

CHARNEY BASSETT PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT 7.30 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY 8th MARCH 2006 IN THE VILLAGE HALL

Present:

Mr G Beer, Chairman
Mr J Harper, Vice-chairman
Mr G Rumble
Mr J Stiles

Mr P G Davies (Clerk)

Seven members of the public were also in attendance.

06/15 Apologies

No apologies had been received by The Clerk

06/16 Minutes of the January 2006 Meeting.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the January 2006 meeting be approved and signed by the Chairman.

06/17 Matters Arising

- a) The Clerk had purchased the sign referred to in minute 06/07 and had delivered it to residents for erection.
- b) There were also two matters arising from questions asked by the public at the January 2006 meeting:-
 - i) The Clerk had contacted Southern Electric to suggest they contribute to the cost of mowing Orchard Green but had not yet received a response.
 - ii) The Clerk had discussed parking on Main Street with PC Martyn Holder who had told him no offence was being committed.

RESOLVED:-

- a) The Clerk should report back to the Council when he had had a response from Southern Electric.
- b) To note PC Holder's response on Main Street parking.

06/18 Residents' Questions

There were no questions arising from residents.

06/19 Clerk's Financial Report

The Clerk presented his financial report CBPC/FIN/06/02 (appended to minutes) which had been distributed to councillors. He presented accounts for payment for street cleaning, membership of OPFA, hire of the Village Hall for Council meetings, Clerk's expenses and an annual subscription to Local Council Review.

The Clerk also presented a bank form for revising the list of signatories on Council cheques which would add Mr Rumble to the list of those authorised to sign.

RESOLVED that:-

- a) the report be adopted.
- b) the accounts presented be paid.
- c) that Mr Rumble's name be added to the cheque signatories.

06/20 Planning Matters

The Clerk had consulted the Chairman (who then consulted other councillors) over an application to carry out remedial work on a mature lime tree in the grounds of Charney Manor. The work was in response to a complaint from a neighbour who had extended his house under the tree and was now complaining about the shadow cast by the tree and the leaves it dropped into his guttering. The Clerk had written to the planners approving the minor remedial work but stating, for future reference, that removal of the tree was unacceptable as it was a fine specimen in a sensitive part of the village. The Vale Tree Officer had responded by saying that should there be a proposal to fell this tree he would place a Tree Protection Order on it to prevent this.

This application was an example of the need to be able to deal with planning applications between meetings when the 21-day deadline prevented discussion at a full Council meeting. The Clerk intended to formalise the procedure for this by recording that any such applications would be referred by him to the Chairman who would then decide whether to convene a special meeting or simply consult with councillors. This would be written into the Council's Standing Orders when drafted.

RESOLVED that:-

- a) the Clerk's letter (which had been copied to councillors) correctly interpreted the Council's attitude to the tree application.
- b) the proposed procedure for dealing with applications received between meetings was acceptable.

06/21 Charney Field

CHAFT have agreed to provide a second gate in the children's play area, located near the willow structure. The Clerk has obtained three quotations for this gate, the lowest of which was £212 inc VAT from D.D.New Estate Maintenance. The Chairman wished mention to be made of the ongoing successful clearance work on the Field by the Charney Army. It was noted that the protective fence around the willow structure had been attacked by rabbits and a watch should be kept on this to prevent damage to the structure.

RESOLVED that The Clerk place an order for the gate with D.D.New.

06/22 Quality Council Status

The Clerk presented his paper CBPC/06/01 - Quality Council Status - an Update (appended to minutes). This showed that the only barrier to the Council making an application for Quality Council status was the lack of a Clerk's qualification. However, he was now prepared to apply for the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) by submitting a portfolio of documents to demonstrate his competence. The Clerk sought the Council's approval for expenditure of £70 on the required registration fee, payable to the Society of Local Council Clerks. Achievement of the CiLCA by The Clerk would not commit the Council to applying for Quality Council status.

RESOLVED that expenditure of £70 be authorised to allow The Clerk to seek a CiLCA.

06/23 Highways

Mr Stiles initiated a discussion on the state of village roads and footpaths, in particular potholes and drainage works which appeared to be subsiding. Concern was expressed about the amount of water lying in numerous areas caused by the blockage of grips. It was felt that OCC priorities were wrong and money spent on the proliferation of signs would be better spent on maintenance of roads. It was reported that the footpath from Buckland Road to Chapel Lane had deteriorated to a muddy state, that to Cherbury Camp needed attention and The Clerk mentioned the footpath to Pusey which had not been cleared. Concern was also expressed at the amount of litter being revealed in hedgerows.

RESOLVED that:-

- a) councillors would provide The Clerk with a list of defects which he would report to OCC Highways.
- b) The Clerk would report footpaths needing attention to OCC Rights of Way.

c) The Clerk would speak again to the Vale Council about clearing litter revealed by hedge cutting.

06/24 Charney Hall and Field Trust

Mr Stiles reported on a meeting convened by CHAFT to discuss fund raising for renovation and extension of the Village Hall. Five events were planned including a quiz night, an Easter egg hunt, catering for May Day on the Village Green, a garden Party and a Curry Evening. Mr Rumble reported that a “100 Club” would be launched shortly, as soon as the licensing is in place.

The Parish Council had been asked to assist with the extension work to the Village Hall. However, there are restrictive VAT rules which have to be observed and the Council may not be able to reclaim VAT on all the works.

RESOLVED that the Parish Council should, within the VAT rules laid down by Customs and Excise, assist with the Village Hall extension project, by minimising the VAT liability.

06/25 Clerk’s Correspondence

06/25.1 A420 Accident Traffic Diversion.

The Clerk reported on his discussions with OCC Highways and Thames Valley Police on the repercussions of the accident on the A420 on 15 February which resulted in significant damage to verges particularly in Buckland Road and Longworth Road. It was evident that existing diversion plans produced by TVP after the last incident in 1997 were flawed because they did not allow for an accident at the junction of the B4508 road to Pusey and the A420 which blocked both roads.

A letter from PS Bill Sykes of the Roads Policing Dept., Abingdon had explained what he had discovered in his investigation of the incident. It was agreed that although correct procedures had been followed, there was no guarantee that such an incident could not recur and should another accident occur at the Pusey junction, traffic would be directed through the village again. It was agreed that this was unsatisfactory and the Council did not consider this incident closed.

RESOLVED that The Clerk should continue with his dialogue with TVP in order to get a more satisfactory diversion plan covering the circumstances which occurred on 15 February and report back to the Council.

06/25.2 Proposal to create a footway at Longworth Road

Following the accident to a pedestrian in Longworth Road, The Clerk had raised the question of a footway in Longworth Road with OCC Highways. He had received a helpful positive response to his suggestion that the Charney Army could undertake this work, suitable supervised. He had submitted details of the proposal to OCC who intended to visit the site to come up with a scheme.

RESOLVED that The Clerk continue to pursue this proposal and arrange for the Charney Army to carry it out.

06/25.3 Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005

This item was on the agenda because it had been anticipated that Defra would have issued a “How to” note on the implementation of this new Act. However, this is not yet available.

RESOLVED that this matter be placed on the agenda of the next meeting.

06/26 County and District Council News

County Councillor Melinda Tilley reported verbally on a number of matters. She gave advance information on a scheme to improve village policing but which would have to be paid for at the rate of around £12,000 per extra policeman per year. She reported that there was an OCC “community pot” of £0.5 million, spread over the whole county for such schemes as village hall improvements, based on 50/50 shared funding. She

sympathised with the view that there was too much street furniture and reported a “blitz” on this would be mounted in Oxford soon. The county was examining ways of cutting speeding and pointed out that whereas the flashing speed signs cost £5,000, “gates” at the entrance to a village were cheap and apparently equally effective. She reported that David Miliband, Local Government Minister, was working on a White Paper aimed at rationalising local government tiers with a view to reducing them, passing more power on to parish councils; she advised the Council to keep a close eye on these developments.

RESOLVED that councillors note Councillor Tilley’s report

06/27 Exchange of Information

Mr Rumble explained that he had obtained a copy of a Thames Valley Police DVD on safer driving and he commended it for wider dissemination.

RESOLVED the existence of this DVD be publicised on the Notice Board

Mr Rumble reported on a letter from the Ministry of Defence received by Charney Manor following a complaint about helicopter activity. The letter offered no solace, explaining that efforts were made to spread the annoyance of low level flying across the whole of the UK. The letter revealed that fixed wing aircraft were authorised to fly at altitudes down to 250 feet whereas rotary winged aircraft (helicopters) were permitted down to ground level.

RESOLVED that the futility of complaining about helicopter activity be noted.

The Clerk reported that 2007 marks the bi-centenary of the building of Charney Mill and the restorers hoped that the Council would be able to help with publicising this.

RESOLVED that The Clerk keep in touch with the restorers on this matter.

06/28 Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Council will be held on Wednesday 10th May 2006 at 7.30 p.m. in the Village Hall. This meeting will be preceded by the Annual Parish Meeting and followed by the AGM of CHAFT.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.18 p.m. with thanks to all those who attended.

Signed.....

Chairman

Date.....