

CHARNEY BASSETT PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2004

Present:

Mr G Beer
Mr J Harper
Mrs P McGuire
Mr J Stiles
Mr G Rumble

Mr P G Davies (Clerk)

District Councillor Elsa Boyce and 9 members of the public attended.

As a result of the resignation of Stafford Taylor, the vacancy on the Council which arose had been advertised. There had been no request for an election and the Council was therefore free to co-opt a new member. Mr Geoff Rumble, a past member of the Council, had volunteered to fill the vacancy. His co-option was proposed by the Chairman and seconded by John Stiles and he was duly appointed as a councillor.

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.

1. MINUTES OF THE 8 SEPTEMBER MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING.

The minutes of the September meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman.

The Clerk reported that decisions are still awaited on the Village Improvement Grant applications for the replacement of posts and use of the old rails on Ock Green (costing £650) and for seats in village locations. If one of these applications has to be withdrawn it should be the latter as two families in the village had offered to donate seats, thus reducing the overall cost of this proposal. Mrs Boyce reported that the Scheme was now spent for this financial year, due to a policy which worked on a *per capita* basis, thereby favouring urban rather than village schemes. She offered to put in a pre-emptive bid for next year. The Clerk reported that he was waiting for a name to whom he should send a letter of complaint about the long delay and lack of information on the progress of the applications. If necessary this letter should be sent to higher levels if no satisfactory response is received. In response to a question from Mr Stiles, the Chairman pointed out, and The Clerk confirmed, that it would be unwise to proceed with either project before the applications had been considered as projects already started were disqualified and, as the funding level would be 75%, significant sums were involved.

The Clerk has not yet arranged a working party to repair the "No Parking" signs on the Village Green but he has again reported the damaged signpost at the junction of Main Street and Lyford road to OCC Highways.

2. CLERK'S FINANCIAL REPORT

The Clerk presented his regular financial report which was adopted.

Mr Harper proposed and Mrs McGuire seconded retrospective approval for the Chairman's decision to make a Council contribution (£22.25) to bulb planting on the green behind the bus shelter (now named Orchard Green - see below) and this was carried. The proposal to grant the Mill restorers £391 out of the OCC grant (see item 5 below) was also approved.

The usual grant of £30 to South and Vale Carers was approved as was payment of the annual membership subscription (£25) to Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association.

3. PLANNING MATTERS

The appeal against the Vale Council's refusal to permit conversion of the outhouse at Gunton Barn has been upheld. The permission has been granted on condition that the additional residential accommodation shall be occupied only as ancillary accommodation to the existing dwelling and shall not be occupied as a separate dwelling and no separate curtilage shall be created.

The permission for an extension to No. 11 Orchard Close had been granted on the assumption that no parking problems would arise from this development as the garage would be retained. In the event, the garage has been converted into a room and residents at the end of Orchard Close have expressed concern about parking. The Vale Council Enforcement Officer has been informed and action will be taken to resolve the parking issue, possibly by providing additional off-road parking to compensate for the loss of the garage. The developer will be required to submit a retrospective application on which the Council - and residents - can comment.

4. CHARNEY FIELD

The application to TOE for a £1,000 grant to repair Bridle Path for disabled access has been rejected, largely on the grounds that it was the responsibility of OCC under the Disability Discrimination Act to ensure disabled access along the bridle path. A dialogue with OCC is continuing but this seems to offer no prospect of financial support for improvements to Bridle Path. Meanwhile, the path has been patched up by surplus material from the resurfacing of Orchard Close and this appears to provide a much improved surface which it is hoped will last into the medium term. The Council had not been involved in this except in providing the telephone number of the contractor with whom the residents had come to a financial arrangement.

Mrs Adamson, from the floor, asked whether the Council would be prepared to contribute to the costs of repairing the Bridle Path. This suggestion was rejected as the Council had taken over ownership of Bridle Path on the understanding that it would not incur any financial liability and the legal responsibility for maintaining vehicular access along Bridle Path lay with the residents of the last three properties.

The Clerk had submitted an application to the Vale Council for trees to replace those lost during the dry spell of the Summer under the Amenity Tree Planting Scheme; the outcome is awaited.

The Clerk was asked to arrange for a final cut of the grass inside the children's play area fence.

The Council offered its congratulations to CHAFT for the excellent bonfire evening which was enjoyed by a large crowd who witnessed a superb firework display.

5. CHARNEY MILL

The application to OCC for a grant towards the costs incurred in meeting the needs of the lease to improve safety and security at the Mill has been successful and a cheque for £450 has been received. As noted in Item 2 above, the money would be used to support the restoration programme.

The Clerk reported that the restorers had asked for his view on driving the mill by an electric motor because of the apparent lack of progress in restoring water to the mill stream. It was generally agreed that while this might be a short term option, the Mill was a water mill and efforts should continue to determine the feasibility of this using one of the options available. Mr Harper and **The Clerk** were asked to continue to liaise with the

Environment Agency to seek a solution. The aim should not be to divert the River Ock permanently through the Mill but to provide a facility for running it for short periods a few times a year for the benefit of visitors.

Reference was made to the provision of a sign on the Mill and Mr Stiles asked who would pay for this. The question of payment for the sign and its design had not yet been raised and The Clerk expected the Council would be fully consulted. OCC permission would be needed before a sign could be erected under the terms of the lease.

6. VILLAGE COLLEGE

The Village College has resumed its ongoing programme this month with Yoga and a full course of Pilates after a successful taster course of the latter. French Conversation will not resume this term in the absence of a tutor but it is hoped to find one in the Spring. Flower Arranging, Willow Weaving and Christmas Decorations courses have attracted full classes.

The financial situation of the College is very healthy and it is proposed to use some of the accumulated funds to improve facilities for students in the Village Hall, for example by purchasing better, safer tables. Any such facilities would be available to all Hall users.

7. CLERK'S CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk had suggested in Charney Chatter that the green behind the bus shelter should have a proper name. He had had two suggestions, namely Orchard Green and Millennium Green. Several other options were discussed but the consensus of the Council and residents present was that it should be named Orchard Green. This decision will be reported in Charney Chatter.

The Clerk had received a letter from the Vale Council asking if there were any sites in the village for blue plaques which would commemorate a significant historical event or an eminent resident; there were no suggestions.

8. RESIDENTS' QUESTIONS

Mrs Dahele asked whether Ock Green railings should be removed for safe storage pending repair but it was felt that this might encourage cars to park on the Green.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Rumble raised a number of questions concerning trees, namely those on The Green which needed trimming, a dead silver birch on Ock Green which needed to be felled and a cherry tree by the church which needed reshaping. It was agreed to seek advice on all of these and if necessary seek quotes for work to be done professionally, Mr Albert Rayner to be included in this. He also passed on a request from a villager that one of the proposed seats should be placed adjacent to the phone box (a site which had already been identified as suitable) and he drew attention to the web site (www.ourwaywaterway.org) which proposed a waterside environment in the new Grove developments.

Mrs McGuire expressed concern that a sale of part of the Pusey estate might result in the closure of the bridle way from the Charney - Gainfield road to Pusey. There was some confusion as to the exact route of this path and **The Clerk** was asked to determine this from the definitive map and its status. Mr Stiles asked for a similar enquiry to be made about the path from Lyford to the Hanney to Kingston Bagpuize road.

The Clerk reported that the District Council's Monitoring Officer had asked all town and parish councils to consider a report to the District Standards Committee on the result of a questionnaire issued to councils earlier in the year. From the 62% of questionnaires returned, the report concluded there was a need for a councillors' training session on the Code of Conduct. The background to this is that a member of each council was chosen at random to complete a questionnaire of 20 questions aimed at revealing the level of knowledge of the Code of Conduct within each council. Mr Stiles had been chosen for this Parish Council but on consulting with The

Clerk whether to complete the questionnaire he had been advised not to waste his valuable time. It appears that the 38% of councils consulted which did not return the questionnaire shared this view and Mrs Boyce commented that Longworth Parish Council was one of those which agreed it was a waste of time. Councillors had been provided with the questionnaire and the correct answers and those who had read these were of the view that this was sufficient training.

10. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 12 January 2005 at 7.30 p.m. in the Village Hall. The Chairman tendered his apology in advance for absence from this meeting.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.00 p.m. with thanks to all those who attended.

Signed.....

Chairman

Date.....