

CHARNEY BASSETT PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT 7.30 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY 11th MARCH 2009 IN THE VILLAGE HALL

Present: Mr G Rumble, Chairman
Mrs J Bath
Mr M Cox
Mr J Stiles

Mr P G Davies (Clerk)

09/12 Apologies

An apology had been received from Mr J Harper; no other apologies had been received. Five members of the public were in attendance. There were no declarations of interest.

09/13 Minutes of the January 2009 Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the January 2009 meeting be approved and signed by the Chairman.

09/14 County Councillor's News

Councillor Melinda Tilley briefly reviewed a range of topics of which she had knowledge, including confirmation that the council tax rise would be 3.75%, endeavours to make park and ride buses free to users, further property blight now that Thames Water have deferred the decision to build the Steventon reservoir and the ongoing saga of the gravel development at Longworth for which Hanson are still seeking planning permission.

Questioned about the state of the county's pothole-ridden roads she reported that she had raised the issue with Councillor Ian Hudspeth, the Cabinet member responsible for roads, but had been told there were inadequate funds available to undertake the road repair programme which was needed after the damage caused by the harsh winter. Asked about the proposed incinerator (now referred to as the "heat from waste project") she had no further news to report.

She reminded the meeting that there would be elections for county councillors on 4th June.

09/15 District Councillor's News

In the absence of Councillor Anthony Hayward, there was no news of Vale Council activities.

09/16 Clerk's Financial Report

The Clerk presented his financial report CBPC/FIN/09/01 (appended to minutes) which had been distributed to councillors.

The Clerk reported that he had had a request for a donation from the Vale and Downland Museum, which the Council supported last year. It was agreed to donate £30.

RESOLVED that the financial report be adopted and the V&D Museum donation be paid.

09/17 Internal Audit

A requirement of the audit process is that the Council documents dealing with risk assessment and effectiveness of internal audit should be reviewed annually and approved by the Council. The Clerk had circulated copies of these documents to councillors who agreed unanimously that they remained valid.

The re-appointment of Mr Peter Leaver (whose agreement to stand had been obtained prior to the meeting) as Internal Auditor was proposed by Mrs Bath and seconded by Mr Stiles and carried.

Resolved that:-

- the Risk Assessment and Effectiveness of Internal Audit documents be approved without amendment
- that Mr Peter Leaver be appointed Internal Auditor

09/18 Planning Matters

The change of use of the offices at Minmere Farm to a residential property and conversion of “Penny Chickens” Buckland Road to a chalet-style bungalow have been approved. The application for the revised scheme for extending the Village Hall had also received approval. The replacement of the garage and sheds at Home Farm, Chapel Lane awaits a decision from the Vale Development Control Committee which will meet on March 30th.

The application by Charney Manor for a new gateway and path has been re-submitted after the gate was moved some 4 metres towards the main entrance in response to an objection from a neighbour.

An appeal at an informal hearing against the decision not to permit two worker’s houses at New Manor Farm was upheld on 30th December. However, The Clerk had subsequently learned that the Vale Council was proposing to appeal against the Inspector’s decision and this would be determined in the High Court later in the year. Their grounds for challenging the Inspectorate were based on the application breaching Planning Policy Statement 7 which defines guidelines on the building of dwellings for agricultural workers in locations outside villages. The councillors were unanimous in their condemnation of this Vale decision which they considered unnecessary and likely to be very costly and The Clerk was asked to draft a letter to District Councillor Hayward asking him to challenge the Vale Council and its reasons for taking this decision.

09/19 Village Clean-up

The Clerk had arranged for 15 sets of litter picking equipment to be provided for a village litter pick on Saturday morning, March 28th. This would be widely advertised within the village to ensure a good turn-out.

The Council agreed that an offer from Edward Adamson to litter pick as village street cleaner was very welcome but raised issues of health and safety for the employment of a juvenile; he would be thanked for his public spirited attitude. Another offer had been received from Joel, the sou-chef at The Chequers. Discussion ranged over whether a litter picker was actually required in view of the Vale Council programme of visits every eight weeks with a sweeping machine. It was considered to be more cost-effective to arrange regular litter-picking sessions with volunteers from the village.

After a lengthy discussion it was agreed to monitor the cleanliness of the village streets after the March clean-up and before a second clean-up in the Autumn. Should the condition of the streets deteriorate to an unacceptable degree between these clean-ups, the question of appointing a street cleaner could be re-visited.

Resolved to:-

- organise a village clean-up on Saturday morning, March 28th from 10.00 a.m. to noon;
- plan for a second clean-up in the Autumn;
- monitor the state of the village roads to determine the need for a street cleaner.

09/20 Clerk's Correspondence

09/20/01 Charney Field Trees

The Clerk reported that he had been in touch with Oak Leaf Tree Services who visited the Field on 22nd January and they were anxious to take the proposal to fell trees forward. It was considered that two other tree surgeons should be approached with a view to obtaining a quotation for a day's work on tree felling only, with Charney Army responsible for removing the logs and brushwood.

09/20/02 Charney Field and Land Registry

The Clerk had received an explanatory note from the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment explaining the reason for registering the TOE interest in Charney Field with the Land Registry. However, the note failed to address the validity of this retrospective action and The Clerk had referred the note back to TOE for clarification of the legal situation.

09/21 Information Exchange

The Clerk reported on a visit he made to RAF Benson with Ed Vaizey MP to learn of their training activities with respect to low flying over the village. The visit was made in response to a small number of complaints from villager about low flying. The station commander was at pains to explain the steps they take to minimise the impact on the habitations over which they fly but the primary aim of training is to provide aircrew with the experience needed to protect them when flying over enemy territory, where they need to keep at or below 100 feet to avoid rocket propelled grenades (RPGs). A fuller account of the visit was published in Charney Chatter. There will be no formal response to the council's letter which was acknowledged by the station commander in the e-mail which invited Ed Vaizey and The Clerk to see the helicopter operations for themselves.

Mr Rumble gave an update on the Village Hall Project. A new specification, which includes a number of cost-saving measures compared with the original is expected to be issued to three builders within days, requesting tenders to be returned by early-April. The spec. proposes a start date of 14th April and a completion date of 4th August but it is not yet known whether these dates are firm. Arrangements need to be made to find alternative accommodation for users (including the Council) over this period. Denchworth Village Hall has offered to provide this.

The Clerk reported that he had his attention drawn by Mr Harper to the hedge and midden heap at the stables in Longworth Road which he felt needed attention. The site tenants have undertaken to take appropriate action.

09/22 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held at 7.30 p.m. on Wednesday May 13th 2009 in the Village Hall.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.55 p.m. with thanks to all those who attended.

Signed Date

Chairman