

# Charney Chatter

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**PUBLISHED BY  
CHARNEY BASSETT  
PARISH COUNCIL**

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## Your councillors:-

Geoff Beer (Chairman), Buckland Rd. 868709  
Jim Harper (Vice-chairman), Barnfield 868288  
Geoff Rumble, Buckland Road 868738  
John Stiles, Barnfield 868191

Meetings are held at 7.30 p.m. in the Village Hall on the second Wednesdays of odd-numbered months.

**The next meeting is on 8th March 2006.**

## CLERK'S CORNER

### Council web site

Have you visited the Parish Council web site yet? It's at [www.charneybassettpc.org.uk](http://www.charneybassettpc.org.uk). It contains information on village activities and is updated much more frequently than either Cherbury News or Charney Chatter. Comments on the site and its contents are welcome and can be sent to the Council from the site itself.

### Cherbury News & Charney Chatter Distribution

Volunteers are wanted for the distribution of The Cherbury News and Charney Chatter, ideally, one volunteer for each street or area. Depending on the number of volunteers it could take up less than half an hour per month. Further information contact John Daghish on 868557.

## FROM ED VAIZEY MP

We have all read about the need to save water. Our part of the world is threatened by a huge reservoir precisely for that reason. So I decided to do my bit and called in Thames Water to give me some pointers. They discovered I had been wasting up to 300 litres of water a day or 100,000 litres a year – enough water for 500 homes for a day.

Rapid action has now been taken to stem the flow. I have already fixed a dripping bathroom tap, saving 252 litres of water a day. Lesson: don't ignore a dripping tap! And I have installed Hippos in the cisterns of my two loos – meaning I use less water when I flush, saving 30 litres a day.

I have recently conducted a survey of local businesses. I was surprised by the gloomy mood of local firms. Top of the list of problems was recruitment and transport difficulties. I would like to see the government doing more to help small businesses, especially those that invest in new technology. The full results of the survey are on the website ([www.vaizey.com](http://www.vaizey.com) - click on the link on the parish council web site) or I would be delighted to send anyone interested a copy in the post.

Next local surgery date: 10 March 2006 at Old Mill Hall, Grove from 5:30 pm

## ADVERT

### For Rent in Charney Bassett

Three stables, barn, lockup workshop and 2.5 acres of paddock available for rent. Please apply to Steve or Sue at Mill Cottage, Tel:01235 867469 or 0773 4599934.

Deadline for copy for the next edition in May 2006: 20 April 2006  
Contributions are welcome, in fact desperately needed! Adverts are free!  
Charney Chatter can be e-mailed free to anyone giving their e-mail address to the Editor

## VILLAGE ENVIRONMENT

### Traffic Mayhem

Not much doubt about the environmental topic of the month (at least for those of us up this end of the village!) - the verge damage due to traffic diversions on 15 February. It caused a flurry of e-mails and phone calls to the County Council and Thames Valley Police, to name but two and provoked a letter to the Editor (see page 3).

The problem was caused by a serious accident at the Pusey junction with the A420, causing the road to be closed. When this last happened a few years ago the Parish Council discussed with the police a diversion plan which would protect the village from heavy traffic. This plan clearly failed this time and the Council wants to know what went wrong. At one stage, the traffic was stationary from the village to Buckland!

The Council has therefore asked Thames Valley Police to re-examine their diversion plans and communications to ensure we don't get a repetition. It will also ask OCC Highways why it can't have a sign warning HGVs that our roads are unsuitable.

### Willow Day

The Willow Day on 5 February was a great success with over 70

people, including lots of children, involved in building the willow structure on Charney Field, under the expert guidance of Norah Kennedy. It was a delight to see such community spirit getting stuck in to this unusual project which will benefit all Field users. It now remains for the willows planted to take root (no problem we're assured!) and by the summer we should be seeing the first shoots of a leafy refuge.

Thanks to brilliant organisation by the Rumbles, (who also laid on the excellent soup and rolls), contributions from CLET and the Village College and donations, the project was self-financing, indeed a little bit left over will enable some of the bark ordered for the play area to be used under the structure.

### Charney Field Play Area

Talking of bark, CHAFT have ordered no less than 25 cubic metres of play bark to top up the play area under the swings and climbing apparatus. That's the good news, the bad news is that it will be dumped outside the enclosure and will have to be barrowed in. Watch for announcements of a working party to undertake this task which will require as many wheelbarrows, shovels and rakes as we can lay our hands on!

## HEADLINES

- *Unsuitable for HGVs!*
- *Barrow boys (and girls) wanted!*
- *Anyone for ping pong?*
- *Bike safety*
- *Save water!*

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**The Village Coffee Hour** has resumed on Tuesday mornings from 10.30-11.30 in the Village Hall and continues until April 4th.

Do call in and chat. 50 pence buys you as much tea or coffee as you can drink - and there are biscuits too!

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## VILLAGE COLLEGE

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Norah Kennedy will be running a repeat of last year's popular one-day course "Willow For The Garden" on the 26th April in the Village Hall. This is specially for anyone who is interested in doing something personal for their own garden.,

Information from Jackie Cross (868575).  
E-mail: villagecollege@hotmail.com.

Table Tennis will continue until the end of March following a successful 3-month opening period. Attendances have been good but one or two players have recently left the village.

So, if you fancy a game, whatever your standard, pop down to the Village Hall on a Thursday evening (7.30 p.m. onwards) or contact David Sibbert on 868734

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## FROM YOUR COUNTY COUNCILLOR

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It's Budget time again and the County Council's Cabinet is recommending a budget for 2006/07 which meets its promise of a 4.375% tax rise with additional funding for its youth services, schools and children. Over £1million will be made available to support Oxfordshire's most vulnerable children in areas such as child protection, children in public care and for children with disabilities.

An emergency fund of £1 million is being set up against which bids can be made to help relieve pressures which are expected to fall on

the Council's Social and Community Services Directorate as a result, for example, of cuts within the NHS in the county.

All schools will receive an above-inflation increase in budget per pupil with at least 4% increases in primary schools and 3.4% in secondary schools.

**Melinda Tilley**

Tel: 01865 820385 Fax: 01865 821493

E-mail: melinda.tilley@oxfordshire.gov.uk

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## NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

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Neighbourhood Watch members got together on 7<sup>th</sup> February to welcome Brian Hook as co-ordinator for The Green. He will be able to pass on information from the Police Ringmaster service. He joins the eight other village representatives: Chris Luker, Jackie Harris, Teresa Cox, Sylvia Gibbons, Julie Rumble, Rex Paske, Peter Davies, and John Daghish. We all benefit from the extra security that these people provide by looking out for their neighbours and I am sure we are all very grateful.

The Police have warned us to be alert to distraction burglars who may use vans and uniforms of utility services, such as water and gas boards, to gain access to houses. Don't be afraid to ask for identification and if in doubt telephone to check that they are whom they

say they are. They will not mind waiting outside while you check if they are genuine.

It is sensible to mark and photograph valuables, padlock sheds and keep tools and equipment in a secure environment. A kit costing approximately £1.00 containing 10 tamperproof labels, marking information, 1 black permanent marker pen and 1 ultra violet (UV) pen is available from Wantage Police Station. Sarah Merritt on (01235) 776007 (sarah.merritt@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk) is able to give information on a free home survey to help in crime reduction.

A copy of the latest Watch News is available on the notice board at the bus stop.

Margaret Roberts (868285).

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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**From Teresa Cox**

Am I correct in thinking that the Sheephouse Farm road to Fyfield is a highway or is it the kindness of the farmer to allow road users across his muddy farm track to get to Millets!!!?

As if the roads around here are not bad enough with large farm machinery devouring the road sides and knocking drivers mirrors off, diversions via Charney due to accidents on the A420 are ruining the rest of the roadside edges! Not only do they cause distress to car and home owners but pity any cyclists that attempt to use our local roads with potholes galore and mud up to their necks. I hope the Parish Council is taking a dim view of this situation with letters to the relevant authorities e.g. Highways Dept., Police and our local MP. As taxpayers this disgraceful situation should not be allowed to continue!

*Teresa's letter will strike a chord with all villagers. But wearing my Clerk's hat, I can assure her that the Council has taken the situation seriously and has made strong representations to those on her list plus the County and District councillors. At the time of going to press OCC have promised to come back with proposals for verge repairs and a meeting is expected with Thames Valley Police to determine what went wrong with their diversion planning which caused the mayhem in the village and resulting damage. Watch the web site for news. - Ed*

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## THE CHEQUERS

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Welcome to the new management at The Chequers pub, Bill, Cielo, Gavin (the boy) and Layla (the dog) from Wantage.

Lunch is served from 12 - 2 p.m. and Dinner from 7 - 9 p.m. (except Monday evenings) . A beef or lamb roast is available on Sundays

**From Colin McGuire**

It was interesting to note the comments of the Fitzgibbon family, who have now left The Chequers after eighteen months. Sadly, their vision of earning a living from a village drinking pub does not stand against the realities of village pubs in today's market. The days of any pub surviving on large volumes of beer being sold are over, except in city centres. Owing two pubs, outside this area, but in similar affluent village locations, I can say from bitter experience that food sales are the key to success, in a clean, well run and furnished venue.

The sad thing is there are many of us living in Charney who use local pubs, but go outside the village to do so. Like others, I would love to have a good village pub here, and I wish Brakspears every success. Having worked through the financial numbers for purchase and refurbishment, given the complete overhaul the place desperately needs, I personally came to the conclusion that the only way to make it work was to somehow extend, providing more seating for diners. I am not sure what Brakspears strategy is, but don't be surprised if they explore this avenue!

*Thanks Colin for your insight. I'm sure that losing the village pub would be a catastrophe and I second your best wishes to Brakspears! But, as with all things, if you don't use it - you lose it! News of the change of management at The Chequers is below - Ed.*

and on Thursdays it's 25% off ALL main course meals for senior citizens. Homemade pies and puds are also available and Chef Mallik's Steak and Kidney Pies are advertised as "yuh-uh-mmy!" Bill's Apple Crumble gets a slightly more modest accolade as "not so bad either"!!