

CHARNEY BASSETT PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 9 MARCH 2005

Present: Mr G Beer (Chairman)
Mr G Rumble
Mr J Stiles

Mr P G Davies (Clerk)

Apologies had been received from County Councillor Andrew Crawford, District Councillor Elsa Boyce and Mr J Harper. Seven members of the public attended.

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 12 JANUARY MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING.

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

The Clerk reported that applications to the Village Improvement Grant Scheme for the repairs to the railings on Ock Green and for seats in village locations had both been approved with grants of 75% of the costs. Mrs Boyce and The Clerk had attended the meeting of the South East Area Committee to support the applications. The seats have been delivered (see below) and the railing work is expected to be done in late April/early May. The Council recorded its thanks to the donors of two of the benches

The Clerk has arranged a working party for 17th March which may be able to include repairs to the "No Parking" signs on the Village Green in its work programme.

The Clerk, as Charney Chatter editor, had spoken to the Village Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator, Margaret Roberts who had promised to make a contribution to a forthcoming edition.

2. CLERK'S FINANCIAL REPORT

The Clerk reported that he had duly posted the Notice of Completion of the Audit on the Notice Board but nobody had asked to see the Council's accounts.

The Clerk presented his regular financial report which was adopted.

The Council noted that the transactions for purchases of tables for the Village Hall (see below) and benches for locations in the village had not impacted on Council expenditure.

In addition to the budget items requiring payment, the purchase of a wheel and tyre for the Council wheelbarrow at a cost of £10 was approved.

Payment of £93.20 to The Clerk, comprising £50 for stationery, phone calls and postage and £43.20 for the printing of three editions of Charney Chatter was approved.

3. PLANNING MATTERS

The retrospective application for a modification to the extension to No. 11 Orchard Close had been approved. The Chairman asked The Clerk to examine the wording of the conditions which did not seem to refer to the conversion of the garage into a study. *[Note from The Clerk: Permission has been granted for the conversion and therefore is not a condition; the only condition is that dealing with the parking].*

The fourth application to extend the garden of Manor Farmhouse into the adjacent paddock had been rejected. However, the matter remains open as the developer has appealed against the “non-determination of the application within the statutory period”. The Clerk had written to the Planning Inspectorate arguing that the “non-determination” was actually only an administrative delay and there were no grounds on which to appeal. The letter made it clear that should the appeal be broadened to consider the rejection of the application, the Council would wish to make a further representation. A reply is awaited.

The Council had considered an application to modify 29 New Road, commenting that it was well thought out, in keeping with the existing building and probably the best presentation that councillors had seen. The application has been granted permission.

The Council had received details of development of Goosey Wick Farm in the form of seven barn conversions. It was the consensus of the councillors that there was unlikely to be any impact on the village from additional traffic nor was there a traffic hazard at the junction of the farm road and the Goosey road so no comments were offered.

The Clerk had reminded Mr Bernard Townsend that the restoration work he is carrying out on Mount Pleasant requires listed building planning permission for which he has applied retrospectively. Meantime he has been given permission to replace the old tiles on the roof of his porch but additional work needs listed building consent.

The Clerk had had a conversation with Paul McDonnell of Minmere Barn. Because the DVD business which it was intended to move to Minmere Farm had been so successful, it had relocated to larger premises in Eynsham. The application to convert the farm buildings at Minmere Farm and undertake landscaping is therefore in abeyance. Mr McDonnell is considering whether to consult with planners on a revised scheme. The pond and tree planting scheme which Mr McDonnell had undertaken was very successful and attracting wild life.

4. CHARNEY FIELD

The Clerk had drawn the attention of CHAFT to the lack of a notice banning vehicles from the Field.

The dead oak trees have been replaced with much younger trees than those planted in the past.

Mrs Adamson had contacted The Clerk to report strange holes in the vicinity of the play equipment which she suspected could be evidence of rats. The Clerk had notified the Vale Pest Control Officer who visited the site and reported that the culprits are short-tailed field voles which do not present the health hazard associated with rats and there is nothing he can do to remove them. They like water and they eat grass and bark, which may account for them venturing into the play area to eat the protective surface! It is clearly these voles which have dug holes all over the Field.

The Clerk had approved a proposal by the grass cutting contractor, A J Baxter, to cut the area inside the play equipment fence every fortnight through the cutting season. At a site visit, the contractor was given permission to modify the fence to create a removable section to allow larger machines in for easier cutting.

Two of the benches purchased under the Village Improvement Scheme have been placed adjacent to the play equipment. To meet RoSPA requirements they should be one metre from the fence.

5. CHARNEY MILL

Nothing to report.

6. VILLAGE COLLEGE

The Village College had made a grant to the Council for the purchase of four new tables for use in the Village Hall (a fifth has been donated). Although the motivation for the purchase was to make life easier for College courses, any Hall users are welcome to use them. By making the purchase through the Council account, the VAT can be reclaimed. The Council recorded its thanks to the Village College for its generosity.

7. CLERK'S CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk had received a letter from Mr Nigel Hammond of West Hanney deploring the planting of the hedge along the Lyford road. His complaint, both as a casual observer and local historian of some forty years standing, was basically that the hedge divided a field which has been open since mediaeval times, causing damage to a locally unique significant landscape. The Clerk had established that there was no objection from Highways and no planning restrictions. The Council's consensus did not align with Mr Hammond's view as it felt that the hedge could actually improve the route to Lyford and it therefore saw no reason to intervene. **The Clerk** was asked to convey this view to Mr Hammond.

The Clerk had received a letter from Mrs Dahele commenting that the litter bin on Orchard Green is really ugly and the Green would benefit from its removal. While the Council agreed the bin is ugly, it was clear that the bin is used (there have been complaints it is not emptied often enough) and its removal might cause a litter problem. **The Clerk** was asked to investigate the provision of a new bin, the design of which would be more in keeping with its environment.

The Clerk reported that he had responded to a complaint received by a villager who caught a dog in the act of fouling by consulting with the Chairman. As a result a letter has been sent to the offending owners reminding them that this offence now carries a possible fine of £1,000. The Council unanimously approved this action. The letter was copied to the Environmental Warden at the Vale Council and the matter was given prominence in the recent edition of Charney Chatter. The Chairman noted that this had given fair warning that a repetition could result in taking more formal action.

There was a discussion of the recently circulated South East Regional Plan on which councillors had mixed views. The main points to emerge from this were the need for infrastructure to be built before major housing development, a strict control over Green Belt development such as wind farms and mobile phone masts (which should also apply to open areas on the edges of villages) and a query over whether suitable "enforceable arrangements" could actually be made in the case of affordable housing. **The Clerk** was asked to draft a response to this consultation document, containing these three main points.

8. RESIDENTS' QUESTIONS

Strong concern was registered from residents about the withdrawal of bus tokens in order to save Vale Council costs. The basis on which this decision had been made (face-to-face interviews with 300 people) was questioned as it appeared that the views of residents of villages such as Charney Bassett could not have been taken into account. As the village has no regular bus service (the Stanford Community bus only runs on Wednesdays and Saturdays and the passes cannot be used on the early morning school buses), a half-price bus pass was of very limited value, indeed the Chairman pointed out that as such a pass would not be acceptable in taxis, it would cost of the order of £10 to get to the nearest bus service! The decision seemed to be discriminatory against villages without a regular bus service. All the councillors present declared an interest as they are qualified to receive tokens but in the face of the strong protest from the floor it was agreed to make representation to the Vale Council in order to attempt to reverse the decision. The Clerk was asked to write to the Vale Council in the strongest possible terms and to copy the letter to the County and District councillors.

Mrs Yvonne Cox asked who was responsible for the flower trough in Buckland Road as it was in need of attention which she was prepared to give it, provided this did not upset the current custodian. Mrs Daghish agreed to intercede in the matter and speak to the current custodian before Mrs Cox took the job on.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Clerk had received a request from the Charney and Lyford Educational Trust to consider whether to renew the appointment of Joanna Scott as one of the Council's two nominated Trustees. As Mrs Scott no longer lives in the parish, it was decided that it would be more appropriate to appoint a villager. Mr Rumble volunteered to undertake this role and The Clerk was asked to convey this decision to the Clerk to the CLET Trustees.

10. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 11 May 2005 at 7.30 p.m. in the Village Hall.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.37 p.m. with thanks to all those who attended.

Signed.....

Chairman

Date.....