

## CHARNEY BASSETT PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 8 JANUARY 2003

PRESENT:

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

Mr P G Davies (Clerk)

Apologies had been received from County Councillor Andy Crawford and Mrs Joycelyn Bath. District Councillor Terry Cox and 9 members of the public were present for all or part of the meeting.

#### AGENDA

1. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising.
2. Clerk's Financial Report.
3. Setting of the Precept for 2003/4
4. Planning Matters
5. Charney Field.
6. Charney Mill.
7. Village College
8. Clerk's Correspondence.
9. Village Plan
10. Ten minutes for Residents' Questions.
11. Any Other Business.

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

The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman.

Mr Daglish had been unable to procure oak for a new Village Green seat. An alternative source is being sought.

The dead tree on footpath No. 3 was reported as removed but this was an error and its removal is still awaited.

The Clerk had drawn the state of the Stanford recycling site to OCC (not VWHDC as reported in the last minutes) and had had an interim response, promising further contact once the site contractors had commented.

OCC Highways have undertaken to deal with the flooding across Longworth Road at Lower Lodge Farm.

Mr Harper has the Jubilee photographs and will consider ways of making them more widely available.

The "Failed Road" sign in Denchworth Road was not removed by OCC Highways, so The Clerk did it.

All other matters arising were on the agenda.

#### 2. CLERK'S FINANCIAL REPORT

The Clerk presented his Financial Report which was adopted. The jubilee celebration grant of £371.67 had now been paid. The report included a statement of the Village College account which is £86.75 in credit with a further grant due from CLET to cover the rental of the Village Hall for the last term.

It was agreed to pay Mr Harper the sum of £18 for the sign which was placed on the millennium tree. It was also agreed, in recognition of the increased work load placed on The Clerk that his expenses, payable in the

current financial year, should be increased to £80. This proposal was adopted unanimously with the councillors' thanks to The Clerk for his continuing efforts on their behalf. In thanking the Council for this gesture, The Clerk explained that he was content to continue in the post without a salary.

### 3. SETTING THE PRECEPT FOR 2003/4

The Clerk introduced a paper outlining a budget for 2003/4 and a number of options for determining the sum required for the precept. The discussion identified a number of possible items of expenditure not listed in the paper but it was agreed that none of them warranted a change in the overall budget which contained a healthy contingency. It was therefore agreed that the precept could be set at £2,000, the same as in the previous three financial years. The Council noted The Clerk's comment that some of the surplus built up for development of Charney Field and other village improvements should be spent in this financial year.

### 4. PLANNING MATTERS

The Clerk had responded to the invitation to comment on the new Draft Local Plan by supporting the new Policy H12 which stated that no more houses would be built in villages like Charney Bassett, unless in support of a viable agricultural enterprise.

The Informal Hearing (and site visit) of the appeal against the refusal to grant planning consent for a 2 metre high wall at "Coral Oaks" took place on 7 January but the outcome will not be known until the Inquiry Inspector reports in a few weeks time.

Planning permission has been granted for the proposed new wall at "Wick Cottage" and changes to the house but without the bow window which would have protruded into the pavement.

Applications had been received for outline permission for change of use of McBains yard, with development involving seven houses and for development of Minmere Farm.

Although the McBain's application presented some conflicts with the new draft Local Plan, it was generally agreed that it would result in a number of environmental benefits to the village. These included the removal of an industrial site, elimination of heavy vehicle movements and restoration of the Old School. A straw poll of a number of residents near the existing yard who were present at the meeting revealed that most of the residents in New Road welcomed the application. The Council supported the application unanimously with the proviso that they would wish to have an opportunity to comment on the details of the scheme when a full planning application was made.

The Minmere Barn and Farm application required a more detailed assessment and it was agreed that the Council would arrange an on-site meeting to discuss it.

### 5. CHARNEY FIELD

The Clerk had thanked Mr Fitzgerald O'Connor for his help in keeping the Field in good order. Mr O'Connor had responded to confirm he would harrow the Field but asking that the debris from the bonfire (a tree stump) be removed to prevent damage to his machines. **The Clerk** undertook to see this was done in good time.

Fourteen sizeable trees had been planted along the western boundary of the Field and The Clerk had thanked the Vale for this work on behalf of both the Council and CHAFT.

The form of a suitable artefact to mark ownership of the Field was discussed and it was agreed that Mr Harper's suggestion of an inscribed Sarsen stone was probably the best idea. He was invited to take this further, consulting with CHAFT on the stone's location and come up with a specific proposal. Mrs Dahele felt it was desirable to place the stone in position before membership of the Council changed in May 2003.

The question of insurance for equipment on the Field was raised. The Clerk explained that it was financially advantageous for an organisation to insure by extending the Council's statutory insurance and he had

discussed this proposal with Lucy Gildersleeves representing the Toddler Group. While this idea was acceptable in principle, it was important that the Council dealt in an even-handed way with all organisations and a compensating donation from any organisation seeking Council insurance cover would be sought.

#### 6. CHARNEY MILL

Comments on the draft lease have been made by The Clerk and Mill restorers to Peter Seddon of W S Atkins who has forwarded them to OCC. Mr John Mant, Council solicitor, will shortly send an amended draft to OCC for their agreement. He has completed the required local searches and has found no problems. There has been no progress in seeking relief from Council's legal costs of the lease but there is a slim chance that OCC may find a source of funds to make a grant towards them. Work on the roof repairs is expected to start in March 2003, a DEFRA licence having been obtained which will ensure the protection of the bats. OCC will pay for supervision of the work by the Oxford Bat Group but the Parish Council will pay for subsequent annual inspections by bat expert David Endacott, required under the terms of the licence. This will involve modest sums to cover travelling expenses of Mr Endacott from Challow

Mr Beer has spoken to Mr Cottrell who owns the field adjacent to the Mill and has obtained his agreement to the use of a small area of the field for Mill parking. A draft letter confirming the arrangement was approved subject to some minor additions and the Chairman undertook to convey this by hand to Mr Cottrell.

#### 7. VILLAGE COLLEGE

Mrs Dahele reported that there was little to report on the College which was about to embark on a new term. There appeared to be some doubt of the viability of some classes but this was believed to be due to late submission of applications.

#### 8. CLERK'S CORRESPONDENCE

The Information Commission had notified The Clerk that the Council's intention to adopt the Freedom of Information Act Model Scheme for Parish Councils was approved until 2007. The Clerk observed that although there was already publicity of the Council's deliberation, this would be improved if the Council web site was developed to provide information on such matters as meeting minutes, finances, news and notices. This would involve some expenditure for hosting such a site but this would probably not exceed £50 per annum. It was generally agreed that such publicity was desirable although it should not be used as a substitute for public attendance at meetings. Mr Cox commented that such a move was in line with Government policy on electronic government. Mr Harper expressed some misgivings about the use of e-mails if a Council web site is available but it was agreed that any problems could be eliminated by careful management. The Clerk explained that he envisaged reporting any feedback to the Council under the Clerk's Correspondence item on the standard agenda. It was agreed that **The Clerk** should pursue this idea and produce a proposal for development of a web site for Council approval.

The Clerk had received a letter from the Chairman of Pusey Parish Meeting, Mr Andrew Brown, seeking the Council's view on the proposed de-trunking of the A420. The Council had been given an opportunity to comment on these proposals when they were made but had not felt it necessary to do so. The Clerk explained the background and the intention of a number of villages to form a pressure group to ensure there was no deterioration of maintenance of the road. It was agreed that the Council should keep in touch with any developments in this area and in view of the impending Council election, this contact should be with the Clerk who could ensure Council representation at any meeting should it be convened. **The Clerk** was asked to convey this decision to Mr Brown.

Mr Harper commented that any involvement in this area should logically fall into his transport portfolio. Mr Cox observed that this topic probably fell within the Faringdon Forum rather than the Wantage and Grove Forum of which Mr Harper was a member. However, under the new election ward arrangements whereby Charney Bassett is linked with Longworth and Littleworth, the Faringdon Forum may be a more appropriate body for Charney Bassett representation.

9. VILLAGE PLAN

Mr Harper outlined his study of what is involved in a Village Plan. It was agreed that the best way to proceed towards producing such a Plan, which involved asking villagers what they wanted for their village, was to produce a Green Paper containing ideas for discussion at the Parish Assembly in May.

As an aside, while mentioning possible improvements to the village environment, Mr Harper reported that he had been in contact with the Environment Agency who informed him that both the ditch at the rear of Barnfield and the Mill stream had been elevated to annual maintenance status from this year.

10. TEN MINUTES FOR RESIDENTS' QUESTIONS

Mr Paske asked whether some form of integrated sign could be placed at the entrance to Chapel Lane pointing to the Village Hall and indicating the lane was a footpath but no through road.

Mr Paske also complained that the junction in Denchworth with the road to Grove was hazardous due to overhanging hedges. **The Clerk** was asked to raise the matter with Dr John Myatt, Denchworth Parish Meeting Chairman. On the matter of overgrown hedges in general, **The Clerk** was asked to draw attention in the Cherbury News to the hazard presented to villagers with mobility problems by hedges impeding pavements.

The footbridge at the junction of the Stanford-in-the-vale bridle path (5) and Footpath No. 4 was reported to be in poor condition and a hazard to walkers. **The Clerk** was asked to contact OCC to seek repairs.

There was some discussion about the trees which had been planted along the Lyford road and whether they were too near the carriageway. While it was accepted that in many years time the branches might conflict with tall vehicles using the road, no law had been broken and no action was needed.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mrs. Dahele asked whether anything could be done about the farm site on Buckland Road which was an eyesore and a possible source of rats. It was noted that the site had been an eyesore for well over 20 years and previous attempts to get the area cleared had met with no success. The Clerk said that he thought the rat problem had been dealt with after Mrs. Rumble had reported them earlier in 2002 and the Vale rat catcher had laid poison. He felt sure that Mrs. Rumble would have reported any recurrence of the rat problem as she regularly walked her dogs past the site.

Mrs Dahele asked whether the Council had any responsibility for the poor condition of Manor Farm road. The simple answer is that it does not and when this matter was raised a few years ago, action was left with the residents who wished to keep the road in its poor condition as a deterrent to speeding vehicles.

Mrs Dahele and Mrs Douglas gave notice that they would not seek re-election at Council elections on 1 May 2003. **The Clerk** was asked to mention in his next Cherbury News report that new councillors would be needed.

Mrs. Dahele mentioned that CHAFT were considering plans to extend the Village Hall and its facilities.

12. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on Wednesday 12 March 2003 at 7.30 p.m. in the Village Hall.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 10.00 p.m. with thanks to all those who attended.

Signed.....

Chairman

Date.....

