

## CHARNEY BASSETT PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 12 MAY 2004

Present: Mr G Beer  
Mr J Harper  
Mr J Stiles  
Mr S Taylor

Mr P G Davies (Clerk)

An apology had been received from Mrs Penny McGuire. Police Constable Martyn Holder, District Councillor Elsa Boyce and County Councillor Andrew Crawford (part-time) attended together with 14 members of the public.

As an introduction to the meeting PC Holder was invited to speak on police matters. He reported that in the previous 12 months, the village crime statistics were 2 burglaries (Minmere Bungalow), 3 thefts from motor vehicles, thefts of a garden ornament and a bicycle (subsequently recovered) and one domestic incident; he had also dealt with a dog problem and youths drinking on the children's play area. Although any crime is unacceptable, in terms of the statistics of surrounding villages this crime rate is "reasonable". At this time of year as grass cutting becomes necessary, mower thefts become evident but such thefts can rarely be traced as they may have occurred at any time between October and April! He emphasised that as beat bobby it was essential that he was kept informed of any crimes and he was happy to be phoned at home on 01367 870232. Because of the way the police handle calls reporting crimes, the beat officer did not always get to know of them. He emphasised the importance of engraving post codes on property which, while not necessarily preventing a theft, would enable recovered property to be returned to its rightful owner and he offered to conduct an engraving clinic in the village if asked. In response to a question from Mr Harper, he agreed that hare coursing still presented problems in the area but that this would not take place again until after the summer. The Chairman thanked PC Holder for his presentation and he left the meeting

#### 1. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Mr Beer was proposed as Chairman by Mr Harper, seconded by Mr Stiles and duly elected.  
Mr Harper was proposed as Vice-chairman by Mr Beer, seconded by Mr Taylor and duly elected.

#### 2. TIMES AND DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was agreed to continue to hold meetings at 7.30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of every odd month.

#### 3. OTHER APPOINTMENTS

Council representatives to other committees were elected as follows: -

Minibus Committee: Mr Beer (combining his role of driver representative.)

Transport Representative: Mr Harper.

Village Hall Committee (CHAFT): Mr Taylor and Mrs McGuire.

Wantage and Grove Forum: Mr Harper.

The Clerk would look after grass cutting (liaising with the Chairman) and would be the Cherbury News reporter.

Mr Peter Leaver was re-appointed as internal auditor to the Council.

4. MINUTES OF THE 10 MARCH MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING.

The hedge at the New Road/Buckland Road junction has been trimmed by John Daglish and The Clerk. The dog pound at Gunton Barn has been completed.

There has been no progress since the last meeting on the proposal by Mr McBain to build on his site.

The Gunton Barn application has gone to appeal. The Council has confirmed its objection.

The fencing around the children's play area has been installed but CLET have declined to fund this.

A £1,000 grant has been sought from TOE to make Bridle Path suitable for disabled access.

The two overhanging bay shrubs in Orchard Close have been trimmed.

The potholes in Orchard Close and outside Primrose Villa have been fixed. The "dip" in New Road has not.

The lilac tree stump behind the bus shelter has been removed. The Council expressed its thanks to the Rumble family for their work in restoring the site and planting replacement shrubs.

5. CLERK'S FINANCIAL REPORT

The Clerk presented his regular financial report which included information for FY 2003/4 to be included in the Annual Return to the external auditors. The Council approved the figures in the Annual Return, the Statement of Assurance and the contents of the Asset Register

The Clerk had also distributed draft Financial Regulations with which the auditors require the Council to comply. These were approved, subject to the inclusion of an additional clause (3.3) distributed separately. The Council also approved a paper on risk assessment which The Clerk reported had been approved by the internal auditor as suitable to meet the auditor's requirements. This opinion would be incorporated in the Annual Return when the internal auditor completed his audit of the accounts. The Chairman and Clerk will sign the Audit Commission Annual Return form to record the Council's approval of the accounts.

There was no report on financial activities for the current year (2004/5) as there has been no expenditure. Income has been the first 50% of the precept (£1,000) and a street cleaning grant for 2003/4 of £160.

Approval was given for payments for street cleaning, grass cutting, OALC membership, a donation to Oxon Association for the Blind and the annual insurance premium. In the last case, the Council will pay the full insurance premium and CHAFT will reimburse the Council for insurance of the children's play equipment. An additional item of expenditure approved was the purchase (recommended by the external auditors) of the NALC publication "Audit Guidance" at a cost of £16.99.

An application to CLET for a grant of £800 towards the cost of the fencing around the children's play has been rejected. While this is unfortunate, the precept calculations included this expenditure in the budget.

6. CHARNEY FIELD

Tim Fitzgerald-O'Connor has continued to cut the grass and, at the request of CHAFT, has left an area uncut to encourage wild flowers and to enable a bug hunt to be held in the summer. The area within the play area fence has been added to the cutting schedule but it was considered strimming along the fence line was needed. Instead of adding this to the schedule, John Daglish agreed to do it and the position would be kept under review. Mr Harper asked that the stones marking the field should also be

strimmed. He expected some larger stones to be added when Mr McBain had moved from his yard and collected more stones for his new yard.

Mr and Mrs Daghish were thanked by the Council for their (continuing) efforts to remove thistles from the children's play area.

The Clerk had applied to TOE for a £1,000 grant to repair Bridle Path to a condition suitable for disabled access to the Field. The outcome of this application was awaited.

#### 7. CHARNEY MILL

The mill had been open on National Mills Day on Sunday 9 May and had received 18 visitors. Mr Taylor had completed his more detailed survey of the state of the building and would be preparing a report. He would confer with The Clerk on the actions to be taken as a result of his report. The Chairman suggested that work was needed to clear the parking area alongside the mill. Although the Clerk had not received a reply from Mr Cottrell, the land owner, he considered that there was an agreement to create a parking area and the first action was to clear the site. This would be a suitable activity for the proposed "Charney Army".

#### 8. VILLAGE COLLEGE

The Village College continued to thrive with French Conversation, Yoga and Flower arranging continuing. Future plans were to continue with these courses with one-day sessions on willow weaving, basketry and Christmas decorations planned. Painting was also being considered together with a first aid course. The College will from now on benefit from an annual grant from CLET, which for the first year, starting in September 2004, would be £750. Members if the public were reminded that CLET exists to promote educational activities among villagers. This fact will be advertised in the next edition of Charney Chatter.

#### 9. OTHER AGENDA TOPICS

There was nothing to report on the Village Green or a Village Plan. Mr Harper considered that, having studied what a Village Plan entailed, the Council were in effect carrying one out without doing it formally.

Questions were asked about the condition of Ock Green railings. The Clerk reported that he had received a quotation for replacement of posts and use of the old rails of £650 for oak posts and would hope to apply for a Village Improvement Grant towards this work. The Clerk had reported the condition of the white railings to OCC and asked for them to be repainted; he had not yet had a reply.

#### 10. CLERK'S CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk had had two requests for the litter bin at the bus shelter to be removed on the grounds that it was not emptied sufficiently regularly and had been used to deposit dog faeces, a combination of these resulting in a terrible smell. It was revealed that the Vale waste management contractors were bound by contract to empty village litter bins regularly but with a change of contractor, this was not happening. Councillor Boyce revealed she was trying to mount a campaign within the Vale Council to ensure the waste contractors were honouring their contractual obligations and Councillor Crawford commented that parish councils under his wing were having the same problem. It was therefore agreed not to remove the bin but to keep the matter under review until the results of Councillor Boyce's and others efforts were known. The Clerk had determined that a dog fouling bin would cost £250 to install and

would incur a weekly charge of £2.50 (£130 annually) for emptying it. At this price it was agreed not to pursue this option.

11. COUNCILLOR CRAWFORD’S REPORT

Councillor Crawford gave a rapid overview of County Council matters including: Oxon has the lowest per capita waste production of any county; social and health care spending up despite erroneous press reports on the loss of funds caused by poor management and auditing (three staff suspended); Youth Offending Team congratulated on its performance; all Oxon libraries now centrally computerised; Council Tax increase reduced from 14.3% last year to 6.25% this year; extra costs include road subsidence due to 2003 hot summer (£2.5M); child protection (£1.5M) and schools (£4M); shortfall in 17,000 employees pension fund; green belt building permission in Structure Plan rescinded.

On a more local note his reference to the Structure Plan provoked some discussion on the proposal for 2,500 houses in Grove and the infrastructure (or lack of it) associated with this proposal, although the proposal for an East-West Wantage by-pass based on Mably Way was of particular interest. The proposed station at Wantage Road has again been shelved due to the cancellation of the Oxford-Bristol service. Despite the press reports, Wantage hospital has not been “saved”, a decision on its future has been postponed. Boundary change proposals will affect the current Longworth ward set-up and will pair Charney Bassett with Stanford-in-the-Vale and Southmoor/Kingston Bagpuize, if implemented.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business

13. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 14 July 2004 at 7.30 p.m. in the Village Hall.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.25 p.m. with thanks to all those who attended.

Signed.....

Chairman

Date.....