed David Douglas' nomination to the Longworth Charity.
8. The Clerk wrote to MPs etc., re the proposals for 75,000 houses in Oxfordshire.
9. The Clerk is still waiting for OCC's production of copies of the footpath map for the notice board.
10. The Clerk had circulated the papers from the Vale Planning Evening, which Mrs Dahele and he had attended and which proved to be very illuminating. **He was asked** to obtain copies of the planning guidelines for councillors.

3. CLERK'S FINANCIAL REPORT AND SETTING THE PRECEPT

The Clerk presented his financial report. There were three items outstanding, payment of the first half of the contribution to the speed limit project (£75), and grant applications from Abingdon Citizens Advice Bureau and South and Vale Carers. It was agreed to pay the speed limit contribution and to offer to pay the second half immediately instead of waiting until the next financial year. The CAB grant was approved as that is a traditional annual item but the South and Vale Carers grant would await the review of grants, which it was agreed would be postponed to the next meeting. The Council agreed to pay 50% (~£16) of the cost of a post-box for the Village Hall, which would be a useful central repository for villagers' responses to (e.g.) questionnaires. The report was adopted.

The Clerk presented his paper on the setting of the precept, which detailed the items on which expenditure was expected in 2000/2001. In considering whether the paper had correctly identified all expenditure items, the councillors examined the possible expenditure on Charney Field and Charney Mill.

In the case of Charney Field, The Clerk pointed out that, in the first phase, there had never been an intention to spend money additional to that granted by TOE for purchase of the field. Fencing and gates were not included in the proposal as the field was surrounded by footpaths. No allowance had been made for grass cutting in 2000/2001 as it was assumed that switching the budget for the existing playing field would suffice to keep Charney Field in reasonable order. In any event, The Clerk reminded the Council that it would be pre-empting the purchase process if expenditure on The Field were to be included in the budget. It was agreed that should the financial situation permit it, some evidence of ownership, in the form of a cairn or seat, could be paid for out of the current account.

As far as Charney Mill was concerned, it was again pointed out that allowing for expenditure would be pre-empting a purchase decision. There were financial uncertainties, especially over insurance, but these would have to be resolved before agreeing to the purchase. The Clerk was attempting to negotiate a reasonable insurance premium, based on the minimum cover needed. He assured the councillors that the report on wood infestation, which appeared to say that treatment at a cost of £550 was needed, was pessimistic, due to the inability of the inspector to determine whether woodworm was active. The Clerk had established that treatment had been carried out by OCC within the last few years and no further treatment would be required for at least 25 years. The Mill restorers were aware of the situation and were actively monitoring it.

It was noted that the aim of having a year end balance at 31 March 2001 similar to that at 31 March 2000, would provide some flexibility for expenditure currently unknown. This might include celebrations of the purchase of Charney Field and the millennium. Following this exhaustive examination of the assumptions in the precept paper, it was proposed by Mrs Dahele and seconded by Mr Harper that the precept should remain unchanged at £2,000; this motion was carried.

4. CHARNEY FIELD

The only matter arising under this heading which was not discussed under item 3 was the acceptance of the conditions attached to the TOE offer of funding. The Council agreed to their acceptance and **The Clerk** was asked to convey this to TOE. Mrs Dahele sought the Council's permission to embark on raising village awareness of The Field and this was willingly given.

5. CHARNEY MILL

The Clerk reported on his efforts to resolve the question of insurance for The Mill. The Council's insurers had asked for the OCC valuation, which turned out to be the extraordinarily high sum of £675,000. This was the OCC estimate for complete rebuilding of The Mill after total destruction by, say, fire; this would cost over £2,000 in annual premiums. It was agreed that this was a nonsensical figure as, if this were to occur, no attempt would be made to rebuild. The Clerk is now attempting to determine the minimum level of insurance required to cover storm damage to The Mill and damage to the adjacent property caused by an incident at The Mill. Other costs included electricity, which amounted to some £70 per year and rates, which would be zero, although the bureaucracy associated with obtaining relief from rates was somewhat daunting.

6. CLERK'S CORRESPONDENCE

The questionnaire associated with the Best Value Review of OCC Country Services was completed at the meeting. Mr Cox pointed out that this was just the first in a whole series, which would examine all services provided by local authorities.

7. TEN MINUTES FOR RESIDENTS' QUESTIONS

There were no questions from residents.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Council agreed to enter the Best Kept Village Competition in 2000, taking due note of the report on last year's entry. To improve the village's chances, it was agreed to arrange another village working party to coincide with the National Spring Clean Week. **The Clerk** was asked to establish the dates of this event and publish it in the Cherbury News. Two dates should be fixed to allow for possible inclement weather on the first of the dates. **The Clerk** was asked to see if the work on the War Memorial could be completed before judging took place. *Clerk's Note: The two working party dates are Saturday mornings, 8th and 15th of April.*

The Clerk was asked to advertise again in the Cherbury News for a fifth councillor.

The Clerk was asked to re-circulate the information on Speedwatch.

The Clerk was asked to ensure maximum publicity on the Notice Board for events which villagers might wish to attend.

Mrs Douglas reported that, as Transport Representative, she had been sent details of a bus shelter grant scheme which could be used to replace existing shelters, as well as fund new ones.

9. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 8 March 2000 at 7.30 p.m. in the Village Hall.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.14 p.m. with thanks to all those who attended.

Signed.....
Chairman