

## **CHARNEY BASSETT PARISH COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL AT 7.30 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY 13 MAY 2009 AND THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

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

Mr P G Davies (Clerk)

#### **09/23 Apologies**

There were no apologies. District Councillor Anthony Hayward, and 11 members of the public were also in attendance. There were no declarations of interest.

#### **09/24 Election of Officers**

Mr Rumble was proposed as Chairman by Mr Harper, seconded by Mrs Bath and duly elected. Mr Cox was proposed as Vice-chairman by Mr Rumble, seconded by Mr Harper and duly elected. The council unanimously thanked Mr Harper for his stint as vice-chairman.

#### **09/25 Minutes of the March 2009 Meeting**

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

#### **09/26 Times and Dates of Future Meetings**

It was agreed to continue with the existing arrangement of meetings at 7.30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of every odd month in the Village Hall.

#### **09/27 Appointments to other Committees**

Council representatives to other committees were elected as follows: -

- Minibus Committee: Mr Harper. It was noted that representation on this committee by a regular user would be welcome but despite a number of approaches by The Clerk and Mr Harper, nobody had come forward.
- Transport Representative: Mr Harper.
- CHAFT (2 representatives): Mr Rumble and The Clerk.

The Clerk would look after grass cutting (liaising with the Chairman) and would be the Cherbury News reporter, Charney Chatter Editor and village web site manager.

Mr Peter Leaver has agreed to act as the Council's internal auditor.

#### **09/28 Clerk's Financial Report**

The Clerk presented his financial report CBPC/FIN/09/04 (appended to minutes) which had been distributed to councillors. The figures contained in the report, which represented the situation at the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009, had been approved by the internal auditor. The Council approved the Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement in the Annual Return which would now be submitted for external audit.

The Clerk reported that he had obtained an alternative insurance quotation from Came & Company which was underwritten by Norwich Union. The cover is better than the current policy with Allianz and with the three-year contract option would result in a saving of over £100 to the council. Councillors had received copies of the policy and were unanimous in agreeing to the proposal of The Clerk that the insurance policy be changed.

RESOLVED that:-

- a) the report be adopted
- b) the Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement in the Annual Return be approved and signed.
- c) the insurance quotation from Came & Company be accepted on a three-year basis.

### **09/29 Clerk's Correspondence**

**09/29/01 Flooding:** The Clerk reported on exchanges of correspondence between the Vale of White Horse District Council and Charles Dingwall requesting him to clear the roadside ditch in Longworth Road. The latest letter gave 28 days for action to be taken or a Section 25 Notice of the Land Drainage Act 1991 would be served on Mr Dingwall. The flooding topic was further debated in the Annual Parish Meeting (see below).

**09/29/02 TOE:** The Clerk had been in discussion with TOE about the requirement from them to register TOE interest in Charney Field (minute 09/09/02, January 2009). The Council had objected to this on the grounds that it was an attempt to impose a condition on the land sale retrospectively, although it did not object to the aim which was to protect the status of Charney Field as a village amenity in perpetuity. The Clerk had drafted a letter to TOE accepting this principle and this was approved.

**09/29/03 Football:** The Clerk had received a letter from the North Berks Football League which is celebrating its centenary this year. The letter was sent to all parishes which have or had football clubs in the League during the hundred years of its existence. Charney Bassett had a team called Charney FC in the League in 1919/21. The letter invited congratulations from these parishes and The Clerk undertook to write such a letter. It was perhaps appropriate in view of the formation this year of an under-12 team called Charney Rangers.

## **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

The Annual Parish Meeting followed immediately after the Parish Council meeting. The Chairman opened by summarising his Annual Report which would be published in full in Charney Chatter and on the village web site.

### **09/30 County Council Matters**

In the absence of Councillor Melinda Tilley there were no County Council matters to discuss.

### **09/31 District Council Matters**

Councillor Anthony Hayward offered to refer any county council matter to Melinda Tilley but there were none. He reminded the meeting that she was seeking re-election to OCC at the June 4<sup>th</sup> election.

He reported that the Vale Council had decided in principle to adopt fortnightly refuse collections which would be introduced in about one years time, issuing residents with wheelie bins with microchips (which would not initially be activated). Special arrangements would be made for food waste.

Asked how the merging of VWHDC with South Oxfordshire DC was going he answered that to date all seemed to be well but it is early days. There was some evidence that due to the economic slow down, staff, especially planners, were not being stretched and were able to devote time to making the new arrangement work.

**09/32 Matters Raised by the Public**

The meeting was open to questions from the public and the following topics were raised:-

**Flooding**

Following on from the Chairman's mention of Project Chaffinch in his report there was a discussion of the need for riparian owners (those landowners with streams running through or past their property) to ensure that these waterways are kept clear of obstructions. Mr Harper emphasised the need for all owners to do this or else the efforts of the rest would be of no avail and suggested all such owners should receive a letter reminding them of their obligations. He mentioned the specific instance of an apparent blockage in Charney Wick Ditch just upstream of his property. He also raised the question of maintenance and the need to involve the Environment Agency with annual inspections.

Responding to Mr Harper's comments, The Clerk pointed out that it is the duty of riparian owners to be aware of their responsibilities, Mr Cox adding that ignorance of the law is no defence. Project Chaffinch has surveyed all the watercourses in and around the village and has identified two places where work needs to be done (one of these is the blockage referred to by Mr Harper). Work has been deferred until water levels have fallen from the high winter levels. The EA representative with responsibility for self-help groups such as Project Chaffinch is due to return to the village later this year to review progress and advise on any maintenance which needs to be done. The Clerk undertook to speak to VWHDC about funding for equipment for Project Chaffinch.

**Footpaths**

The status of the path leading past Charney Mill to the fields between the village and Lyford was questioned in view of an incident in which a dog walker was asked to leave the path, despite a notice asking dogs to be kept on leads. The Clerk reported that this was not an officially-designated footpath so the landowner was within his rights to ask people on the path to leave. It was believed that the notice was an indication that the path could be used "unofficially" but it is understood that game birds are now bred on the land and dogs are likely to be discouraged. The Clerk counselled against attempting to formalise the situation but he undertook to try and have a word with the landowner.

**Grass cutting**

The Clerk was asked to complain to the grass cutting contractor about the state of the children's play area after the last cut when the grass cuttings were not picked up.

**Hedges**

It was pointed out that the hedges at Penny Chickens needed cutting back where they overhang the highway. The Chairman undertook to speak to the builder who is converting the property.

**09/33 Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held at 7.30 p.m. on Wednesday July 8<sup>th</sup> in the Village Hall.

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

Signed .....

Chairman