

CHARNEY BASSETT PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT 7.30 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY 12th NOVEMBER 2008 IN THE VILLAGE HALL

Present: Mr G Rumble, Chairman
Mr J Harper, Vice-chairman
Mrs J Bath
Mr M Cox
Mr J Stiles

Mr P G Davies (Clerk)

08/54 Apologies

No apologies had been received. Six members of the public were in attendance. There were no declarations of interest.

08/55 Minutes of the September 2008 Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the September 2008 meeting be approved and signed by the Chairman.

08/56 County Councillor's News

In the absence of the County Councillor, there was nothing to report.

08/57 District Councillor's News

In the absence of the District Councillor, there was nothing to report.

08/58 Clerk's Financial Report

The Clerk presented his financial report CBPC/FIN/08/06 (appended to minutes) which had been distributed to councillors.

RESOLVED that the financial report be adopted.

08/59 Planning Matters

A decision is awaited on demolition and replacement of garage and sheds at Home Farm. An extension at The Old Stables has been approved. The council had no objection to either of these.

An appeal against the decision not to permit two worker's houses at New Manor Farm is due to be held at Abingdon on 25th November.

Notice had been received, for information only, that the application to build two houses at Bushey Barns in Pusey parish had been re-submitted after withdrawal in February 2007. As the application is essentially the same as the previous one on which the council had no comment, it would make no comment on this latest application.

The Clerk and Chairman had been invited by Mr Paul McDonnell to have a preliminary look at a proposal to change the office conversion at Minmere Farm into a house. The Clerk, in welcoming an early sight of the

plans, explained that the council's formal view could only be given once an application had been made and all the councillors had had an opportunity to comment. That said, the preliminary view of the Chairman was that the council should not object and, indeed might support the application. The council had not objected to the office conversion and the external appearance of the house would be no different from the office. A house would improve the visual amenity of the entrance to the village as it would involve demolition of unsightly old farm buildings and clearance of the site, including removal of rubble and other debris. It remained to be seen what the planners' opinion of an isolated house outside the village is.

Councillors agreed to look carefully at the application when it had been received. Mr Harper commented that it seemed that the intention all along had been to convert the farm buildings into a house but the Clerk explained that the business circumstances of Mr McDonnell had completely changed since the original permission for an office had been granted. He commented, without a specific reference to the application being discussed, that applications had to be considered on the facts presented and not on conjecture on any hidden agenda behind an application.

08/60 Flooding

Project Chaffinch (**CH**allenge - **A**void **F**urther **F**looding **I**N **C**harney) has continued with work by the Charney Army which has cleared the millstream from the road bridge to the Mill. Further work to clear the upstream side of the bridge to Charney Wick ditch would be undertaken in due course with the permission of the landowners, one of whom, Colin McGuire had requested Charney Army assistance. The stretch alongside the Godfrey's property appeared to be relatively clear but the stretch alongside the Lindsey's property requires clearance. Plans to do this work are temporarily hampered by high water levels. Contact with the EA has been maintained and a request for assistance to measure flows in the watercourses has been made to them.

The Vale Council has written seeking information on self-help, flood-related activities and The Clerk has responded with details. The letter held out some hope of funding for self-help activities in the future and this development will be watched with interest. Examples of where funding would be useful include equipment, such as waders, for use by the Charney Army in clearance and future maintenance work and hire of equipment. The council agreed in principle that the flood protection work undertaken by the Charney Army should come under the auspices of the parish council in order to meet one of the criteria for receipt of funds from the Vale. However, Mr Harper reminded the council of the need to be aware of health and safety implications while doing this work and Mr Stiles asked that the council's insurers be made aware of the Army's activities to ensure that the cover afforded to volunteers engaged on council supported activities remained valid. The Clerk agreed to do this and keep councillors informed of the outcome. He would also report back to the Vale that Project Chaffinch was now formally under the auspices of the council.

RESOLVED that the flood-related activities of Charney Army be formally declared to be under the auspices of the council.

08/61 Clerk's Correspondence

The Clerk had received a letter from the Stanford-in-the-Vale Community Minibus seeking two council nominations for representatives on its committee. There are no longer any drivers in the village who might act on behalf of the council but Mr Harper agreed to accept one nomination as it fell within his portfolio as transport councillor. However, it was suggested that a notice should be placed on the Notice Board and in Charney Chatter inviting regular users of the bus to take up the second nomination.

The Clerk had received a complaint about the activities of low-flying helicopters over the village and the Chairman confirmed he'd also had one. A letter drafted by The Clerk was discussed and approved and would be sent to the Station Commander at RAF Benson.

The Clerk had received a letter from a group based in Sutton Courtenay seeking support for their campaign to stop a waste incinerator being built close to Didcot power station and had circulated this to councillors for comment. The consensus was that there were no grounds for the council to support this group and no reply was sent.

The Clerk had received a letter from the Oxfordshire Woodland Project. Although it was primarily appealing for funding, it also offered a free advice service and The Clerk has responded inviting them to visit Charney Field to give free advice on what can be done to the white poplars.

08/62 Information Exchange

Choice of a date for a village clean-up in the Spring of 2009 was deferred to the next meeting.

The Faringdon East Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG2) was undertaking a survey of villagers' concerns about their safety and welfare and a questionnaire had been included in the latest issue of Charney Chatter. To date there had been only two responses to this survey, suggesting people had no concerns over their safety but the closing date for return is the end of November which means a better response might be achieved by then. However, there was some criticism of this approach and it was generally felt the Police should get on with reducing crime and stop consulting as they already knew where and what crimes were being committed.

Following the retirement in June of Mrs Rumble from street cleaning, no replacement had been appointed. It was agreed to advertise for a replacement in Charney Chatter, Cherbury News and on the Notice Board.

The Chairman announced that a further grant of £2,500 from OCC towards the village Hall Project had been approved. However, despite this raising funds to £86,000, there remained a significant shortfall which would have to be filled before even the reduced scope project could proceed.

In response to a question from the public, The Clerk confirmed that there was no news on the Old School. He would contact the couple most interested in purchasing it to see whether they had had any luck persuading Mr McBain to part with it but he thought this unlikely.

It was observed that parking on The Green still occurred and the deterrent of a No Parking sign had gone. The Chairman revealed he had the sign in safe keeping and it was agreed to re-instate it by purchasing new posts.

The Clerk confirmed that although there was no "village plan" as such, planning development in the village was covered by the Vale Council 2011 Local Plan and this was used as guidance by Vale planners and by The Clerk to advise councillors on whether village developments notified to the council complied with the Plan.

The Clerk had had reports of HGVs in the village, one of which appeared to have parked on the pavement near Barnfield overnight and one which filled the entire width of New Road on its way west. It was believed that this traffic was related to activities at Cobweb Buildings in Lyford and the situation needed to be monitored. The police should be informed on the non-emergency number 08458 505 505, if a problem such as obstruction is being caused by one of these very large vehicles.

08/63 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held at 7.30 p.m. on Wednesday January 14th 2009 in the Village Hall.

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

Signed Date

Chairman