

CHARNEY BASSETT PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 14 NOVEMBER 2001

PRESENT:

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

Mr P G Davies (Clerk)

District Councillor Terry Cox, PC Martyn Holder and one member of the public attended. An apology had been received from County Councillor Andrew Crawford.

AGENDA

1. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising.
2. Clerk's Financial Report.
3. Planning Matters
4. Charney Field.
5. Charney Mill.
6. Village College
7. Clerk's Correspondence.
8. Ten minutes for Residents' Questions.
9. Any Other Business.

Before the meeting proper, the Chairman invited PC Holder to address the meeting. He reported the village crime statistics, which, since January 2001, included four house burglaries, a figure above average for a village the size of Charney. He reminded the meeting that free advice on security matters was available from the police and it was disappointing to report that there was little demand for this service. In response to a question on speeding, he reported that speed detection devices were normally deployed only at accident black spots and Charney was not one. One of the problems facing local police is hare coursing and the inadequate legislation to catch them. The presence of hare coursers has been linked to burglary and theft in an area.

The question of communications with Thames Valley police was discussed and there was plenty of anecdotal evidence of difficulties in contacting the police and especially police with some local knowledge. PC Holder admitted that he, too, had had problems. **The Clerk** was asked to write to Thames Valley Police expressing the council's concern at the state of affairs. PC Holder reminded the meeting that he was usually available and would ensure that his phone number was published again in Cherbury News. For the record, his home phone number is 01367 870232 and his mobile number is 07970 145294.

The Chairman thanked PC Holder for his attendance and the information he presented.

1. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING.

The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman.

On matters arising, The Clerk had requested painting of the post and telephone boxes, cut the New Road/Buckland Road hedge and had investigated Mr Harper's complaint about dumping building materials in the stream along the Bridle Path. On the last point, there was some dumping of material, but mainly on a bridge, which had not stopped water flow.

The Clerk also reported that the hedge at Ock Bridge on the Lyford Road had been trimmed and the dip in the road to the A415 had been repaired. He was still awaiting quotes from Terry Morgan and Jonathan Terry for replacement of the Ock Green railings.

The Clerk reported that it appeared after discussions with Mr Mark Peters that there could be no reduction in insurance premiums between the Council and the Village Hall Management Committee. Mrs Dahele drew attention to an article in Local Council News which said that Parish Councils could not insure village halls managed on their behalf.

All other matters arising were on the agenda.

2. CLERK'S FINANCIAL REPORT

The Clerk presented his financial report which was now so complicated that it required explanatory notes, which were appreciated by the Council. It included an account of expenditure on the Village College, showing a deficit of £45.27. However, a cheque for £225 had been received from CLET for hall rental and telephone charges since September 2001 and a letter had been received from Abingdon and Witney College informing that the Parish Council invoice for £227.17 for previous telephone rental had been passed for payment.

The Clerk drew attention to the surplus on grass cutting as a result of cancellation of the cutting of the old playing field. This surplus would be enough for six cuts of Charney Field. **The Clerk** was asked to request a Field cutting before the winter set in.

It was agreed to give the usual £25 donations to the South and Vale Carers and the Royal British Legion.

The report was adopted.

4. PLANNING MATTERS

Councillor Cox reported that there was a new Local Plan in preparation which would be valid until 2011 and the Parish Council would be given an opportunity to comment on it. The general theme was a town-based strategy, exploiting brown field sites. There would be 700-1300 new houses on green field sites on the edge of existing developments, for example between Grove and Denchworth. There would also be developments in towns such as Faringdon, Botley, Wantage and Abingdon. The Government was proposing to issue a Green Paper on planning reform which might include proposals to combine District and County Local and Structure Plans

Councillor Cox also reported on his informal discussions with planning officials on the replacement for "Pennar" in Longworth Road, to which the Council had objected. He explained that this would go to the Planning Committee and it was his understanding that the officials were likely to recommend approval. Mr Cox was closely questioned on how approval could be recommended when the proposal clearly breached Policy H13. He suggested that there had previously been tight interpretation of this Policy in the Oxford Green Belt but not in villages.

The Chairman expressed the view that this news gave cause for concern. The Council relied upon the Local Plan to protect the village environment from undesirable development and it should only be breached in exceptional circumstances, which did not seem to apply in this case. It was agreed that the existing bungalow should be replaced. However, the proposal to replace it with a property some 200% larger than at present was a gross breach of the 30% guideline in Policy H13. The proposed property was virtually identical to Coral Oaks, built in Longworth Road by the same developer, slightly shorter but slightly taller and much closer to the road. The planners and Planning Committee should be encouraged to visit the site to see the visual impact of Coral Oaks, in order to visualise the even more significant impact of another similar property across the road.

The Clerk was asked to write again to the Vale Planning Department to express the Council's objection to the proposal.

5. CHARNEY FIELD

Receipt of the deeds from Gloucester Land Registry had been delayed but the Registration number had been obtained.

The Chairman observed that the firework display and supper on 4 November had been an unqualified success with an excellent village turn-out which was a good start to the use of the Field. The Village Hall and Field Trust (VHFT) were to be congratulated on their organisation. From the floor, Mrs Adamson, on behalf of the Trust thanked the Council for their contribution to the cost of the fireworks. The VHFT is now managing the Field and will be seeking to develop the amenity further, possibly with help from CLET. It will hold an open meeting on 29 November at which it hopes to discuss ideas for further development.

There was concern that there had already been cases of dog fouling on the Field and it was being used by horse owners, neither of which activity was desirable for maintaining the Field in good condition. Dog fouling was unacceptable as children were now using the Field. **The Clerk** was asked to refer to this in his Cherbury News report.

6. CHARNEY MILL

There had been some progress on the leasing of the Mill as OCC grappled with the problem of insuring the building and a formal offer of a lease or an agreement to maintain the status quo could be expected before the next meeting. It was agreed that informal contact should be made with the new owner of Mill Cottage and Mr Harper agreed to do this.

7. VILLAGE COLLEGE

Mrs Dahele reported that despite a difficult start caused by unreliable equipment, the second term of the College, with e-mail and the Internet the topics, was under way. In the longer term it was still hoped to set up yoga and French conversation classes although in the latter case, these would not be held at the Manor, as had been hoped. Mrs Dahele was in discussion with Abingdon and Witney College and was hoping to set up a long-term management arrangement with them. She reminded the meeting that the Charney and Lyford Educational Trust could make student grants available but the ILA Government funding scheme had been rescinded.

8. CLERK'S CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk had received a letter from CLET seeking a replacement Trustee for Mrs Dahele. In the absence of a nomination, it was agreed to defer this matter to the next meeting.

The Clerk had received an invitation to the Council to join Speedwatch, an OCC initiative. As this would have a number of benefits which could help reduce speeding in the village, it was agreed to join.

9. TEN MINUTES FOR RESIDENTS' QUESTIONS

Mrs Adamson sought the Council's view on the new fence erected along the Bridle Path, which she and a number of neighbours considered detracted from the visual amenity of the Path. The Clerk explained that any landowner could erect a fence less than 2 metres in height without permission and as this was not on Parish Council land, it had no power in the matter. The Chairman agreed that this was the legal situation and therefore was not a matter in which the Council could intervene. Resolution of any problem caused by the fence was a matter between the residents affected and those who erected the fence. He allowed Mr Harper to explain the reason for the fence and his plans for improving the general appearance of the site. The Chairman hoped that an amicable agreement could be reached between all parties involved.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mrs Douglas asked what could be done to stop parking on the Village Green by persons who simply ignored polite notices to desist. The Chairman and Mr Harper agreed to make a personal approach to Mr Crisp, the main offender and **The Clerk** would approach the Callaghans. While on the subject of parking, it was reported that McBain's vehicles were causing obstructions in the mornings in New Road while they waited for the yard to open. It was agreed that a personal approach to Mr McBain was required to resolve this.

Thanks were expressed to those people who had helped to make the village approaches more attractive by looking after the plant tubs and to Mrs Mills who had made an excellent job of keeping the Notice Board tidy.

Mrs Douglas suggested it would be good for communications if Council representatives on other bodies (e.g. CLET, VHFT and the Minibus Committee) could be invited to report on their activities to the Council as an agenda item.

Mr Harper pointed out that despite receiving a letter from the electricity distribution company saying they had made improvements to the reliability of supplies to Charney, there had been another failure since (*and another since the meeting - Clerk*). **The Clerk** was asked to write to the company to draw this to their attention.

The Clerk was asked to provide each councillor with a plan of the village conservation area.

11. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 9 January 2002 at 7.30 p.m. in the Village Hall.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 10.22 p.m. with thanks to all those who attended.

Signed.....
Chairman