

Charney Chatter

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MAY 2008

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
Jos Bath, Buckland Road 868260

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 14th May, 2008

ADVERTS AND EVENTS

Personalised Home-made Cards

If you can't find the right card for that special occasion, Eunice will make one for you. Ring her on 868646. Proceeds to charity

Village Diner

The Village Diner provides home-made food from local sources in Buckland Village Hall, at 12.15 p.m. every third Wednesday in the month except in August and December. For £4 you get a splendid two-course meal, tea or coffee and a chat. Next date 21st May.

Piano Teacher

Liz Cowlam, experienced Piano Teacher qualified to CT ABRSM. Preparation for exams if desired. Tel: 868318.

Village Hall Bookings

Contact Eunice Davies on 868646 with your requirements, both for hire of the Hall itself and the crockery and cutlery; also the gazebos.

Summer events to look forward to!

Charney Church Fête 21st June and the Meal on the Green 12th July. More details and timings to follow nearer the dates!

WANTED!

Cakes for the Fete refreshments on 21st June. Don't wait until the day before to make one, do it now and tell Eunice on 868646 that you've got one (or better still several) - there's a freezer available for storing them.

Morris Dancing

Cry Havoc Morris will be dancing at The Chequers on Thursday May 8th at 8.00 p.m. with Icknield Way.

SeeSaw Summer Fair

The sixth SeeSaw Summer Fair will be held at Steventon Village Hall on **Tuesday 13th May 2008** from 10.00 a.m.- 3.30 p.m. in aid of SeeSaw, the charity which provides grief support for the young in Oxfordshire. SeeSaw strives to reduce the distress of bereaved children and enable families to work together through the difficult times that follow the death of a loved one.

Susie Bond, a Chelsea Exhibitor, of Busy Baskets, Wallingford will demonstrate her unique style of planting and designing patio pots and hanging baskets at 11a.m. and 2 p.m. Over 33 stalls from gourmet smoked products to children's toys, games, puzzles, books and gifts. Coffee, tea and light lunches available.

Contact: Suzanne Crafer Tel: 01865 391193, or Mobile 07801 166234.

www.seesawsummerfair.org.uk

This is an Empty Space

I could have squeezed another advert in here - could you have used it? There's no charge!
Ed

EDITORIAL

This is a busy time of year for your Council, or at least for The Clerk! Although councillors serve a four-year term, there has to be a council AGM to elect a Chairman and Vice-chairman and as the name suggests, this is, of course, an annual event. As in previous years this will be held on the second Wednesday in May (14th this year) and will be followed by the Annual Parish Assembly - the parish council meeting at which the agenda goes out of the window and parishioners are free to raise any (relevant) question they like. It's an opportunity for you to come and tell your council what you expect of it in the year, or years, to come, so turn up and have your say.

At the Assembly, the Chairman presents a report reviewing the past year and as we are a Quality Council we are required to publish this and have done so on pages 2 and 3.

This will be the last annual report presented by the current Chairman, Geoff Beer who will be retiring from the council after just over ten year's service. He intends to leave the village in the near future and has chosen to retire now so that a new Chairman can be elected at the Council AGM. His resignation has reluctantly been accepted and the other councillors have

unanimously thanked him for his good chairmanship during his tenure of office. His departure creates a vacancy on the council and this will be advertised shortly. If you are interested, contact The Clerk for more details. If more than one person is interested we may have an election, if not, the council can co-opt a replacement.

You may have seen the recent media publicity about damage to the Ock Bridge. If you did, you will no doubt recognise the story as a regurgitation of the February story when a Polish driver using satnav brought his HGV through the village - although this time we made the Daily Telegraph! The bridge has been repaired but your council is keeping a careful eye on it and the general problem of HGVs through the village. A new grain barn at West Hanney has received planning permission which may generate up to 300 HGV movements a year. Your council is concerned that Charney will become the easiest route to and from the A roads in the area and we will be endeavouring to influence the routing agreement which has to be signed before final permission is granted. We don't need volunteers to lie down in the road yet but watch this space!

HEADLINES

- *Chairman retires - vacancy created.*
- *HGV threat!*
- *2007/08 reviewed in annual report.*
- *Chequers refurb. nearly done!*

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Coffee Hour sessions continue in the Village Hall on Tuesdays (10.30-11.30). Call in and chat. 50p buys you as much tea or coffee as you can drink - with biscuits too! Everyone welcome!

Deadline for copy for the next edition in July 2008: 20 June 2008

Contributions are welcome, preferably by e-mail. Adverts are free!

Charney Chatter can be e-mailed free to anyone giving their e-mail address to the Editor

Visit www.charneybassettpc.org.uk for the very latest village news

CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2007/08

This report covers the period from 1st April 2007 to 31st March 2008. It is a summary of the activities of your Parish Council over this period, the decisions made on your behalf and the way some of your money from the Council Tax was spent in maintaining the environment in which you live.

The Council meets bi-monthly on the second Wednesday of the odd-numbered months at 7.30 p.m. in the Village Hall. There are five councillors and during the period, all the councillors either attended all six meetings of the council or made acceptable apologies for absence. Actual average attendance of councillors was four and average public attendance was seven. The councillors' four-year term of office ended on 30th April 2007 and an election for a new council was held on 3rd May 2007. The existing five councillors were re-elected unopposed.

Council expenditure comes from a precept on the Vale of White Horse District Council (VWHDC), which derives its income from the Council Tax. In the period under review the precept was £2,700 and grants and VAT refunds added £459 to the Council's income. Main items of expenditure were grass cutting (£1,167), insurance (£248), improvements to Charney Field (£310) and street cleaning (£270). Items categorised as Council administration, which includes internal and external auditing (£110), maintenance of the village web site (£40), printing Charney Chatter (£98), membership subscriptions to CPRE (£28), Oxon Association of Local Councils (£120) and Oxon Playing Field Association (£30) and Clerk's expenses (£200) accounted for £768. The Council has a policy of supporting charities which can demonstrate a direct link to the village. Accordingly, donations of £30 each were made to Abingdon Citizens Advice Bureau, Oxon Association for the Blind, South and Vale Carers, Hanney Royal British Legion, The Vale and Downland

Museum, Wantage and the Independent Advice Centre, Wantage.

The Council's finances are very healthy at present due to the "windfall" of an uncontested election. The 2007/08 budget had to make provision for a full election, costing of the order of £600. In the event, there was no election because the number of persons putting their name forward exactly equalled the five vacancies and the expenditure was limited to 10% of this figure. The Council now proposes to use some of this saving to add to a Vale Council grant to the landfill operators in the Vale as third party funding. This complex scheme means that the Council's contribution will enable the Trust for Oxfordshire Environment to give a grant of £50,000 towards the Village Hall Project. Your council is in the fortunate position of being able to reclaim VAT paid on appropriate transactions and this facility was used during the year to order trees for Charney Field and to pay for the first aid course, using donations from villagers either directly or through CHAFT. This arrangement, which is subject to strict controls by HM Revenue and Customs, enables your council to get better value for money on any such schemes which are within the rules.

Although it is not the planning authority for the village (the Vale of White Horse Council is), your Council was invited to comment on fourteen planning applications during the year - nearly a three-fold increase on last year. Most were extensions, conversions or conservatories, none of which raised any council objections and which eventually received permission from the Vale Council planners. However, your council objected to one, an extension to Willow Cottage, on the grounds that it was completely out of keeping with the conservation area in which it would have been located, a view shared with three neighbours.

THE CHEQUERS

Great sighs of relief can be heard from The Chequers where Roberta and Husnu can finally see the end of the refurbishment work which has been going on for the last four months. Finishing touches are being made to the internals and there's even been time for some planting to tidy up the garden area. Both their parents have been over for a visit and they've been helping too.

The accommodation is almost ready for occupation and Roberta tells me that it will be available at the beginning of May. Facilities are en-suite and there's even wi-fi for the tired, over-worked executive!

There's a real buzz about the pub now and it's encouragingly busy so you'd better book in advance, just in case, on 868642.

NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION GROUP

Despite people muttering about the lack of police presence in the countryside, the Faringdon East Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG2) which covers Charney Bassett, is having difficulty getting villages to nominate representatives. The NAG is a government initiative in which Thames Valley Police (TVP) interact with communities to identify their needs. At present, all the running is being made by Charney and the Hanneys with Dave Sibbert and Peter Davies members.

To improve the profile of NAG2, Dave is to set up a communications network involving parish councils, newsletter editors etc. to whom NAG news can be sent regularly.

Meanwhile, the main topic on the NAG agenda is speeding through villages. A strongly worded letter will be sent to the Assistant Chief Constable of TVP asking him to improve the enforcement of speed limits to give a clear message to speeders that they will incur penalties if they persist.

CHARNEY ARMY

The Charney Army has turned its attention to removing dead elms from along the bridle path to Stanford-in-the-Vale. This will not only clear areas for live trees to flourish, it will help to keep the ditch clear of fallen trees.

themselves, they will be welcome; a small donation would not go amiss if you do this!

This work is generating logging material so if wood-burning stove owners would like to help

The Army meets at 10.00 a.m. on the second and last Thursdays of the month, usually on Charney Field. To receive automatic notification of activities send your e-mail address to the Editor.

SOUTH AND VALE CARERS

The South and Vale Carers Centre, one of the charities supported by the Parish Council, is starting a new project and is looking for volunteers. Would you be interested in helping out someone caring for a relative in their own home? You would be introduced to

a household where the carer and the cared-for person are living and asked to stay in the home while the carer took some time off - perhaps an hour a month, perhaps an afternoon a week.

Details from Chris Elliott 01235 510212 or chris@svcarers.org.uk.

Visit www.charneybassettpc.org.uk for the very latest village news

VILLAGE COLLEGE

The Computing for the Terrified course has gone very well and, hopefully, the students are now less fearful!

Pilates and Yoga courses continue and there is a proposal to introduce a second Pilates course on Wednesday mornings. One hour sessions would cost £5.50 per person, the same as the Friday classes which would also be run by Rona Bennett. Seven students are needed with one already signed up. Interested? contact Jos Bath.

Another Flower Arranging course with six sessions is now running.

After a slow start recruiting students, no fewer than nine have enrolled for the five-week course on Digital Photography

We still need more students to enrol for Yoga as diminishing numbers mean we might have to raise the fees to an unacceptable level to break even.

For details of all College courses contact Jos Bath on 868260.

MAY DAY WEEKEND IN CHARNEY BASSETT

TABLE TOP SALE - VILLAGE HALL

Saturday May 3rd 10 a.m. -12noon

Trestle tables available for selling your items, £5 a table, contact Katy Dedman on 867598.

Booked already:-

“Nought to Two, Nearly New”, hand-smocked designer dresses for little girls;

Baskets of flowers;

Bedding plants;

Craft work;

Coffee and cookies.

Also a Wanted and For Sale Board.

Table space in the Hall is limited, tables brought to the Hall garden would be welcome.

VILLAGE GREEN CELEBRATIONS

Bank Holiday Monday May 5th at 2.30p.m.

Come and welcome Rachel, our 2008 May

Queen and see her crowned by Rev. Joy Hance. Watch the children show their Maypole dancing skills to music played by Ruth and Wanda. Join in circle dancing with The Vale Islanders. Enjoy a tasty afternoon tea served from Lucy and Paul's barn.

Proceeds to Village Hall Development. Donations of cakes for teas welcome. Bring a folding or garden chair to be sure of a seat.

Calling children!

Maypole dancing practice on The Green Tuesday April 29th and on Thursday May 1st both at 4.30 p.m. Dancers please R.S.V.P. to Marian Gardiner 868319.

The Chequers will be serving delicious meals. Book lunch on our May Day weekend by phoning (01235) 868642.

Marian Gardiner

ROOT AND BRANCH

Root & Branch provides a range of activities designed to support people experiencing emotional or mental health difficulties, such as anxiety, depression, schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. These include organic gardening, bee keeping, forge work, woodwork, administration and computer skills, cooking

and arts and crafts. Based on an organic farm near Faringdon, we provide a safe and serene environment which fosters a culture of friendliness, mutual respect and community.

Volunteers are always wanted to help out.

Contact us on 01793 780380 or alternatively visit our website at www.rootandbranch.info.

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CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2007/08 (CONT.)

This view was upheld by the planners and permission was refused. This is a good example of the way the council attempts to retain the character of the village by objecting to inappropriate planning applications. It will always do this, not only with planning applications but when it is given the opportunity to comment on a host of other aspects of local government. One application, for two workers houses at New Manor Farm raised no objection from the Council, which generally supports agricultural developments in a difficult time for farmers, however this proposal has been refused by the planners.

Perhaps the most vital role of the Council is to maintain and protect the village environment. To this end as well as spending nearly half the precept on grass cutting, it employs a street cleaner who is responsible for litter-picking to supplement the efforts of VWHDC contractors. Your council is active in seeking appropriate action in several areas which affect the village environment including speeding, road and bridge repairs, restriction of heavy goods vehicles through the village and flooding. The speeding issue is one of the main topics on the agenda of the Faringdon East Neighbourhood Action Group, part of the Thames Valley Police neighbourhood policing initiative, on which the council is represented.

In making improvements to the village environment, your council is fortunate to be able to call upon the services of the Charney Army. This is an independent, ad hoc collection of mainly retired people, including three councillors and The Clerk, who carry out tasks within the village to improve the environment, effectively acting as unpaid, voluntary contractors to the Council. Their work during the past year included continuation of work on Charney Field, involving not only clearance of overgrown areas but assistance with the major tree-planting project. A particularly interesting task was the assistance with the bird and bat

box workshop, in which villagers constructed boxes which the Army subsequently erected on mature trees on the Field. Nearly 20 boxes have been erected and are being monitored.

The 2006/07 Annual Report mentioned that your council was intending to seek accreditation as a Quality Council. The Quality Council Scheme was introduced by the Government in 2003 to recognise those councils which are representative of and actively involve all parts of their communities, are properly managed, meet the community's wishes through effective communications and work in partnership with other councils and organisations. There are over 50 criteria which a council seeking this award have to meet. In January 2008, the Council was awarded Quality Status by the Oxfordshire County Accreditation Panel, joining four other councils in Oxfordshire, the town councils of Bicester, Carterton and Didcot and the parish council of the Bartons, near Banbury. The panel was impressed by the lengths to which the council goes to communicate with villagers by means of its web site, its newsletter, Charney Chatter and its publication “Welcome to Charney Bassett” - a guide to services available to villagers.

I would like to end this report on a personal note. After due consideration, I have decided to resign from the Parish Council. I record my thanks to all members (past and present) for their constructive participation in village business during more than ten years as Chairman. Together with other village organisations significant progress has been made in maintaining and improving the village and its amenities. Receipt of Quality Council Status recognises the council's work in promoting democratic procedures. I would like to wish the council well in the pursuit of further improvement and the retention of Quality Council Status.

Geoff Beer (Chairman)

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COUNTY COUNCIL NEWS

I suppose the issue most affecting us all at the moment is the threatened Post Office Closures. The County Council has called for an extension of post office closure consultation and criticized the quality of the consultation that has taken place into the proposed closure of post offices around the county. The Leader of the Council, Councillor Keith Mitchell, said that the consultation had not been sufficiently promoted in places where closures are proposed and that there had been a heavy reliance on the internet - excluding many of those who are likely to use post office services.

The Council realises that the Post Office needs to reduce its costs, but the strategy to run down the network may prove to be counter-productive in the longer term and we suggest that a wider and longer consultation period - with the support of local authorities

and local strategic partnerships - would encourage other business models and a wider range of possible options to emerge for consideration. Essex County Council is to actively intervene to preserve some post offices for a short time. We are interested in looking at what Essex is doing and seeing what we could learn. However, I would have thought it highly unlikely that we will go down the same path.

There are a lot of problems on the roads at the moment and I am reporting all of them. They will get done, but slowly I am afraid. The Pusey/Hatford/Stanford dangerous junction at Bow Road will be looked at with perhaps some new road markings and signage provided.

Melinda Tilley, Kingston Bagpuize Division.
Tel: 01865 820385 Mob: 07816 834234
E-Mail: melinda.tilley@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

CHAFT NEWS - THE VILLAGE HALL PROJECT

We are close to being able to fund Phase One (extension to include kitchen and store) - plans have been drawn up and submitted for approvals and will then go for tender.

£5,000 has been awarded by The Vale of White Horse District Council (South East); this brings their funding to a total of £10,000 in the year 07/08 which is really encouraging.

£850+ was raised at the Curry Supper in March. Thanks to all who helped and supported the function, but especially the Greenacre family for so generously welcoming us into their home once again, also Geoff and Julie Rumble, Jane Fry, Derek McClintock and Peter Davies. Our cooks, Bhopinder and Harpreet produced lots of excellent food, and a good time was had by all.

£84 was received from donations made at The Wedding Dress and Flowers exhibition in St Peter's Church. Particular thanks to Kay Adamson, Lucy Gildersleeves, flower

arrangers and all other helpers for mounting such an enjoyable event.

£132 from the recent Quiz Night. Many thanks to the Gildersleeves for organising a fun evening and to Roberta and Husnu for their hospitality and their tasty food.

We are waiting the outcome on three more funding applications (total £30,000+).

Having achieved so much CHAFT is working hard to keep up the momentum with fundraising within the village, locally and nationally - please continue to give your support to help bring in those additional funds.

I shall be standing down from CHAFT in May as Jash and I expect to be leaving the village. My personal thanks to all who have supported the Village Hall and Charney Field projects over the years - CHAFT efforts made on your behalf contribute so much to making Charney Bassett the special place that it is.

Elisabeth Dahele

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FROM YOUR MP - ED VAIZEY

One national issue that annoyed me recently was the decision by the National Union of Teachers, at their annual conference, to vote to ban the armed services visiting schools. This was really politics by the back door - the union clearly feels the Iraq war was wrong (a perfectly respectable view) and has decided to take it out on the armed services.

As some of you may know, I am a member of the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme. It gives MPs the chance to work with the forces close up, and needless to say I have been very impressed. I cannot imagine a better career or experience for any one, whatever their background. So I wrote to all our local schools and asked them what they thought of this idea. I am pleased to say that every single secondary school in my constituency wrote back to say that they received visits from the armed services and would continue to do so. I am absolutely delighted!

On local matters, I saw that the Charney bridge made the national news, with the parish clerk lamenting the cracks caused by heavy lorries trundling over, directed by Sat Nav. I have just got one of these machines, and they

are quite addictive. It did indeed direct my Volkswagen Passatt over the bridge on a journey from Sparsholt to Fyfield. I will happily intervene with the County if the Parish feels signs or indeed some kind of width restriction is needed.

Parliament remains quiet at the moment. We debated the Government's anti-terrorism legislation at the end of March. I remain opposed to the proposal to allow terrorist suspects to be detained for 42 days, but we will not have a vote for this for a while. The Finance Act is being debated at the end of April, but there is no date yet for the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Bill, which concerns a lot of people. Finally, there is a private members' bill to ban the advertising of fatty foods, which I will be opposing. We won't make people healthy by banning adverts, only by ensuring that everyone, particularly our children, have access to sporting facilities.

You can contact me at the House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA, on 0207 219 6350 or at vaizeye@parliament.uk.

Next local surgery is on 23rd May at Old Mill Hall, Grove from 5:30 -7pm.

CLET

Charney and Lyford Education Trust, CLET, supports a range of educational projects, with grants both to individuals under the age of 25 and to the community in Charney and Lyford.

Applications will be considered by the Trustees who meet in January, May and September. Details from the Clerk: Frances

Rothwell, "Oldwalls", Buckland Road, Tel: 868704 E-mail: fc.rothwell@tiscali.co.uk.

The next meeting of the CLET Trustees will be on Wednesday 7th May 2008. Forms for applications to be considered at this meeting may be obtained from the Clerk and should be returned to her as soon as possible

100 CLUB DRAW

The March draw was, eccentrically, drawn on April 8th at Coffee Hour. Winner of the £25 first prize was Rebecca Wright (116) and of the second £10 prize, Kate Belcher (9)

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