

## CHARNEY BASSETT PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 14 MAY 2003

PRESENT:

Mr G Beer (Chairman)  
 Mr J Harper (Vice-chairman)  
 Mr S Taylor

Mr P G Davies (Clerk)

Apologies had been received from Mr J Stiles and Mrs P McGuire. Mr Andrew Crawford, County Councillor, Mrs Elsa Boyce, District Councillor and 13 members of the public were present.

#### 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. Village Green
8. Clerk's Correspondence.
9. Village Plan
10. Residents' Questions.
11. Any Other Business.
12. Next meeting

#### 1. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING.

The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman.

The seat on the Village Green has been installed but the Village Improvement Grant Scheme is currently in abeyance.

The Jubilee photographs have been mounted and await display in the Village Hall.

The rats are back on the Cherbury footpath and Mrs Rumble has reported this to the Vale Council.

Mr Jim Cottrell, the farmer who planted trees on the Lyford Road has been asked to remove them.

The proposal to make Chapel Lane an "official" address has been referred back to Mr Paske by the Vale Council which is not assured that all residents understand the full implications of this, which will require a new post code.

The Clerk had reported the problems with the A415/A338 junction traffic lights to Highways and awaits a response.

All other matters arising were on the agenda.

#### 2. CLERK'S FINANCIAL REPORT

The Clerk presented his Financial Report which was adopted. The large current account balance was due to the CLET grant for children's play equipment which the Council would purchase, thereby getting the benefit of reclaiming VAT, which would be ploughed back into the provision of the equipment. Arrangements had been made to obtain an interest-free loan, if necessary, while the refund was awaited. Apart from this, the current account was generally in line with expectations.

It was agreed that the mandate for signing cheques should be amended to take account of the new councillors and that in future, cheques would be signed by any two councillors. **The Clerk** would arrange this.

A decision on which grant applications should be paid was again deferred to the next meeting. The question of membership of CPRE would also be considered in the same context.

### 3. PLANNING MATTERS

Three planning applications had been considered since the last meeting: Churn Barn and Land North of Overdown House (both supported) and Gunton Barn (objection raised).

### 4. CHARNEY FIELD

The Sarsen stones to mark ownership of the Field had been collected by Mr McBain and awaited installation, with which he would assist by providing the machinery and driver. The stones are very different from the original concept in that they do not include a tall stone. Although this means there is less risk of toppling, the Chairman commented that they would now hardly be noticeable in the chosen location and he would prefer to see them placed where they would be more readily seen by Field users. He proposed to hold another site meeting to resolve this issue. Once in place a decision could be made about an inscription on the stones for which Mr Harper already had a quotation.

In response to a question from the floor, it was agreed that a seat should be provided near the children's play area. It was also agreed that a proposal from Mr Daghish to improve the footpath access to the Field from the Bridle Path with log borders and wood chippings should be followed up by the next working party.

### 5. CHARNEY MILL

The Council's copy of the lease has been signed and all that remains to be done for the lease to take effect is to exchange copies with OCC; publicity of this event is planned. The repairs to the roof and weather boarding, carried out by OCC as part of the agreement on the terms of the lease have been completed satisfactorily and an inspection by the bat expert has confirmed the bats have returned.

Mr Harper outlined the progress being made towards restoration of water to the Mill, without increasing the risk of flooding in the village. The Environment Agency has increased the frequency of maintenance to the watercourses and would now undertake this work annually.

The Mill will be open for the Open Gardens Day on 8 June and the Feast on 5 July and had been open on National Mills Day on 11 May. Responding to a question about access to the Mill, **The Clerk** was asked to consult with the restorers on arrangements, in particular what constitutes a "party" for the purposes of visits.

In response to a question from Mr Crawford, The Clerk confirmed that OCC had offered to offset the legal costs of the lease by granting an equivalent sum for work to ensure public safety. The sum involved is £440.

### 6. VILLAGE COLLEGE

Mrs Dahele has relinquished her role as the liaison between the Village College and Abingdon and Witney College. However, as there are currently no outstanding issues to be dealt with and the CLET grant for next term has been applied for, she was prepared to continue in the role until a successor could be found - preferably by no later than the end of July. Next term would see the addition of a First Aid course to the existing courses.

### 7. VILLAGE GREEN

The appearance of the Green had been improved by work carried out by a working party. It included turfing and re-seeding, removal of the old "No Parking" signs and replacement with more friendly ones and installation of the seat made by Mr Daghish.

### 8. CLERK'S CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk had been in discussion with Charney Manor who were very appreciative of the work to clear the additional part of Ock Green. They wished, however, to ensure that no issues arose over maintaining this

piece of land in tidy order (despite it being part of the lease), for example the cost of regular mowing and any other work there. **The Clerk** had agreed to meet the Manor Secretary to discuss these issues.

Mr Harper reminded the Council that the railings around Ock Green had still not been replaced and **The Clerk** was asked to redouble his efforts to find a contractor to do this, using the original square-section rails.

#### 9. VILLAGE PLAN

Mr Harper outlined what a Village Plan entails but explained that it was not immediately obvious what grants the Council would qualify for as the activities suitable for grant aid were already being carried out as normal village/Council activities. Nevertheless, there were several Heritage funds from which the Council might obtain funding in the future, for example work on the Mill might qualify for grants under the Industrial Heritage heading and development of the Village Hall should also qualify. He would be keeping a watching brief on this area to ensure no opportunities for village improvements were lost.

#### 10. RESIDENTS' QUESTIONS

Mr Hook raised the question of the state of repair of Manor Farm Road which was now riddled with potholes, posing risks to users. The Council felt that proposals for remedying this situation should come from the residents and there was evidence of conflicting views as to the desirability of doing anything, particularly as the potholes deterred speeding and any permanent solution might conflict with the rural setting. It was agreed that **The Clerk** would discuss the matter further with Councillor Taylor, a road user, to see if a solution could be produced and would also go back to Thames Water who had in the past offered to make a contribution to repairs as they use the road for access to the sewage farm. It was observed that Thames Water activities seemed to have increased lately with increased lorry traffic not helping the situation.

Mrs Graham asked if the telephone box could be painted as it was somewhat shabby. **The Clerk** was asked to arrange this.

A number of sites of crumbling pavements were reported, notably the area around the Main Street/New Road junction, the bus shelter, Orchard Close. The first of these was in particular need of repair because of the risk presented to residents with impaired mobility. **The Clerk** was asked to report these problems to Highways. Councillor Crawford asked to be copied in on the report as this would help to put pressure on OCC.

**The Clerk** was asked to arrange for the hedge at the New Road/Buckland Road junction to be cut.

#### 11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman warmly thanked Mr and Mrs Rumble for installing a ceiling in the bus shelter and painting its interior. This had dramatically improved its appearance and would help in the efforts to win a Best Kept Village award.

There was some discussion over speeding through the village which continues unabated. There did not seem to be any answer to this although The Clerk had been offered another loan of the mini-Gatso which has a temporary effect.

##### 11.1 EXTERNAL COUNCILLORS COMMENTS

During the course of the meeting District Councillor Boyce and County Councillor Crawford were invited to raise any issues relevant to the village.

Councillor Boyce had nothing to report as the Vale Council is still being re-constituted after the recent elections.

Councillor Crawford mentioned four issues:-

- A review of Oxfordshire electoral boundaries is being undertaken and this is expected to move Charney Bassett into a constituency which includes Stanford-in-the Vale, Island Villages and Longworth. This will have implications for Forum membership (see below).
- The recent dramatic increase in Council Tax will not, regrettably, result in improved services (indeed, there has been a reduction in the Highways budget) as the bulk of the increase will go towards Social Services.
- The movement of Charney Bassett out of the Island Villages electoral ward into the Longworth ward has raised the issue of Forum membership. Charney tends to look towards Wantage rather than Faringdon and should retain its membership of the former's Forum. [Note: The Clerk had been asked by Councillor Boyce to make an instant choice of which Forum Charney Bassett should be in for the purposes of informing the Vale Chief Executive and had made an executive decision to retain membership of the Wantage and Grove Forum, which Mr Harper regularly attends].
- The new Health Centre in Wantage is due to open shortly and although provision has been made for a bus turning area, there is no provision for a bus service to this out-of-town Centre. Lobbying will be necessary to ensure access for people without cars.

12. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 9 July 2003 at 7.30 p.m. in the Village Hall.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.12 p.m. with thanks to all those who attended.

Signed.....

Chairman

Date.....