

## CHARNEY BASSETT PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 14 JANUARY 2004

PRESENT:

Mr G Beer (Chairman)  
 Mr J Harper  
 Mr J Stiles  
 Mr S Taylor

Mr P G Davies (Clerk)

District Councillor Mrs Elsa Boyce and 8 members of the public were present. Apologies had been received from County Councillor Andy Crawford and Mrs P McGuire.

#### AGENDA

1. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising.
2. Clerk's Financial Report.
3. Setting the Precept for FY 2004/05
4. Planning Matters
5. Charney Field.
6. Charney Mill.
7. Village College
8. Clerk's Correspondence.
9. Residents' Questions.
10. Any Other Business.
11. Next meeting

#### COUNCILLOR BOYCE

Councillor Boyce expressed her relief that, unlike her report at the last meeting, things had been relatively quiet of late although she had been surprised - and alarmed - to learn that the considerable quantity of paperwork she had already received giving guidance on awarding drinking licences was possibly only half of the final amount!

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

The minutes of the November meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman.

The Clerk had obtained a supply of stickers to deter dog fouling and had placed some around the village, including the Notice Board.

The Clerk had reported the trees on the bridle path overhanging Bridle Cottage to OCC and they had sent a tree expert to look into the problem. The latter had agreed that action was needed and would arrange appropriate felling of the trees presenting a risk. No indication has yet been given as to when this will be done. At Mr Stiles' suggestion, the Council agreed to convey its thanks to Mr Daghish for clearing a fallen tree from the Stanford bridle path. The Clerk reported that he had walked the path with Mr Daghish and they had identified a large number of trees which should be felled. **The Clerk** proposed to advertise this fact in the next edition of Charney Chatter, offering logs in exchange for contributions to a working party. While on the subject of trees, the Chairman expressed the Council's thanks to those who helped with the erection of the Christmas tree on the Village Green.

The Clerk reported that the first edition of "Charney News" had been produced and distributed. There had been some media interest in it and in future copies would be sent to local papers, Radio Oxford and Oxford Main Library. Councillor Boyce asked to be included in the distribution.

## 2. CLERK'S FINANCIAL REPORT

The Clerk presented his Financial Report and explained the revised format, based on newly acquired spreadsheet software. The format was acceptable to councillors and the report was adopted. Payment of invoices for internal audit (£60) and chippings for the Field footpath (£15) were approved. The Council's financial position remains healthy.

## 3. SETTING THE PRECEPT

Before considering the level of precept, the Council considered a proposal to pay for a fence around the children's play area on Charney Field. The Clerk explained that advice had been received from OPFA that a professional fence was best and a quotation for £800 had been received from a contractor for erection of the fencing already bought by the Council, together with additional fencing to complete the perimeter and a gate.

A joint application with CHAFT had been made to CLET for this sum and this would be discussed at the next CLET meeting on 21 January. If this was successful, the Council would not incur any expenditure. In the light of the healthy bank balance it was agreed to authorise the expenditure on the work, irrespective of the outcome of the CLET application. The Clerk reported that he had explored other sources of funding without success but as some time had now elapsed he would revisit this issue.

Having examined the fencing already purchased, Mr Harper expressed concern at the durability of it as it was assembled using screws. It was accepted that this was valid comment and at the suggestion of Mr Taylor, it was agreed that, should it be necessary, it would be relatively cheap and easy to replace the screws with bolts.

The Council considered a paper produced by The Clerk estimating expenditure and income on FY 2004/05 and after some discussion it was proposed by Mr Harper and seconded by Mr Taylor that the precept should be maintained at £2,000. Mr Harper pointed out that the proposal to mount and engrave the final marker stone on Charney Field at a possible cost of £300 was not included in the list of expenditure items but accepted this could be a call on the contingency.

## 4. PLANNING MATTERS

There has been some progress on the proposal by Mr McBain to build on his site. The application has now been formally agreed by the Director and Chair of the Vale Development Control Committee and the consent will be issued once the Secretary of State has confirmed that there is no objection to it as a technical departure from the Local Plan. The timescale for this is as yet not known. The Council is anxious to ensure it is fully consulted on the details of this scheme and Mr Harper suggested a meeting with the developer. This was considered to be premature at this stage but it was agreed that **The Clerk** should write to the planners suggesting planning gains in the form of an improvement to the New Road/Buckland Road junction, a footpath between the site and Buckland Road, a water supply to Charney Field and landscaping.

The Clerk had conveyed to the planners the Council's view that the further set of drawings for Gunton Barn only comprised detailed changes which, while making the proposal marginally more acceptable, failed to address the objections to the overall bulk of the building and the fact that it could become a separate dwelling.

The application for an extension at Mill Cottage had been rejected by the planners on the grounds that by reason of its design, siting, height, scale and bulk it would detract from the special interest and character of Mill Cottage which is a listed building. It would also not preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. It was therefore contrary to Policies HE3 and HE15 in the adopted Local Plan and Policies HE1 and HE5 in the First Deposit Local Plan for 2011.

## 5. CHARNEY FIELD

An application for a 75% grant from the Vale Village Improvement Scheme for the improvements to the footpath from Bridle Path to the Field had been successful and the sum of £91 had been promised.

Having agreed funding for the fencing around the children's play area, there was some discussion on other developments. The Chairman reminded Mrs Gildersleeves that the Council would await proposals for such things as seating from CHAFT.

Mrs Rumble reported from the floor that the dead trees on the Field had been replaced and provided with watering tubes. She had spoken to the men undertaking this task and had discovered that the Vale bears responsibility for new trees for the first 18 months after planting. They regretted that they had not been able to spend any time watering the trees which died in the hot summer of 2003. This 18 month "guarantee" has been renewed for the batch of new trees.

#### 6. CHARNEY MILL

WS Atkins' contractors have returned to the Mill to complete repairs to the weatherboarding but the standard of work is judged unsatisfactory by the restorers and The Clerk. Once Mr Stafford Taylor had carried out a wider survey to add to his interim report, this would be raised again with Atkins. Mr Taylor reported that he had discussed the Mill with Grant Audley-Miller, the Vale Conservation Officer who had expressed concerns at the standard of the repairs.

Mr Harper had followed up the rumour that water was about to be restored to the Mill, only to find out that it was, indeed, just a rumour and the EA have no such plans. He did, however, establish that the EA Planning Department would restore water if requested, subject to it being feasible, without risk of flooding. It was agreed to follow this up by **The Clerk** speaking to Bruce Hedge of the restorers before Mr Harper contacts the EA planners.

The Clerk reminded the meeting that there would be a talk on "The Archaeology of Charney Mill and its Millstream" at Grove Methodist Hall on 8 March 2004 at 7.30 p.m.

#### 7. VILLAGE COLLEGE

Representatives of the College will attend the next CLET meeting on 21 January 2004 to follow up on the review submitted to CLET in September 2003 and to discuss future involvement of CLET in the running of the College.

The Spring Term has begun with continuation of French Conversation and Yoga classes with Flower Arranging to be resumed later in the term. Information had been received from St John Ambulance on the courses they offer with a view to including this on the College syllabus.

#### 8. CLERK'S CORRESPONDENCE

A questionnaire from the Audit Commission on a Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) on the Vale Council's performance was discussed. It was agreed that this was not very relevant to the Parish Council and was too time-consuming to complete.

In response to a question by Mr Harper arising from the minutes of a General Meeting of the OALC, The Clerk reported that he had a risk assessment of the children's play area in hand. He would in due course submit a draft to OPFA and the Vale Council for comment. Mrs Boyce offered to send the Longworth assessment to The Clerk.

A letter had been received from Thames Valley Police explaining improvements in the non-emergency call system, involving a new telephone number, 0845 8 505 505. It was generally agreed that there was plenty of anecdotal evidence to show a lack of public confidence in the police reporting system but this message could only be conveyed to them with evidence of actual problems. The number would be publicised in Charney Chatter.

A questionnaire from the Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Forum, seeking information on conservation activities in the village, was passed to Mrs Gildersleeves for possible action by CHAFT which had been considering possible nature conservation projects.

The Longworth Charities had sought the appointment of a Council representative as a Trustee, the appointment of Mr David Douglas having lapsed. The Clerk had established that Mr Douglas was prepared to continue as Trustee and it was agreed to re-appoint him. **The Clerk** was asked to convey this decision to Mrs Houlton, Clerk to the Trustees.

The Clerk had received advice from ORCC on the procedures necessary to ensure that reclaiming VAT on Village Hall renovation projects was legal. These procedures had been used in the past and would be adopted in the future if further renovation work was undertaken.

9. RESIDENTS' QUESTIONS

Mrs Rumble asked if the hedge at the New Road/Buckland Road could be cut as it was restricting visibility at this awkward junction; it had not been done last year. **The Clerk** was asked to arrange this.

Mrs Gildersleeves sought the Council's agreement in principle to laying a drain on the Village Green along the length of her barn to provide drainage of water shed by the barn thatch on to the Green. This was given, as it would be of mutual benefit, subject to precise details being made known when available.

Mrs Gildersleeves also sought permission to use the Village Green for a private function, involving the erection of the CHAFT gazebos with access from her barn. The Council agreed that as this was a special case which would not create a precedent and because use of the barn and power for village functions had been willingly provided in the past, permission should be given as a reciprocal neighbourly gesture. The Gildersleeves would, of course, be responsible for any environmental impact of the function.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business

11. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 10 March 2004 at 7.30 p.m. in the Village Hall.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.51 p.m. with thanks to all those who attended.

Signed.....

Chairman

Date.....