

CHARNEY BASSETT PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 10 JULY 2002

PRESENT:

Mr G Beer (Chairman)
Mrs Douglas
Mrs J Bath
Mr J Harper

Mr P G Davies (Clerk)

Apologies had been received from Mrs Dahele, and County Councillor Andrew Crawford. There were no members of the public present.

AGENDA

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

1. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING.

The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman.

The Clerk had yet to write to Mr Callaghan of "The White House" concerning parking on The Green but as Mrs Douglas reported further infringements of the No Parking policy, he was asked to maintain this as an action.

The Clerk was due to meet Mr Albert Rayner shortly and would invite him to become "village tree surgeon".

All other matters arising were on the agenda.

2. CLERK'S FINANCIAL REPORT

The Clerk was unable to present the Financial Report in the usual format as the Council's books were with the auditors. He presented a summary which was duly adopted. The audit which had just been completed was for the FY 2000/2001 and there were no matters arising from it.

The Clerk reported that the Government has introduced new "light touch" auditing arrangements for councils such as the Parish Council, requiring the appointment of an internal auditor whose job will be to confirm that the accounts have been properly kept. There is a check list of ten tests, requiring yes/no answers, which the internal auditor will need to carry out. Guidance on internal auditors from the Audit Commission states that "The only qualification necessary for appointment as an internal auditor is that the person concerned should be both competent and independent and have acted without influence by the council".

The current arrangement in this Council to carry out internal auditing through the Clerk's Financial Report is no longer acceptable under the new arrangements as serving councillors are unlikely to be accepted as being independent enough to audit their own councils. The Clerk had received a number of offers from consultants prepared to undertake this role for a fee but had approached Mr Peter Leaver of Longworth

Road to see if he would be prepared to undertake this role and at what cost. Mr Leaver fully satisfies the criteria for internal auditor and would be prepared to do this for a fixed annual fee of £60. It was proposed by Mrs Douglas, seconded by Mrs Bath and carried that this offer should be accepted and **The Clerk** was asked to write to Mr Leaver asking him to act for the Council.

3. PLANNING MATTERS

The Clerk had, on the day of the meeting, received an e-mail reply from the Chief Executive of the Vale of White Horse District Council, Mr Terry Stock, concerning the Council's complaints about the way approval was given for the replacement for "Pennar" in Longworth Road. He read the letter to the Council and it was agreed that it failed to address the central issue which was that the Vale's Legal adviser had told the Development Control Committee that Policy H13 in the Local Plan "carried little weight". It is the Council's view that had this not happened, no Committee member could reasonably have believed that the over 150% increase in volume of the replacement property could be accepted as falling within "broadly 30%" defined in the Policy. In addition, other relevant issues were the impact of the size of the development on surrounding properties and the loss of visual amenity in the road. Mr Cox informed the Council that he had spoken to Mr Stock and he felt also that his response was not entirely satisfactory. **The Clerk** was asked to draft a further letter in reply for the Chairman's approval.

There were two planning applications outstanding. Stables at Minmere Barn presented no problems and **The Clerk** was asked to notify the planners accordingly. The retrospective application for the balcony at The Chequers needed detailed consideration and a separate meeting would be held to discuss it. Mr Cox reported that enforcement action on this unauthorised development was pending, subject to the result of the retrospective application.

4. CHARNEY FIELD

A slight misunderstanding between the Village Hall and Field Trust and The Clerk had been resolved. The arrangement is that the Trust will determine when cutting is needed and will ask The Clerk to arrange it, thus ensuring that Council financial commitments were only made by The Clerk. It was understood that Mrs Gildersleeves would be giving publicity to the arrangements for managing The Field in the Cherbury News.

A number of people had been actively helping to maintain The Field and Mr Harper was anxious that they should be thanked in person. Further work was needed, especially in clearing grass from around the new trees.

Mr Fitzgerald-O'Connor, owner of the land to the west of the Field had agreed that upgrading the footpath to a bridleway was a good idea and The Clerk had therefore asked OCC to undertake the formal change. Mr O'Connor had also offered to help with grass cutting at any time and this offer had been gratefully accepted.

5. CHARNEY MILL

The Clerk had informed Mr John Mant, who acted for the Council in the purchase of Charney Field, that the Council wished to proceed with the lease of The Mill on the basis of the Heads of Terms drawn up by OCC. The necessary papers would be forwarded to him so that he could deal with OCC's legal representatives.

OCC agents and a contractor had been to inspect the work needed to put the Mill roof in good order. Mr David Endacott of the Oxfordshire Bat Group had also been asked to survey for bats and was delighted to find a colony of Natterers Bats - a relatively rare species - occupying the space under the roof ridge. Work to repair the roof would be undertaken in such a way as to ensure the colony was not disturbed.

The question of possible parking alongside the Mill has not been resolved as the landowner is still not known.

6. VILLAGE COLLEGE

In the absence of Mrs Dahele there was no discussion on the College. The Clerk did, however, report that he had received a further cheque for £240 from the Charney and Lyford Educational trust to cover hire of the Village Hall for classes.

7. CLERK'S CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk had received a flurry of questionnaires from the Vale of White Horse District Council seeking information on a variety of topics concerning activities on the village. Mr Cox explained that this was all part of the Government's "Best Value" initiatives and there would be more requests for information. **The Clerk** was asked to seek help from Mrs Gildersleeves for information on Hall usage.

The Council had been invited to attend a Planning Evening at Abingdon on 29 October 2002. **The Clerk** was asked to reserve three places at this event, the actual names would be chosen nearer the time.

It was agreed to respond to a letter concerning Amenity Tree Planting by seeking a site meeting to discuss further planting on Charney Field, possibly along the line of the proposed bridleway.

A letter concerning District Community Funding Officers appeared to be of interest to the Hall and Field Trust as it listed sources of funds for village halls and The Clerk was asked to pass it on.

The Clerk had received a letter introducing the Access Officer for the Vale Council, containing useful information on contacts who could deal with access problems, in the broadest sense.

8. TEN MINUTES FOR RESIDENTS' QUESTIONS

There were no members of the public present.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Council reviewed the celebration of the Queen's Golden Jubilee on Monday 3 June 2002. It was unanimously agreed that the event had been a great success and the report in the Cherbury News was a fair summary of what happened. The Council wished to place on record its appreciation of all who were involved, whether organising or just taking part. Mrs Douglas mentioned an interesting historical fact that at the Charney celebrations of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1897, all the children were presented with mugs - a case of history repeating itself.

It was reported that the bench on the Green was in need of repair or, preferably, replacement. Mr Harper agreed to speak to John Daghish to see if he would be prepared to undertake the task of replacing it. The Clerk suggested this could be a suitable project for funding by the Village Improvement Scheme.

10. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on 11 September 2002 at 7.30 in the Village Hall. Mr Cox apologised that he would be unable to attend.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.13 p.m. with thanks to all those who attended.

Signed.....
Chairman