

CHARNEY BASSETT PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL AT 7.30 PM ON WEDNESDAY 9 MAY 2012

Present:

Mr M Cox, Chairman
Mr D Nellist, Vice-chairman
Mr J Harper
Mrs J Fry
Mr D Roberts

Dr S K Cowlam, Clerk

Forty members of the public were in attendance.

12/28 Apologies and Declarations of Interest

County Councillor Melinda Tilley had sent her apologies for absence. Several residents were unable to attend, but had wished to do so: David Sibbert, Trevor Brown, and Jill Walker. There were no declarations of interest.

12/29 Election of Officers

Mr Cox was proposed as Chairman by Mr Harper, seconded by Mr Nellist, and duly elected. Mr Nellist was proposed as Vice-chairman by Mr Harper, seconded by Mrs Fry, and duly elected.

12/30 Appointment of Two New Parish Councillors

Two casual vacancies had arisen by the resignation of Miss P Edwards and Mr D Hughes. No representations had been made to VWHDC for nominations of candidates. Accordingly, no election was necessary, and two new parish councillors were co-opted: Mrs Jane Fry, and Mr David Roberts. The Chairman thanked them for offering their services, and thanked Pamela Edwards and Doug Hughes for their past services.

12/31 Times and Dates of Future Meetings

It was agreed to continue with the existing arrangement to meet in the Village Hall at 7:30pm on the second Wednesday of every odd month.

12/32 Appointment to other Committees

The following appointments were made.

- Minibus Committee: Mr Colin McGuire.
- Transport Representative: Mr Jim Harper.
- Charney Hall & Field Trust: Mrs Jane Fry and Miss Pamela Edwards.
- Charney & Lyford Educational Trust: Mrs Jos Bath and the Clerk.
- Longworth Charities Trust: Mr Jim Harper.
- Neighbourhood Action Group: Mr Mike Cox. (Mr D Sibbert holds a personal appointment).

12/33 Other Responsibilities

The following responsibilities were made or noted.

- Grass cutting liaison: the Clerk.
- Seven Voices Reporter: the Clerk.
- Charney Chatter Editor: Dr Roger Watson.

- Village website Editor: Mr John Wright.
- Village College Manager: Mrs Lynn Brookes.
- Charney Army Convenor: Mr John Daghish.
- Internal Auditor: Mr Peter Leaver.

12/34 To approve the Minutes of the March Meeting, and Matters Arising

RESOLVED: the minutes of the March 2012 meeting be approved and signed by the Chairman.

Matters arising from the March 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 CHAFT rather than the PC would insure the children's play area as this is the lower cost overall to both bodies.
- 12/06 RESOLVED. The Clerk had sought the views of Bruce Hedge and Henry Gunston on Jim Gardiner's paper on flooding in Charney Bassett. They had supported the conclusions, and recommended consideration of the impact on the River Ock. This topic is described at paragraph 12/40.
- 12/06 RESOLVED. The Clerk, the Chairman (but no longer Councillor Hughes) to explore the scope for work on riparian ownership.
- 12/09 RESOLVED. The Clerk to convene a meeting on Neighbourhood/Community Plans. This is covered at paragraph 12/41 on housing in these minutes.

12/35 Clerk's Financial Report

The Clerk presented his financial report CBPC/FIN/12/03 (appended to minutes) which had been distributed to councillors. The figures represented the situation at the end of the financial year ending 31 March 2012, and 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 key points were as follows:

- We had begun the year with a balance of £5184.59 and ended with a balance of £5423.82.
- The precept had remained unchanged at £3800.
- Costs associated with the Children's play area had been transferred to CHAFT, by agreement.
- A PAYE scheme had been set up with HMRC, as required, to pay the Clerk's honorarium.

RESOLVED: the report was adopted, and the Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement in the Annual Return was approved and signed.

12/36 Date of Next Meeting

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

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8:10pm.

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The Annual Parish Meeting followed immediately after the Annual Parish Council Meeting.

11/37 Chairman's Annual Report

This is reported in full in Charney Chatter and on the village website, and is therefore not detailed here. The key points are as follows.

- The precept has remained at £3800, representing a charge of £30 on a band D property.
- Two councillors stood down at the end of the year, and have been replaced.
- The PC has commented on a number of planning applications during the year.
- We are grateful to riparian owners, and to the Charney Army, for their responses in maintaining watercourses. Project CHAFFINCH has made good progress, as reported at paragraph 12/40.
- The Village College is flourishing under Lynn Brookes' management. We are grateful for funding by CLET and VWHDC.
- The Government's new Planning Policy Framework is to lead to simplification of the planning process, but will also result in additional housing. The VWHDC is drafting its core strategy, and its interim housing supply policy is an attempt to achieve its slipping targets for house building.

12/38 County Council Matters

None reported.

12/39 District Council Matters

None reported.

12/40 Flood Avoidance in Charney Bassett

Jim Gardiner gave a presentation of his analysis of the July 2007 flood, with graphs, photographs, and maps (some from the Environment Agency). The key points are as follows.

- The evidence comes from observation and analysis of the local contours, and from discussions with residents who related their experiences of the event.
- The course of the Charney Wick Ditch is through the lowest lying part of the village, so a flood in this watercourse presents the greatest flood risk to the village.
- The flood in the Charney Wick area was caused by high waters in the River Ock back-flowing up the Gainfield Brook to its junction with the Charney Wick Ditch, and then down the Charney Wick Ditch, and along the Mill Stream, thereby flooding southwards from the Bridle Path and northwards from the Mill Stream.
- Future flood risk could be reduced by insulating the Charney Wick Ditch from flood surges from the River Ock, to provide water flow preferentially down the Ock. This could be achieved by three things: installing a restriction where the Charney Wick Ditch emerges from the Gainfield Brook, installing a restriction where the ditch at the Godfreys' western boundary joins the Charney Wick Ditch, and building up the earth bank at this boundary, the site of a former causeway.
- These have the advantage of being low cost measures.
- RESOLVED. Residents agreed that a next step is to explain these findings to the Environment Agency, and seek their support for the measures.
- RESOLVED. Two interested residents (one flooded, one nearly so) should be consulted beforehand.
- RESOLVED. Steve Champion should be consulted. He remarked at the meeting that Mill Cottage had been flooded from the River Ock, not the Mill Stream. He asked that consideration be given to using the Mill Race to relieve the Charney Wick Ditch.
- RESOLVED. One resident asked to consider altering the slope of the road and pavement above the culvert in Main Street, as a cheaper option than enlarging the culvert.

12/41 VWHDC Interim Housing Supply Policy

The Chairman and the Clerk explained that the implications of the VWHDC's house building programme for Charney Bassett are as follows.

- In November 2011 VWHDC advised the PC that it had calculated that Charney Bassett should have ten more houses. This is based on a prediction of the number of houses needed to maintain the same population, because of the declining number of people per household over recent years.
- In February 2012 VWHDC advised the PC that its (new) Interim Housing Supply Policy (IHSP) now identified scope for 10-20 houses that could be built on land in the village owned by OCC.
- The IHSP represents an attempt to meet the VWHDC's inability to meet its house building target, and takes advantage of the eased planning laws to accelerate planning permissions. OCC appears to have provided a ready source of potential building land. Indeed, a "site screening" application has been made "with the knowledge and consent of the land owner", we believe, by consultants to OCC.
- We believe that the PC has no option but to accept the number of new houses imposed by VWHDC, but we can influence matters such as location, style, etc.
- The PC has responded to VWHDC (by 20 April, as required) that we could support ten, but not twenty; and has commented on the absence of infrastructure which could affect the sorts of people who would locate here. The PC also said that it could identify two sites, though it did not divulge these, as they are privately owned, and had the owners had not been approached.
- Our best means of bringing influence to bear emerges from the recent Localism Act, which empowers communities' involvement in the planning process. Wealthier councils, such as Faringdon Town Council have the income and expertise to produce a Neighbourhood Plan. Charney Bassett PC has neither! However, we could prepare a Community Plan. (This does not have such demanding hoops and hurdles). Furthermore, a Community Plan needs to be prepared and owned by the community rather than simply the PC, though the PC can assist in its preparation.
- RESOLVED. Residents agreed that a Community Plan would be beneficial. Brian Hook has experience in this connection and agreed to lead the project. Hugh Brookes, Kay Adamson, and Steve Champion agreed to join the team.

12/42 Residents Questions

Villagers present made the following points.

- There was concern over the safety and disturbance (especially at night) RAF helicopters overflying the village.
- Kay Adamson offered to turn the telephone box into an art gallery.
- There was concern over the large speeding tractors that drive through the village; their drivers are often using mobile phones while driving, and verges are being damaged.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9:15pm.

Signed Date

Chairman