

## CHARNEY BASSETT PARISH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL AT 7.30 PM ON WEDNESDAY 14 MARCH 2012

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

Dr S K Cowlam, Clerk

County Councillor Melinda Tilley, District Councillor Anthony Hayward, and twelve members of the public were in attendance.

#### **12/14 Apologies and Declarations of Interest**

Apologies for absence had been sent by Village College Manager, Lynn Brookes. There were no declarations of interest.

#### **12/15 To Approve the Minutes of the November Meeting, and Matters Arising**

RESOLVED: the minutes of the January 2012 meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman.

Matters arising from the January 2012 meeting were as follows.

- 11/68. The PC had still to identify pieces of land of interest on a map with a view to researching their ownership.
- 11/70 RESOLVED. The PC and CHAFT had agreed that in future CHAFT would insure the children's play area when the PC insurance is renewed in June 2012. However, it is thought prudent for CHAFT and the PC to determine the lowest cost overall, and this is being established before taking action.
- 12/03 RESOLVED. The Clerk had forwarded a briefing note to our County and District Councillors from November's VWHDC planning and Localism workshop to seek their advice. This is covered at paragraph 12/16.
- 12/06 RESOLVED. The Clerk to seek the views of Bruce Hedge and Henry Gunston on Jim Gardiner's paper on flooding in Charney Bassett.
- 12/06 RESOLVED. The Clerk, Chairman and Councillor Hughes to explore scope for work on riparian ownership.
- 12/09 RESOLVED. The Clerk to convene a meeting on Neighbourhood/Community Plans.

#### **12/16 County Councillor's Matters**

Melinda Tilley reported as follows.

- The new Minerals and Waste Policy proposes no new digging. This implies that the Hanson's application for Pinewood Road probably will not proceed, though the Hatford quarry could be extended.
- Keith Mitchell is retiring as leader of OCC. There is much focus at present on identifying a successor, and consequently the composition of the cabinet.
- The Chairman sought advice on the new planning laws and the Localism Act. Melinda Tilley and Anthony Hayward advised that no towns or parishes in the Vale district are beginning Neighbourhood Plans. (It is widely recognised that these represent a very demanding and

expensive proposition). The Chairman expressed concern at the VWHDC proposal to develop 10-20 houses in Charney Bassett. We were advised that the VWHDC is “scoping” locations for 1000 houses in the next year or so to meet its interim housing supply policy, and that this is not an expression of interest by a developer.

### **12/17 District Councillor’s Matters**

Anthony Hayward reported as follows.

- He had visited Didcot power station. Its decommissioning is planned for 2015. There are no plans for successor provision of electricity for the two million existing consumers.

### **12/18 Clerk’s Financial Report**

- The Clerk presented his financial report CBPC/FIN/12/02 (appended to minutes) which had been distributed to councillors.
- The report noted that the PC had spent 94% of the precept, and that the current account balance at the end of the financial year would be about £317.69 less than at the start. This position is satisfactory.

RESOLVED: the report was adopted.

### **12/19 Land at Ock Green**

Steve and Sue Champion had contacted the Clerk to ask to make a presentation to explain their wish to purchase from Charney Manor the enclosed field opposite the Church. They made the following points.

- They wish to protect the land from development.
- They have a concern over security of their adjacent property, and vulnerability to unauthorized access.
- They are content with the PC’s use of the land and would enter into a covenant to continue this, similar to the existing covenant with Charney Manor.
- The land had become rather overgrown until recently.

In reply the Chairman and Clerk made the following points.

- The PC wishes to retain the current arrangement to lease the land from Charney Manor.
- We do not wish to see building development of the land, and are comfortable with the Manor’s covenant that protects against this.
- We are concerned that if the Manor were to sell the land to the Champions and in due course they were to sell it, a subsequent owner might not be minded to continue its use for benefit of the community as a whole.
- It had been our intention, now that willow trees had been felled, to seek agreement to replant the field with an orchard, fruit bushes, or other (not for profit) horticultural use for the benefit of village residents.

In discussion it was agreed that the present legal arrangement is preferable, with the PC’s proposed use, and with attention to the Champions’ concern over security. The view of residents expressed from the floor supported this strongly. In fact, “Jubilee Orchard” seemed a most appropriate suggestion in this Queen’s Diamond Jubilee year. Councillor Hughes (who is also a church warden) confirmed that the PCC’s view (expressed outside the meeting by David Douglas, Vice-chairman of the PCC, to the Clerk) supports the arrangements described in this paragraph.

RESOLVED: the Clerk would contact the Trustees of Charney Manor to seek agreement for the proposals for use of the land at Ock Green as proposed by the PC for the benefit of village residents with attention to protect the Champions’ concerns.

### **12/20 Flooding/Project CHAFFINCH**

- The Clerk had arranged a meeting with Bruce Hedge and Henry Gunston, who are connected with the restoration of Charney Mill, and are knowledgeable experts on the local watercourses. Jim Gardiner and Keith Harris described their studies of the 2007 flood event, and their conclusions. Bruce and Henry agreed that the measures proposed seemed sensible (to insulate the Charney Wick Ditch from the River Ock).
- However, it is necessary to consider the effect of increased flood water loading of the River Ock and its potential impact on Charney Wick.
- In this connection Hugh Brookes had produced a contour map of the area. This is difficult to do accurately owing to the small land area and a range of elevations of only a few meters.
- Also a visit had been made to David Godfrey's property to discuss his experience of the flood event. Some further ground levelling studies are needed.

### **12/21 Neighbourhood/Community Plans**

The Chairman reported as follows.

- The Chairman and Vice-chairman had attended a workshop on this topic. Three Oxfordshire communities are preparing Neighbourhood Plans, but most of the 170 delegates expressed the view that this is too demanding and too expensive for the resources of communities such as ours, as acknowledged by our County and District Councillors, at paragraph 12/16.
- The PC had resolved at its last meeting that we should produce a Community Plan instead. This prospect is much more achievable for the resources at our community's disposal. It would need to be championed and managed by a subcommittee of the PC, but must be the work of the community and reflect its collective views.
- We are invited to respond to VWHDC's Interim Housing Supply Policy site screening for 10-20 houses to be built on land owned by OCC at the junction of New Road and Buckland Road. We plan to respond that 11 new houses had been set for Charney Bassett before 2026 and that these should be on the lines of our previous comments that they should not alter the character of the village.
- The timescales for response to IHSP site screening and launching a Community Plan project do not match, and we resolved as follows.

RESOLVED: the Clerk would draft a response to the VWHDC IHSP site screening for Charney Bassett as outlined above.

RESOLVED: the May meeting of the PC and the Annual Parish Meeting would be the opportunity to launch the preparation of a Community Plan.

### **12/22 Election of Representatives to CHAFT & CLET**

There is a vacancy for a PC representative on each of these committees caused by the resignation of Geoff Rumble. Councillor Pam Edwards volunteered to join CHAFT, and the Clerk volunteered to join CLET. These were accepted by the PC. The Chairman thanked Geoff Rumble for his service on the two committees.

### **12/23 Planning Matters**

The Clerk reported as follows.

- Planning permission has been granted for a single storey extension at Goosey Wick Farm.
- Alterations to Manor Farm have been granted planning permission.
- An application has been made to expand the barn on land behind Narrogin, Longworth Road.

### **12/24 Village College**

Lynn Brookes had provided a report as follows.

- Weekly yoga, pilates and patchwork & quilting classes continue to thrive.
- A set of five French conversation classes has started.
- Two Saturday workshops have been held, with advice from the VWHDC Arts Development Officer: “Pen & Watercolour”, and “Expressive Painting”. “Singing for Everyone” is to be held in March.

**12/25 Clerk’s Correspondence**

The final recommendation of the Boundary Commission’s review of Oxfordshire is that the number of County Councillors should be reduced by eleven to 63, with some rearrangement of wards. We are likely to have the same County Councillor (provided that she is readopted).

**12/26 Information Exchange**

Resurfacing of Buckland Road has not been successful: pebbles continue to come unstuck from the tarmac.

RESOLVED: the Clerk should contact OCC Highways about this.

**12/27 Date of Next Meeting**

9 May 2012, at 7:30 pm in the Village Hall.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8:45pm.

Signed ..... Date .....  
Chairman