

## CHARNEY BASSETT PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 14 JANUARY 1998

PRESENT:

Mrs A Wason-Cooper (Chairman)  
Mrs T Cox  
Mrs J Fry

Mr P G Davies (Clerk)

20 members of the public were in attendance. An apology was received from Dr. Evans, County Councillor.

#### AGENDA

1. Minutes of the last meeting.
2. Matters arising from last meeting minutes.
3. Village Hall funding
4. Annual Precept for 1998/99
5. Ten minutes for Residents' Questions.

#### 1. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of 14 January 1998 were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

#### 2. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL

Mrs Wason-Cooper announced that she had signed the appropriate form of acceptance of the position of Chairman. She also announced that the intention of the meeting would be to resolve the question of Village Hall funding (Item 3 on the agenda), followed by the setting of the precept for 1998/99. All other matters would be left until the next meeting.

The Chairman also announced that she had been studying rules of procedure in the Parish Council Handbook and in future, Council procedures would be changed to remove the item "Any Other Business" from agendas. The Handbook recommended that AOB should not be used as decisions taken under this item could not be binding. All matters for discussion would have to be on the agenda for them to be discussed. The Clerk pointed out that if this change was adopted, the meeting frequency of the Council meant that should an important matter arise immediately before a meeting, it would have to wait two months for attention. The Chairman responded that should this arise, the agenda could be changed at the meeting. The Clerk pointed out that unless changes to the agenda were displayed on the notice board for at least three days before a meeting, discussion of them at a meeting would be illegal and not binding. He recommended that there should be some agenda item which would enable the Council to consider late items to give maximum flexibility in dealing with business.

Appointments to the Village Hall Committee and the Playing Field Sub-Committee will be made at a later date as would the appointment of a new Vice-chairman.

As the only valid nomination for the two vacancies on the Council, Mr Geoff Beer would become a member of the Council with effect from the election date of 22 January 1998. The Chairman had invited him to the meeting so that he could have an early insight into the matters discussed but he had been unable to attend as it was his wife's birthday. A second round of nominations would be invited from 29 January 1998 with a deadline for submission by noon on 6 February 1998. Mr Steve Callaghan indicated his intention to submit a nomination form.

#### 3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE LAST MEETING

Manor Farm Road: The letter to all frontagers had been prepared but not sent. The Clerk pointed out that this was an administrative matter which fell within the duties of **The Clerk** and he undertook to send it.

Village Map: The Chairman acknowledged that the action had been discharged prior to the last meeting. The Notice Board copy of the laminated map had been stolen and Mrs Daghish was asked if she could provide a replacement for **The Clerk** to laminate.

Telegraph Poles: **The Clerk** was asked to write again to BT.

Environmental Improvement Scheme: This item was wrongly identified and should have referred to the Environmental Agency Plan consultation. **The Clerk** was asked to convey the Council's views, detailed in previous correspondence, on flood protection defences and revival of water courses around the village. Although the Chairman proposed deferring discussion of the VWHDC EIS to the next meeting, The Clerk pointed out that the funding offer was conditional on expenditure in the current financial year and a two-month delay would effectively prevent this. After some discussion, it was decided, in the light of EA recommendations not to disturb the river bed, to pull out of the scheme and **The Clerk** was asked to convey this to VWHDC.

Manor Farm Barn: No decision has been received.

Area Policing Plan: **The Clerk** was asked to contact PC Roger Foster to discuss his attendance at the Parish Assembly.

The Old School: CPRE had withdrawn their interest in the Old School prior to the last meeting. Concern was expressed at the continuing deterioration of the property.

Dog fouling: The Clerk read out a letter received that day about the provision of dog bins under the VWHDC scheme. After some discussion, it was agreed that dog bins were inappropriate in the village and **The Clerk** was asked to convey this decision to the Vale.

Grass cuttings: **The Clerk** was asked to raise this matter with Mr. Clarke who had been appointed grass cutting and tree liaison officer for the Council.

Playing field: This item was not on the agenda and would be deferred until the next meeting. The Chairman reported that there had been no progress in forming a sub-committee to take the project forward.

Street cleaning: The Clerk had suggested privately to the Council that it was unfortunate that the rate for street cleaning had been raised at the last meeting, immediately after Mrs. Venn's resignation and that the increase should be made retrospective to give Mrs. Venn a "retirement bonus". The Chairman referred to The Clerk's proposal and consulted the other councillors who unanimously agreed that in the light of extra demands for funding in the next financial year the sum involved (£12) could not be found. Following a number of angry interventions from the floor, this decision was reversed and **The Clerk** was asked to pay Mrs. Venn's outstanding invoice at the new rate of £4 per hour.

Village Speed Limits: The Clerk suggested that there was no parallel between Deddington, a large village on a major trunk route, with Charney Bassett and their approach to the speeding problem would not be relevant to our situation. This was agreed and the matter will not be pursued. The Clerk raised the question of the approach by OCC to parish councils seeking assistance with the 30 mph limits in villages project. **The Clerk** was asked to reply agreeing in principle to some form of assistance but without committing a sum of money and suggesting some self help, for example, in installing signs. From the floor, Mr Hook, County Councillor for Marcham reported that The Vale would be second of the Oxfordshire District Councils to have the scheme implemented and there would be time to make allowance for any funding needed at a later date. On a related matter, The Clerk reported that he had had a successful outcome to his discussions with Thames Valley Police on the subject of HGV diversions in the event of a road traffic accident on the A420. Diversions through the village might still be necessary in the future but they would be in one direction only. In response to a question from the floor, The Clerk reported that he had on a number of occasions requested a weight limit through the village but the highways authority declined to apply one.

Library Service Consultation: A response had been forwarded to OCC.

Village bonfires: The matter had been raised in the Council report to the Cherbury News.

Damaged Road Signs: The Clerk advised that with the reductions in the OCC highways budget, there was little prospect of expenditure on repairing road signs and it would be better to limit our requests for expenditure to meet more urgent highways needs. This was accepted. From the floor, Mr Callaghan asked whether "Warning - Children" signs could be erected at the approaches to the village. It was pointed out that they already existed on the Denchworth and Longworth roads but had apparently been removed from Buckland Road. **The Clerk** was asked to procure a replacement for Buckland Road.

Transport Representatives: **The Clerk** was asked to reply to ORCC telling them that Mrs Cox was the Council Transport Officer. At the same time, the Council's support for the retention of the ORCC Transport Officer's post should be expressed, referring to the need for public transport but not committing any funds.

#### 4. VILLAGE HALL FUNDING

The Chairman reported that, in her capacity as Treasurer to the Village Hall Committee, she was bringing forward a request for a grant from the Parish Council towards the cost of repairs to the Hall, currently estimated at around £8,000. A request for a grant from Vale of White Horse Council had met with the response that they would expect the Parish Council to make a significant contribution to the cost, if they were to receive funding from the Vale. They also commented that the more organisations that used the Hall, the more likely a grant would be made. It was felt that the Parish Council should respond positively as it did not contribute to the running costs of the Hall, indeed, it paid for its use. The Chairman proposed a grant of £500 which was agreed. There was widespread support for this proposal from the floor, indeed, there was a suggestion that £500 might turn out not to be enough. The Parish Council would act as agent for the Village Hall Committee in administering the funding as this would have VAT benefits.

#### 5. ANNUAL PRECEPT FOR 1998/99

Introducing this item, the Chairman reported that there was no formal Clerk's Financial Report for this meeting as there had been no financial transactions since the last meeting. The reason for this was the lack of a banking mandate which the Clerk had refused to sign after the last meeting, because he considered, in his position as Proper Officer for Council financial matters, that it had not been properly drawn up. The Clerk requested that a new mandate be discussed and agreed so that outstanding accounts could be settled. The Chairman proposed that this matter be deferred until the next meeting or outside the meeting but The Clerk pointed out that this would introduce a further two month delay to paying bills. The Chairman then proposed that cheques should only be signed by two councillors (any two of the three existing members) in line with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1972. The Clerk objected to this and stated that if, as Proper Officer, he was to exercise the control over Council finances which the law laid down, he had to be a cheque signatory. A compromise was eventually reached and the mandate was duly completed. For the purposes of complying with the wording of the mandate it was agreed that a bank account be continued with Midland Bank plc in accordance with the clauses listed in section 5 of the mandate form. The "signatory" defined in the mandate form would be The Clerk plus any two of the existing three councillors.

The Chairman reported that the councillors had met to discuss the paper written by The Clerk outlining his calculation of the precept needed for 1998/99. The Clerk did not attend this meeting. This had indicated that, on the basis of estimated expenditure on items known to The Clerk, a precept no greater than that for 1997/98 could be set which would carry with it a contingency of £1,400. The Chairman reported that the paper did not, however, include the agreed grant to the Village Hall (£500) and other calls on funding including (up to) £500 for the next full election, £120 for current vacancy elections, £20 for a new rule book, £50 for a Clerk's course and sundry other items totalling a few tens of pounds. In addition, she felt it prudent to add 5% to The Clerk's budget proposals. On this basis, she proposed that the precept should be raised to £1,900. The Clerk disputed some of the assumptions, specifically pointing out that the full election costs would not fall due until the FY 1999/2000. Nevertheless, the Council agreed unanimously that the precept should be £1,900 and **The Clerk** was asked to convey this to the Vale of White Horse Council.

#### 6. QUESTIONS ETC. FROM RESIDENTS

There were no questions from the residents other than those raised during the matters arising.

#### 7. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 18 March 1998 at 7.30 p.m. in the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.20 p.m.

Signed.....  
Chairman