

CHARNEY BASSETT PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL AT 7.30 PM ON WEDNESDAY 9 JULY 2014

Present: Mr D Nellist, Vice chairman
Mrs J Fry
Mrs S Dobson
Mrs M Castle

Dr SK Cowlam, Clerk

Seven members of the public were in attendance.

14/41 Apologies and Declarations of Interest

Apologies for absence had been sent by Chairman David Roberts, Village College Manager Lynn Brookes, and Neil Dobson. There were no declarations of interest.

14/42 to approve the Minutes of the May Meeting and Matters Arising

RESOLVED: the minutes of the May 2014 meeting be approved and signed by the Vice Chairman. Matters arising were as follows.

- 14/40 The PC considered it timely to replace the notice board on the bus shelter.
- 14/40 The Clerk had advised Steve Champion that there is no reason why the Charney Bassett Action Group (CBAG) should not have a presence on the village website.
- 14/40 The Clerk had written to the Trustees of Charney Manor about allotments at the Manor. This is reported under Clerk's correspondence.

14/43 County Councillor's News

Melinda Tilley reported as follows.

- Children's Services at OCC had been the subject of a four week inspection, with 24 hours notice. The concluding report was "good" in all five categories. (Only eight other Authorities have received "good", and only five had "good" in all categories).
- OCC has funding for the Western Conveyance Channel for its flood relief project.
- There is more funding for pothole repair.
- Challow railway bridge on the A417 will be closed for three months for the planned works, and there will be increased traffic through villages during this period, though HGVs should be rerouted onto more major roads.
- Melinda offered the PC £500 from her discretionary fund for a new notice board.
- OCC will debate whether to agree to fracking in the county.

14/44 District Councillor's News

None reported.

14/45 Clerk's Financial Report

The Clerk presented the financial report CBPC/FIN/14/04 (appended to minutes) which had been distributed to councillors. The report represented the situation at 20 June, and had been approved by the internal auditor. The PC had received £2066.55 in grants and from fund-raising for the

defibrillator project. Expenditure included £2315.69 on the Neighbourhood Plan and £299.99 on a computer projector.

RESOLVED: the report was adopted.

RESOLVED: the PC bank account mandate be revised to include Mary Castle and remove Michael Cox.

14/46 Defibrillator Project

Refurbishment of the telephone kiosk is proceeding. Sixteen people have volunteered to be trained in use of the defibrillator. It is planned to be operational by the end of July.

14/47 Flooding/Project CHAFFINCH

Two residents, who had been flooded in 2007, had expressed reservations over the proposed project to improve flood defence for the village. As a result, a meeting was held on 11 June, and residents from 13 households (who were flooded or nearly so in 2007) were invited to attend. Residents from five attended. Apologies for absence were received from three. Jim Gardiner presented material that he had presented in May 2012 and some more recent material. Residents were not confident that the proposed project would work as intended, and had two concerns:

- The proposed project had not been peer reviewed by appropriate professional experts.
- If the project were implemented, it did not work as planned, and residents were flooded, would their household insurance be invalid if they had not informed their insurer of the project, and would the PC be liable for the damage.

The project team met subsequently on 18 June to consider a way forward. The PC, through the project team, invited the residents to form their own quorum to deal with the outstanding issues. A target date of the September PC meeting was set to consider progress. The Clerk had written two notes for the record of the meetings, and these are appended to these minutes.

In discussion at tonight's meeting residents expressed concern that the Environment Agency no longer inspects watercourses routinely in order to ensure that they are functioning satisfactorily. They noted that the PC does not have the authority to do this, and wished pressure to be brought on EA and government to resume this activity.

RESOLVED: the PC to bring pressure on EA and local/national government to inspect watercourses and be vigilant in maintaining their effectiveness against flooding.

14/48 Neighbourhood Plan Project

Christine Trotman reported on progress, as follows.

- The draft questionnaire had been sent to OCC and VWHDC for comment. The revised version is ready to be printed and distributed to residents. This will be done in mid September (after the holiday season).
- Impact statements have to be prepared on various topics that are being considered (such as allotments, street lighting, traffic calming, etc.), and groups of 2-3 residents are being asked to do this. (It needs to be independent of the project team).

The PC thanked the project team for its hard work to date.

14/49 Village College

Lynn Brookes had provided a report as follows.

- Patchwork & Quilting classes have finished for the summer and will resume in September when it is hoped to run an additional beginners' class.

- The Annual Exhibition was held in the village hall on 7 June. It was a great success, with work of an extremely high standard. Thanks go to Julie Ingram-Johnson for her expert tuition. £264 was donated to the defibrillator fund.
- Yoga and Pilates classes continue on Fridays and Mondays respectively, both with waiting lists.

14/50 Clerk's Correspondence

- Charney Manor had served notice on allotment holders to vacate their plots by January 2015. The Chairman and the Clerk had met Trustees of Charney Manor on 1 July to discuss termination of allotment use, and the wider relationship of the Manor and the village. The Trustees thought that most of the allotments were not being worked, and that there was now little interest in their use by villagers. We have ascertained that all but one of the allotment holders are working their plots, wish to continue, and are prepared to pay a higher rent, and advised the Trustees of this. We are hopeful that the Trustees will consider these factors favourably.
- The Clerk had been contacted OCC Property & Facilities Department about Charney Mill. The PC has rented the mill from OCC since 2003, and OCC now wishes the PC to pay for its electricity usage, as required by the terms of the lease. The PC will not be required to pay retrospectively for the eleven years or so that OCC has been paying. The Clerk has arrangements in hand for this new cost.

14/51 Information Exchange

- Sue Dobson had contacted OCC about overgrown paths and bridleways, and these had been cleared by OCC.
- Residents complained about the lapse in contractor grass cutting. The Clerk had been aware of this and had dealt with it.
- Residents complained about the weed growth in gutters, foliage overhanging pavements, and vehicles parked on pavements.

RESOLVED: the Clerk would place a note in Charney Chatter about this.

14/52 Date of next meeting

10 September 2014, at 7:30 pm in the Village Hall.

The Vice Chairman closed the meeting at 8:50pm.

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

Notes of a meeting held on 11 June 2014 in Charney Bassett village hall to discuss a proposed flood defence project (Project CHAFFINCH).

Present: Residents: John & June Stiles
Stephanie Wright
Colin McGuire
Trevor & Annabel Brown
Ian & Amanda Graham
Liz Cowlam
Project CHAFFINCH: David Roberts (Chairman of the PC)
Jim Gardiner
Stephen Cowlam (Clerk to the PC)

1. The background is as follows. Jim Gardiner had analysed the flood of July 2007 to determine its cause. He had presented his findings to the PC meeting in May 2012. Residents at that meeting agreed that the PC should pursue the project to the next stage. This involved repeating Jim's presentation in December 2012 to representatives of the Environment Agency. The EA considered the proposals to be sound, and advised that we would need consent under the Land Drainage Act from VWHDC for the project to build up the causeway and remake the ditch. We would need EA consent for construction of a weir just downstream of the emergence of the Charney Wick Ditch from the Gainfield Brook. We explained our proposals to the landowner, Paul McDonnell. He supported the project needing VWHDC consent, but not the one needing EA consent. Accordingly, we pursued the causeway project, but not the weir project. We obtained VWHDC consent in October 2013, and a grant of £1500 from them towards the cost of the project. Since then the Charney Army carried out preparatory work to clear foliage, undergrowth, and fallen trees along the causeway.
2. Colin McGuire expressed reservations about the project in February 2014, and this was followed in May 2014 by Trevor & Annabel Brown. Accordingly, project CHAFFINCH members arranged the meeting reported here to discuss the proposals.
3. We invited residents from 13 households who had been flooded, or nearly so, in 2007. Residents from five of these attended. Apologies for absence were received from three.
4. Jim gave a presentation which contained material from the 2012 presentations plus some more recent material. Residents were clearly impressed with his presentation, and acknowledged the thorough and diligent work that he had done. This was demonstrated by the thanks that many of them gave him after the meeting.
5. Nevertheless, some of the residents were not confident that the proposal would work as intended, and some were not convinced that building up the causeway would prevent water from flooding their homes as in 2007. They questioned the downstream effects of the project, including the adequacy of the culvert under Main Street, the culvert outside Bridle Cottage, and the Mill Stream.
6. Residents expressed a wish for the project to be peer reviewed, and a risk assessment made of possible water flows from behind the proposed built up causeway in the cases with and

7. without a 6 inch weir in the ditch. Such an assessment could involve a survey of heights along the causeway, and the field to its west as far as the bank of the River Ock.
8. Discussion among residents turned to buildings and contents insurance of their properties. In the event of a future flood, would their insurance be invalid if they had not informed their insurance companies if the project were to take place, and would the PC be liable for flood damage to their homes?
9. Jim Harper had sent some questions to the Clerk, and the answers to these are as follows. Watercourses are not being inspected by the PC once or twice a year. This is a riparian responsibility, not the PC's. Riparian owners are not being notified by the PC of obstructions in watercourses as a matter of routine, though they are sometimes alerted where no remedial action seems to have been taken for a long time. He wishes the pipe outside Bridle Cottage to be lowered. The purpose and consequence of this would have to be assessed, and authorisation obtained to do this from EA, as it falls within their jurisdiction.
10. The project team assured residents that no further action would be taken with the project unless and until they agreed to proceed. The project team would consider the proceedings of the meeting, and report back to residents in due course.

Stephen Cowlam,
Clerk to the PC,
18 June 2014.

Notes of a meeting of the PC working party held on 18 June 2014 to discuss the future of Project CHAFFINCH.

Present: David Roberts
 Jim Gardiner
 Stephen Cowlam

1. At the conclusion of the meeting held on 11 June 2014 with residents who were flooded in July 2007 we three agreed that we needed to consider the proceedings of the meeting, and recommend a way forward.
2. Outside the meeting David Roberts and Trevor Brown had had further conversation. Trevor offered assistance in contacting key personnel at the Environment Agency with a view to seeking their professional advice on remedial action to reduce flood risk in Charney Bassett. Trevor thought that this might be a long shot but worth pursuing nevertheless. It was felt that any further decision-making and activity should involve a greater number of participants than relying on the PC's working party alone.
3. Outside the meeting Stephen Cowlam and Stephanie Wright had had further conversation. They shared the view that the working party was unlikely to be able to do anything more to demonstrate to residents the soundness of the project that has been proposed.
4. To date the PC working party has achieved the following.
 - a. Investigated the flooding event of 2007.

- b. Obtained the services of Jim Gardiner who was prepared to invest time and skill to analyse the problem, and propose a solution.
 - c. Presented the proposed solution to EA and VWHDC.
 - d. Obtained agreement from the landowner (Paul McDonnell) to carry out the project.
 - e. Obtained authorization from VWHDC under the Land Drainage Act to carry out the project, and a grant from them towards its cost.
 - f. Liaised with the Hanney Flood Group, which is considered by EA to be a model of good practice.
5. The meeting of 11 June 2014 was held because we encountered reservation from some flood victims of
 - a. The soundness of the proposed project, given the lack of its detailed review by appropriate professional experts.
 - b. Whether residents or the PC would face an insurance liability in the event of a future flood event.
 6. The PC now invites residents to take the work from here, and form their own quorum to deal with the outstanding issues, or to generate other proposals.
 7. The PC welcomes feedback from residents, and suggests a target date of the PC meeting on 10 September 2014 for further discussion.

Stephen Cowlam,
Clerk to the PC,
19 June 2014.