

CHARNEY BASSETT PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL AT 7.30 PM ON WEDNESDAY 9 NOVEMBER 2011

Present: Mr M Cox, Chairman
Miss P Edwards
Mr D Hughes
Mr J Harper

Dr S K Cowlam, Clerk

Six members of the public were in attendance.

11/64 Apologies and Declarations of Interest

Apologies for absence had been sent by County Councillor Melinda Tilley, District Councillor Anthony Hayward, and Councillor David Nellist. There were no declarations of interest.

11/65 To Approve the Minutes of the September Meeting, and Matters Arising

RESOLVED: the minutes of the September 2011 meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman. Matters arising from the September 2011 meeting were as follows.

- 11/25 and 11/58 RESOLVED. Councillor Hughes had arranged for an expert to brief the Council on land ownership records in connection with riparian ownership along the River Ock and the Charney Wick Ditch. This is reported at paragraph 11/68.
- 11/49 RESOLVED. Councillor Hughes had raised the topic of naming Charney Field with CHAFT.
- 11/54 RESOLVED. The Clerk had identified to Melinda Tilley road repairs needed in Charney Bassett. She advised that these should be reported to OCC Highways Dept in the normal way.
- 11/58 RESOLVED. The Clerk had discussed the myForest database with John Wright, the village website manager. He recommended that this could be accessed via an email address that is not associated with a particular individual, but should not be via the village website. CHAFT had also been alerted to elicit possible interest there.
- 11/59 RESOLVED. The Chairman and the Clerk would attend a briefing evening organized by VWHDC on the Localism Bill and new planning law. Also OALC plan a session on these topics in the Spring of 2012.
- 11/62. The Clerk has still to investigate ownership of the grassy area at Buckland Rd/Longworth Rd.

11/66 County Councillor's Matters

Melinda Tilley had provided a brief as follows.

- Melinda is fighting a new planning application for gravel extraction via Pinewoods Road.
- The OCC budget process is under way, with many more cuts to be found.
- All of the schools in Melinda's area are OfSTED "good" or "outstanding". She is hoping that all Oxfordshire schools will do something for the Olympics and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.
- OCC is anticipating a bad winter by providing a ton of salt to Parish Councils and instructions on keeping roads and footpaths clear.
- The concessionary bus pass scheme has been extended from 09:30-11pm to 09:00-midnight.

11/67 District Councillor's Matters

None reported.

11/68 Presentation on Riparian Owners

Simon Escreet spent 20 years as a property lawyer for VWHDC. He has set up a business helping parish and town councils to identify their own and property of unknown title. Our interest arose from seeking to identify riparian owners, particularly where attention is needed to reduce flood risk. But Simon could also help to identify ownership of parcels of land in and around communities. This is likely to increase in importance as "Localism" will give PCs the right to purchase community land. RESOLVED that the PC would identify the pieces of land of interest on a map with a view to researching their ownership.

11/69 Clerk's Financial Report

- The Clerk presented his financial report CBPC/FIN/11/06 (appended to minutes) which had been distributed to councillors.
- The report projected that the PC would spend 97% of the precept, and that the current account balance at the end of the financial year would be about £360 less than at the start, as a result of expenditure from the flood grant. This position is satisfactory.

RESOLVED: the report was adopted.

11/70 Estimation of the 2012/13 Precept

- VWHDC had advised of changes to the timetable for setting the precept. The PC has to consider the budget at this November meeting, rather than at its January meeting, as hitherto.
- The Clerk presented his estimation CBPC/FIN/PRE1213. This totalled £3516 basic expenditure, £4219.20 including 20% contingency.
- Councillors agreed that there should be no increase in the precept of £3800, and so it is necessary to seek budget reductions of £419.
- These were identified as follows: £100 for training, which we have been able to find at little or no cost over the last two years; £75 for a Christmas tree, on the basis that we can continue to be gifted one by a resident, as in recent years; and £250 for insurance. Hitherto, CHAFT has paid half the PC insurance in respect of the children's play area; details of this matter are the subject of current discussion.

RESOLVED that the Clerk seek a precept of £3800 from VWHDC.

RESOLVED that the Clerk report on options for insurance cover.

11/71 Flooding/Project CHAFFINCH

- There has still been no response from EA to the actions taken by their representative in May (now retired) despite the Clerk's repeated requests, and pressure from OCC's representative. Further efforts are not thought to be a good use of limited time, particularly as we have found other ways to resolve some of them to date, as follows.
- Diana Martin had contacted Mr Cottrell, who owns the land adjoining the R Ock where it was blocked towards the Lyford Bridge. She and David Godfrey had cleared the debris using a JCB. The PC had reimbursed the cost of this from the flood grant.
- Jim Gardiner has continued his study of the local geography and the watercourses. This continues to conclude that excess water should not be routed along the Charney Wick Ditch, as this is the lowest lying part of the village. He has obtained data from EA on water levels in the R Ock at the time of the flood in 2007. A graph of this shows two episodes of rising water levels on 20 and 21 July. This matches well with Trevor Brown's report of his experience at his property.

- In discussion we were reminded that we have not yet considered the effect of the Gainfield Ditch on watercourse dynamics.
- Jim Gardiner and Keith Harris are considering the use of a laser meter to measure the depths of the Charney Wick Ditch at various locations.

RESOLVED that the Clerk should convene a meeting of the flood group to hear of the latest work and consider further analyses.

11/72 Planning Matters

The Clerk reported as follows.

- VWHDC had refused an application to remove a planning condition preventing the addition of windows, rooflights or ancillary buildings at Minmere Barn.

11/73 Village College

Lynn Brookes reported as follows.

- Yoga and pilates classes are fully subscribed, and have waiting lists.
- The patchwork and needlecraft classes are proving so successful that they have been expanded to morning, afternoon and evening sessions.
- A third digital photography course has been completed and followed by a French conversation class.
- CLET has agreed funding for “taster” courses. Lynn would now meet the VWHDC arts development officer in order to progress these further. Lynn will publish details in due course.

11/74 Queen’s Diamond Jubilee

- The PC noted that there is an *ad hoc* committee developing plans for the village’s celebrations, composed of representatives from the PC, CHAFT and residents. The committee reports its work in Charney Chatter.
- The PC had included £100 in its budget for 2012/13 for the Jubilee.
- The PC had agreed to use its bank account to hold funds collected by the Jubilee Committee.
- £32 had been received in this connection from an event held recently at The Chequers.

11/75 Clerk’s Correspondence

- The Clerk had responded to the VWHDC consultation on car parking. We welcomed the proposal for two hours’ free parking as a means of stimulating trade in our towns, but remarked that something further would be needed, as this measure is already in place in privately owned car parks in Wantage, and that WODC has universal free parking.
- The Clerk had accepted OCC’s offer to provide a free batch of salt for the village roads and pavements for the winter.
- We are invited to respond to the VWHDC consultation on its draft Interim Housing Supply Policy. This aims to ease and accelerate planning applications in order to meet the district council’s house building targets that are compromised by the economic downturn. Its draft policy estimates that Charney Bassett will need 10 additional houses by 2026 in order to maintain the same population at the projected decrease in the number of persons per household. The view of the PC is that Charney Bassett could accommodate this increase, but that the type of housing needs to be considered carefully to recognize the available local infrastructure, the absence of facilities in the village, and the wish to maintain its present character.

RESOLVED that Councillors should forward their detailed views on the VWHDC draft Interim Housing Supply Policy to the Clerk, so that he could formulate a composite reply before the deadline: 25 November 2011.

11/76 Information Exchange

- The Chairman reported that the new telephone number (101) will be introduced on 15 November for calls to the police that do not warrant the urgency of a 999 call.
- David Nellist had expressed concern (prior to the meeting) that we do not have a village plan. The Chairman and the Clerk may learn more about this topic at the forthcoming meeting organized by VWHDC on 23 November.
- The Chairman reported on proposals from OCC for self-help snow clearing. This is at an early stage and might involve NAG groups too. Essentially, nominated individuals, particularly those with tractors, JCBs, etc, would agree to clear specific roads in their community, and have insurance cover provided for that duty by OCC.

11/77 Date of Next Meeting

11 January 2012, at 7:30 pm in the Village Hall.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9:20pm.

Signed Date

Chairman