

## CHARNEY BASSETT PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 23 MAY 2001

#### PRESENT:

Mr G Beer (Chairman)  
Mrs D Douglas  
Mrs E Dahele  
Mr J Harper

Mr P G Davies (Clerk)

An apology was received from Mrs J Bath. 9 members of the public attended.

#### AGENDA

1. Annual General Meeting of the Council
2. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising.
3. Clerk's Financial Report.
4. Planning Matters
5. Charney Field.
6. Charney Mill.
7. Village College
8. Clerk's Correspondence.
9. Ten minutes for Residents' Questions.
10. Any Other Business.

Prior to the Council meeting, a brief presentation on Neighbourhood Watch was given by Mr Peter Green, Acting Area Co-ordinator, followed by a question and answer session. Mrs Margaret Roberts agreed to take on the role of Village Co-ordinator, vacated by Mr Bill Clarke.

#### 1. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

The minutes of the Council AGM are recorded separately.

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

The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman. All the matters arising were under agenda items.

#### 3. CLERK'S FINANCIAL REPORT

The Clerk's presented a revised statement of accounts for 2000/2001, correcting a minor error which had come to light when completing the triennial audit form. Mrs Douglas drew attention to a minor error in a listed expenses payment which appeared to show payment to D Douglas when it was actually to B Douglas. Subject to these two amendments, the report was approved.

It was agreed to pay three invoices: for insurance and for membership of OALC and CPRE.

#### 4. PLANNING MATTERS

The Clerk had written to the Vale Planners, lifting the Council's objection to removal of the planning condition on the garage and workshop in the grounds of Mill Cottage, on the understanding that the remedial work had been carried out. The letter suggested that the Vale Enforcement Officer should visit the site when in the vicinity to confirm the work had been done.

#### 5. CHARNEY FIELD

A large file of relevant information on, and an Agreement for, the purchase of The Field had been provided by The Council's solicitor, Mr John Mant and had been circulated (albeit at short notice) to all councillors except Mrs Bath who was on holiday. The only issues outstanding were the definition of the width of the path and the remedial work to remove dead wood from the trees at the end of the Path. The Clerk explained that, in the absence of a specific figure, OCC had taken the width to be the default value of 3 metres. The trees would be dealt with by Mr Clarke as soon as the foot and mouth problem had gone away. Neither of these issues need hold up the signing.

A long debate ensued during which numerous points of clarification were sought. Villagers with vested interests joined in this debate which saw a number of these issues resolved. There was some argument as to the correct position of the boundaries of the north side of the Bridle Path but The Clerk explained that the plan provided by OCC showed the definitive line, based on the wall of Mr Ody's garden and as this appeared to benefit a number of the residents, it would not be in the interests of anyone to raise this as an issue.

The most significant issues were the questions of liability of the Council for accidents on the Bridle Path (e.g. a fall into the ditch or a horse kick) and potential damage caused to properties by trees on the Field. The Clerk assured the councillors that these liabilities were the reason why the Council is required by law to carry Public Liability Insurance (to the value of £5,000,000). Residents concerned at the accident risk were free to erect a fence to reduce the risk but as this would be outside the defined line of the Bridle Path, it was outside the remit of the Parish Council.

A question was raised about the status of the wall and railings at the junction of the Bridle Path and Main Street and although these, too, were outside the line of the Bridle Path, **The Clerk** was asked to write to OCC requesting repair of the shaky railings, the response to which should reveal ownership of these features. At present, they appeared to be on Mr Harper's property.

At the end of this debate, it was agreed that, as not all councillors had had time to digest the information and Mrs Bath had not seen it, signing of the Agreement would be postponed to a Special Meeting on 30 May 2001. **The Clerk** was asked to publicise this on the notice board.

#### 6. CHARNEY MILL

There had been no further progress on this item since the last meeting. The action is currently on OCC to produce acceptable heads of agreement for transfer of The Mill to the Parish Council.

#### 7. VILLAGE COLLEGE

Mrs Dahele updated the Council on progress with the College, which is now run by Abingdon and Witney College, since these two merged. It was intended to review the College in July with a view to formulating a forward programme, should the demand exist. Mrs Dahele reminded the Council that the College was not limited to computer courses and if there were a demand for, say, language courses, this could be met. It was agreed to discuss the matter in greater depth at the next Council meeting.

The College is due to feature in the Village Feast on 7 July 2001 with computers available for hands-on demonstrations. **The Clerk** was asked to explore other avenues of publicity, for example the Wantage and Grove Herald.

#### 8. CLERK'S CORRESPONDENCE

There were no items of Clerk's Correspondence.

9. TEN MINUTES FOR RESIDENTS' QUESTIONS

Clarification was sought on the official position on opening footpaths now that foot and mouth restrictions had been lifted in Oxfordshire. The Clerk explained that although OCC had written to parish councils inviting them to open paths over which they had jurisdiction, this had to be with the agreement of the landowner. In the case of the bridle path to Stanford, Mrs Godfrey still had stock adjacent to the path and did not wish to see it opened until they had been moved.

The Chairman referred to a letter received from Mr Colin McGuire of Byways, following the Parish Assembly. In it he suggested that the Council invest in a "communal skip" to be strategically placed for the disposal of rubbish. After careful deliberation, the Council unanimously agreed that, while the suggestion was based on good intentions, the siting in particular and responsibility for the skip, including health and safety issues, made it impractical. The Council was not aware of anyone having difficulty disposing of waste as the Stanford tip is conveniently close. However, should any such difficulties be brought to the attention of the Council, arrangements to help could be made.

While on the subject of Mr McGuire's letter, Mrs Dahele questioned the statement in the reply from the Council which stated that horses could not be ridden on a footpath, whereas it stated in the book on councillors' responsibilities that riding a horse on a footpath is not a criminal offence. The Clerk explained that the two statements are not contradictory - riding a horse on a footpath is trespass and is a civil, not criminal offence.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no news of the Best Kept Village Competition but judging continues into June 2001.

Mrs Dahele mentioned the GM crop trial at Hinton Waldrist and the holding of public meetings and felt the Council should be aware of developments. While noting this, the Chairman stressed that the issue was one for the public and was outside the remit of the Council.

11. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be the Special Meeting to be held on 30 May 2001 at 7.00 p.m. in the Village Hall. The next regular Council meeting will be held on Wednesday, 11 July 2001 at 7.30 p.m. in the Village Hall.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.34 p.m. with thanks to all those who attended.

Signed.....  
Chairman