

CHARNEY BASSETT PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 9 JULY 2003

PRESENT:

Mr G Beer (Chairman)
 Mr J Harper (Vice-chairman)
 Mrs P McGuire
 Mr J Stiles
 Mr S Taylor

Mr P G Davies (Clerk)

Mrs Elsa Boyce, District Councillor and 6 members of the public were present. In opening the meeting, the Chairman gave a special welcome to the newly co-opted member of the Council, Mrs Penny McGuire.

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. Residents' Questions.
9. Any Other Business.
10. Next meeting

1. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING.

The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman.

The Jubilee photographs have been mounted and await display in the Village Hall.

Rats have not been observed on the Cherbury footpath lately but may have moved out into the fields for the summer.

There have been no recent developments over the trees on the Lyford Road. The Chairman asked that it be placed on record that the order to remove the trees had come from OCC Highways and not from the Parish Council.

The Clerk had met the Manor Secretary to discuss Ock Green. The Manor Board is considering its attitude to the extension to Ock Green.

The Clerk has reported the shabby telephone box to BT and the pavement problems to Highways.

2. CLERK'S FINANCIAL REPORT

The Clerk presented his Financial Report which was adopted. Despite a number of non-budget items of expenditure, the financial position remains healthy. The Council approved the expenditure on fencing for the children's play area, a large part of the cost of which would be offset by claiming the remaining sum of the TOE grant for Charney Field.

Approval of the Statement of Assurance in Section 2 of the Annual Return to the auditors was proposed by Mr Harper and seconded by Mr Stiles. It was duly signed by the Chairman and The Clerk.

The question of grant applications was discussed at length and it was agreed that grants should only be made in cases where there was clear evidence of a body providing a specific service to the village. Care should be exercised in committing public money to causes villagers may not wish to support. This meant that in this financial year, grants would be made to Hanney British Legion, Abingdon Citizens Advice Bureau, South

and Vale Carers and the Oxon Association for the Blind. It was agreed that, on balance, membership of CPRE was beneficial and should continue, despite a rise of over 40% in the subscription.

3. PLANNING MATTERS

Of the three planning applications referred to in the minutes of the last meeting, two (Churn Barn and Land North of Overdown House) were approved and one, Gunton Barn, was rejected. There were no others in the pipeline.

4. CHARNEY FIELD

The Clerk introduced his paper which proposed changes in the way the Field is managed on behalf of the Council by CHAFT. The changes had been prompted by a requirement of the Council's insurance company that if the Council wished to save CHAFT the cost of separate insurance for the Field, it would need to demonstrate that the organisation of such events was in the hands of a Council sub-committee and not an independent body, such as CHAFT.

To meet this requirement, it was agreed that the two Council representatives on CHAFT, plus The Clerk, should be recognised as a Council sub-committee which would attend CHAFT meetings and be kept informed of CHAFT proposals for Field activities. Approval for CHAFT activities would be through the sub-committee which would, if necessary, refer matters to the full Council. Both the Council and CHAFT would ensure that all parties were aware of Field matters and, in accordance with the insurer's needs, the sub-committee's activities would be reported in the Council's minutes. CHAFT requests for Council funding would be made to the sub-committee which would seek Council approval for expenditure, thus ensuring sub-committee costs were in the Council's accounts (another insurance requirement). This arrangement was accepted as the only solution to the insurance issue. It did not involve any additional meetings and protected the charitable status of CHAFT. The proposals in The Clerk's paper had been accepted by CHAFT but **The Clerk** was asked to convey the Council's agreement to the new arrangements formally.

The insurers also required that the equipment was subjected to a weekly inspection. CHAFT nominated Mrs Adamson and Mr Daghish as their inspectors and this was accepted by the Council. The Clerk explained that inspectors did not require any formal qualification but needed to be "responsible persons". In the absence of both the nominated inspectors, substitutes should be arranged by them so that the weekly inspection routine was observed. **The Clerk** had produced an inspection report with tick boxes based on an OPFA pattern but agreed that it needed slight modification to suit the Field needs.

Mr Taylor was already a Council representative on CHAFT and Mrs McGuire agreed to be the second one.

Mrs Gildersleeves and Mrs Adamson, for CHAFT, reported on recent developments on the Field, focusing on the children's play equipment. This had had a few minor hitches, some caused by "children" too old to use the equipment but had generally been very well received and it had been in regular use. In response to a question from Mr Taylor, Mrs Gildersleeves reported that seating and a table for parents/grandparents adjacent to the equipment was being planned. CHAFT was also planning to form a working party to install the new fencing.

Mrs Adamson drew attention to the continuing problem of dog fouling, both on the Field and the approaches to it and it was agreed that **The Clerk**, in his Cherbury News item, would, yet again, appeal to dog owners to clear up any fouling and take it home for disposal.

Mr Stiles reported - and Mr Daghish confirmed - that all the oak trees planted along the bridle path from Buckland road are dead. The Clerk was asked to bring this to the attention of the Vale tree people.

5. CHARNEY MILL

Completion of the lease was effected at a ceremony on 7 July 2003, attended by Councillor Fawcett, OCC Executive Member for Learning and Culture. The Council now has responsibility for maintaining the Mill. In response to a question from Mr Harper about health and safety liabilities, The Clerk assured the Council

that these had been looked at carefully during the drafting of the lease, with full consultation with the restorers and the owner of Mill Cottage and no problems were expected. **The Clerk** was asked to resolve the issue of parking with Mr Cotterell.

6. VILLAGE COLLEGE

Ms Jackie Cross (The Old Forge) has kindly volunteered to replace Mrs Dahele as the liaison between the Village College (VC) and Abingdon and Witney College (A&WC). The Clerk reported on a series of meetings between himself, Mrs Dahele, Ms Cross and Christine Long of A&WC to discuss the future running of the VC. He proposed that as the VC has proved to be self-sufficient, with funding from A&WC and CLET, it should have its own bank account to simplify the Council accounts, in which the VC details are currently incorporated. This would involve using the current surplus of £426.75 as the opening balance of the new account; this was agreed.

Ms Cross will manage the setting up of courses in conjunction with A&WC and will publicise the VC in the village. **The Clerk** will be responsible for financial aspects, which should be simpler without the need to go through the Council's account. A&WC had offered the VC a contract which needed some minor amendments under which A&WC would provide all the administrative back-up to courses under their auspices, including payment for the hire of locations used by the VC. A minor amendment would allow the VC to arrange its own courses where they were outside the A&WC syllabus or where they were unable to provide instructors. The VC would seek CLET funding for courses in the latter category (the flower arranging course earlier in the year is an example of such a course).

CLET has sought a review of the VC, in the light of its funding and **The Clerk** will prepare a review paper setting out the original aims of the VC, its finances and a business plan for its future development. This would, in effect, constitute a "contract" between CLET and the VC to complement the A&WC contract.

The VC has set up an e-mail address which is: villagecollege@hotmail.com

7. CLERK'S CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk reported on his research into sheltered accommodation in response to a letter from Mrs Dahele and Mrs Rumble. It was agreed that this was not feasible in Charney Bassett but the need should be kept in mind.

The Clerk produced a draft parish map for the purposes of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 which showed that there were no contentious areas on it. Councillors were interested in obtaining copies of this and **The Clerk** agreed to look into this.

The Clerk had been sent a video produced by the Standards Board of England which gave guidance on the way councillors' interests need to be dealt with at meetings. No councillor expressed an interest in seeing it.

It was agreed to respond to the Vale questionnaire on councillors' allowances by opting for payment of travel and subsistence on Council business but with no other allowances payable.

8. RESIDENTS' QUESTIONS

Questions were raised about stream clearance by the Environment Agency and the consensus was that very little had been achieved. Activities seemed to have concentrated on removing vegetation from the banks but not the stream beds. Mr Harper undertook to look into this by raising the issue with his contacts in the EA.

The rubbish bin at the bus shelter was overflowing again and **The Clerk** was asked to contact Waste Management at the Vale Council to get it emptied.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Mrs Boyce thanked the Council for the opportunity to listen in to Council business as she found it useful in her capacity as Chairman of Longworth Parish Council. She also mentioned that she had been voted vice-chairman of the District Council, a position she was very proud to hold. The Chairman congratulated her on this accolade. In this capacity she was due to attend the decommissioning of GLEEP, the first reactor to be built at AERE Harwell over 50 years ago.

Mrs Boyce had little to report on Vale business as it was still early days for the new council. She had looked into the question of Village Improvement Grants and confirmed that this scheme was in abeyance, along with a number of other schemes, possibly due to shortage of funds. She had been advised by the Vale that any project which qualified for an Improvement Grant did require approval before it could be started and one way of obtaining funds for such projects was to divide them into phases, each the subject of an application. Unfortunately this was not possible in the three cases which The Clerk had drawn to her attention. She made a brief reference to homelessness, which is in her portfolio, but was pleased to report that there was only one case in the offing in the Vale.

9.2 Mr Taylor proposed that the Council should record its appreciation of the efforts of the organisers in arranging a highly successful Feast. This was unanimously agreed and **The Clerk** was asked to do this.

10. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 10 September 2003 at 7.30 p.m. in the Village Hall.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.35 p.m. with thanks to all those who attended.

Signed.....

Chairman

Date.....