

CHARNEY BASSETT PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT 7.30 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY 14th MARCH 2007 IN THE VILLAGE HALL

Present: Mr G Beer, Chairman
Mr J Harper, Vice-chairman
Mrs Joycelyn Bath
Mr G Rumble
Mr J Stiles

Mr P G Davies (Clerk)

07/13 Apologies and Declarations of Interest

There were no apologies. County Councillor Melinda Tilley, District Councillor Elsa Boyce and 9 members of the public were also in attendance. There were no declarations of interest.

07/14 Minutes of the January 2007 Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the January 2007 meeting be approved and signed by the Chairman.

07/15 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

07/16 County Councillor's News

Councillor Tilley reported that £60M was available for road repairs in the county but although this sounds a large amount, it will be spread rather thinly over county roads. Other good news from the county came with the high achievements of Oxfordshire schools.

Councillor Tilley also gave a summary of the situation regarding the proposals for unitary councils which will be considered by the DCLG on March 25th. Should the proposal from Oxford City Council proceed to the next stage, parish councils would then be consulted, but not before. She considered this was unlikely because of the "weak" status of Oxford City and the higher statuses of the councils with which it was proposing to combine and she believed that the *status quo* was the most likely outcome. Independent financial assessments also indicated high costs which would never be recouped.

07/17 Residents' Questions

RESOLVED that the meeting be adjourned to invite questions from the public and be re-convened when any questions had been dealt with. The questions asked are contained in an addendum to these minutes.

07/18 Clerk's Financial Report

The Clerk presented his financial report CBPC/FIN/078/02 (appended to minutes) which had been distributed to councillors. It included details of the expenses incurred by The Clerk in carrying out his duties.

An application for funding had been received from the Independent Advice Centre, Wantage and it was agreed to donate £30 as they had been able to demonstrate that they were providing a service to the village. Applications from Root and Branch and Oxfordshire Children's Information Service for funding were considered but, with regret, rejected as not having sufficiently strong links to the parish.

Mr Stiles observed that on the payments sheet of the report, the VAT paid for grass cutting on 23 October 2006 was not recorded. The Clerk confessed that this was an omission but it had not affected the claim for a VAT refund as that was dealt with separately. *[He subsequently confirmed this on checking the VAT claim for 2006].* He would amend the sheet and re-issue it.

RESOLVED that:-

- a) the report be adopted, subject to the VAT correction.
- b) The Clerk's expenses be approved and paid
- b) the Independent Advice Centre, Wantage be donated £30

07/19 Planning Matters

The proposed development at Bushy Barns, in Pusey parish, which would have demolished redundant farm buildings and erected two houses, has been withdrawn. The reason for this is not known.

The application for demolition of the existing conservatory and erection of a new conservatory and extension at No. 30 New Road has been approved .

The Clerk reported on communications with a couple who are seeking to purchase the Old School from Mr McBain. He has provided background to them and, while not committing the Council, has indicated that should an application for conversion of the building to a dwelling be made, it would almost certainly be favourably received as it would rid the village of an eyesore.

07/20 Clerk's Correspondence

The Clerk explained the problems he had had in communicating with Thames Valley Police when it was discovered that the local bobby had resigned. As a result of a series of phone calls, faxes and e-mails he had received a letter from Chief Inspector Philip Littlechild, Area Commander in which he apologised and promised to write again soon. Ed Vaizey MP was advised of the situation and has asked TVP to copy him in on communications. The Chairman reported that he had raised this matter with a TVP representative at the recent OCC reception for parish councils. Councillor Boyce, confirming that PC Salway had resigned because he was not being allowed to carry out the local bobby role for which he joined the force, also reported that the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator had resigned but this had not been reported to villages.

The Clerk reminded councillor's of the election timetable and the need to submit nomination papers to Abbey House by noon on April 4th. He could provide electoral roll numbers for proposers and seconders.

07/21 District Councillor's News

Councillor Boyce reported yet another restructuring of the Vale Council, largely due to the need to accommodate officers from the South Oxon DC in Abbey House. She observed that she had six more weeks of her tenure of office and this was therefore her last meeting. She thanked the Council for its support to her during her time as district councillor. In reply, the Chairman thanked her for her support to the Parish Council.

07/22 Quality Council

The Clerk introduced his paper CBPC/07/01 in which he recommended that the Council seek Quality Status as examination of the booklet on the Quality Council Scheme revealed that because The Clerk was now qualified, there were sufficient ticks in the "Yes" boxes to warrant this, indicating the quality of the existing council. He admitted that there did not seem to be any particular benefits of Quality Status but it would have a lot of kudos in a county with only four other Quality Councils, three of which were town councils. Discussions with OALC had revealed they were keen for a small parish to prove it could be done and had given every encouragement.

One requirement for Quality Councils is that they should publish an Annual Report. The Clerk had produced a first draft of a report on 2006/07 and invited councillors to provide comments on contents, including suggested additions, by mid-April so that the new Council Chairman could present the report at the Parish Assembly and it could be published in the May edition of Charney Chatter.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) The Clerk take the necessary steps to apply for Quality Status.
- (b) Councillors consider the first draft of the Annual Report for 2006/07 by mid-April.

07/23 Unitary Council proposal

Mr Harper had asked for this item to be placed on the agenda but considered it had been fully aired by Councillor Tilley's explanation of the situation and need not be discussed further.

07/24 Information Exchange

Mr Harper felt the Council should invite the grass cutting contractor to add strimming of the grass around the children's play area to his schedule. However, as the schedule for 2007 had been agreed and it was not clear whether he in fact did trim inside of the fence, it was agreed to observe what he does and if necessary get a quotation from him for this extra work.

The Clerk wished to place on record what a pleasure it had been working with the existing Council and hoped this excellent working relationship would continue with the new Council.

07/25 Next meeting

The next meetings of the Council will be the Council AGM and Parish Assembly. These will both be held on Wednesday 9th May 2007 starting at 7.30 p.m. in the Village Hall.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.44 p.m. with thanks to all those who attended.

Signed.....

Date.....

Chairman

ADDENDUM TO THE MINUTES - RESIDENTS' QUESTIONS

07/Q3

Mrs Nellist raised the question of poor parking at night, on pavements and near to junctions. Mrs Dahele reported that a car parked in Orchard Close for some weeks had apparently been abandoned but although the police had been notified it was displaying a valid tax disc and was not guilty of a road traffic offence. The Clerk observed that when vehicles were seen to be offending it was important to record registration details.

07/Q4

Mrs Rumble asked about the provision of more stones at the entrance to Charney Field. Mr Harper explained that although it was planned to add stones, including one tall one as a centrepiece, it depended on the goodwill of Mr McBain and he felt it was inappropriate to chase him.

07/Q5

Mr Hook reported that steps were being taken to surface Manor Lane properly and this might involve its closure for a period. He asked whether the Council had any involvement with the Lane as it owned the Village Green. The Clerk replied that the Council had only been involved when there was a proposal to charge frontagers for resurfacing and as it was the major frontager it did not consider this to be a good idea. It was mentioned that Thames Water had offered to contribute to the cost of resurfacing and Mr Hook was aware of this.