

Charney Chatter

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

DECEMBER 2003

EDITORIAL

The Parish Council report in the November edition of Cherbury News told you about the proposal to produce a newsletter. This is the first one! Look after it - it might become a collector's item!

Lack of space in Cherbury News now limits Council reports to the months in which it meets. However, news items between meetings have been published in the past and it seems that some people have missed them. So, this is an attempt to keep you informed of things happening in the village which don't necessarily involve the Council.

Although it shouldn't be difficult to fill the four pages to which this newsletter will be limited, that remains to be seen. A newsletter is only as good as the material available to it and if you'd like to contribute, the Editor's address details are on the back page.

Feedback will be welcome and, in particular, short letters, notes or comments on matters of village interest.

Anonymous letters may be published provided they're not libellous and a name and address is given to the editor.

Village organisations are welcome to report on their activities in these pages.

HEADLINE TOPICS

- *Phoning the police.*
- *Village environment.*
- *Trees and planning law.*
- *Dog fouling (inevitably!).*

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Deadline for copy for the next edition in March 2004: 24 February 2004

Meetings are at 7.30 p.m. in the Village Hall on the second Wednesdays of odd-numbered months. **Next meeting 14 January 2004.**

CLERK'S CORNER

Village environment

There's been a fair amount of work undertaken over recent months by volunteers to help tidy up the village environment, including improvements to the Green and the new footpath from Bridle Path to Charney Field. This latter work has been undertaken for CHAFT and paid for by the Parish Council.

These labour intensive activities got me thinking and I drew up a list of other tasks requiring man (or woman!) power:

- Clearing the plantation alongside the new footpath to Charney Field.
- Clearing the stream bed at Ock Green.
- A parking area alongside the Mill.
- Tree maintenance on Charney Field.

Have I missed any jobs? What would you like to see done? Would you like to help? Do you think it's worth the village entering the Best Kept Village competition again this year?

Rats

Earlier this year, rats were spotted on the Cherbury Camp footpath. The Vale Council rat catcher was called and seemed to have got rid of them. But they're back and have been seen on the straw bales by Buckland Road. Be aware and please ensure you don't leave any food around for them. Look after your dogs too - one is suspected of having been bitten by a rat. The rat catcher is having another go at them!

Better late than never!

The Vale District Council has decided, somewhat belatedly, to compile a record of millennium celebrations in the Vale! Remember the millennium, bugs and all that? Hopefully the record we kept of events, particularly the pictures on display in the Village Hall will help in this exercise but it does seem a long time ago now.

Found

A "man in the moon" metal brooch has been found on the Village Green.

Ock Green

By arrangement with Charney Manor, the "inner" Ock Green has been cleared of weeds by the Council's grass cutting contractor up to Mill Cottage and you are free to walk along the mill stream. You're advised to keep clear of the beehives inside the wall.

Tree Preservation Orders

At present only the tree in the garden of the Cottage on the Green has a TPO to protect it. A number of people have suggested there should be more TPOs - what do you think?

Broadband

BT has set a threshold of 200 customers for broadband to come to the Hanney exchange - and 117 have already registered. If you'd like to register your interest, visit the web site:- <http://broadband4stanford.com/hanney.htm>.

VILLAGE EVENTS

The Village Coffee Morning resumes on 13 January 2004. Why not drop in on a friendly group of villagers of all ages which gets together for a chat in the Village Hall every Tuesday between 10.30 a.m. and noon? For 50p you can drink as much coffee and eat as many chocolate biscuits as you like! It's all in a good cause with any profits donated to charity. The £120 surplus from the last session went to Riding for the Disabled.

The Parochial Church Council wishes to thank everyone involved in the Harvest Supper (with quiz!), held in The Manor and the Christmas Bring & Buy Coffee morning (held in November!). The surplus of £21 from the former was donated to charity and the profit of £382.78 from the latter will contribute to church and pastoral facilities in the village. Special thanks to the Sunday School for all the items they made to sell.

VILLAGE COLLEGE

The Village College (VC) has just completed another successful term with courses on French Conversation, Flower Arranging and Yoga. French resumes on 12th January 2004 and Flower Arranging sometime in the Spring. The Yoga course is ignoring term-time convention and is carrying straight on!

The VC is still sponsored by the Parish Council but now has financial and management independence. Abingdon and Witney College continues to support the VC which can now arrange its own curriculum. The VC is generously supported financially by the Charney and Lyford Education Trust.

Is there a subject you'd like to see included in the curriculum? If so, let us know. We're looking into other languages, First Aid and Painting. Remember it's not just for adults and we'd love to arrange a teenagers' course if there's a subject they'd like to pursue.

College management is now in the hands of Jackie Cross, The Old Smithy (868706), assisted by Peter Davies (868646) on the administration front with Elisabeth Dabele (the founder) retained in an advisory role.

E-mail: villagecollege@hotmail.com or post a letter in the Village Hall post box.

CHARNEY FIELD

The long dry Summer has taken its toll of the trees planted last Autumn. The good news is that the Vale Council will replace them. You can still "sponsor" a tree by putting your name on a label on the tree, the only requirement is that you help to keep it alive by looking after it!

Recent work preparing for the bonfire party revealed the extent of dog fouling. It's difficult to understand the mentality of dog owners who walk away from the health

hazard they have left for people to tread in. The Council and CHAFT are now seriously considering banning dogs from the Field to protect children.

Advice from the Vale Council is that there is an existing bye-law which can be used to prosecute owners of dogs which foul. It is keen to take a test case to court so that the resulting fine of up to £1,000 might act as a deterrent. Would anyone like to volunteer for this?

PLANNING

A surprising number of people have asked me whether they need permission to fell trees in the garden. You do if you live in the conservation area, unless the tree is under 3 ins. diameter at breast height (4ft 6ins); outside the area you don't. If you need permission you must apply to the Vale Council planners. They consult the Parish Council who may object if there appears to be no valid reason for doing it. I cannot

recall the Council ever doing this because the main reasons for the regrettable loss of a tree are to do with disease or damage to property. Hopefully, people who have to fell a tree will replace it with another.

If you ever need to see a planning application, you don't have to go to a District Council office - contact The Clerk - at any reasonable hour!

POLICE

PC Martyn Holder, our beat bobby, is happy for his phone numbers to be widely known. They are: Home: 01367 870232 and Mobile: 07970 145294.

Talking of which ... have you had any problems communicating with the police? Non-emergency calls on 01235 767000 go to a call centre in Windsor. There are lots of stories about the difficulties of conveying to a policeman, unfamiliar with the area, the details of your problem and many people now don't seem to bother. Responses recently include "is that Denchworth, Oxfordshire?"; Ardington - is that a town?; Charlie Bassett - what's your nearest town?"

Tell the Council if you have experienced difficulties. We've made representations in

the past and would be happy to do so again but need evidence.

PC Holder has always offered to "have words" with any persistent speeding drivers - and he's as good as his word. A flash young driver who shot through SID (the Speed Indicating Device) recently at 42 mph should be driving through the village more slowly in future - he's had a visit! If you know of persistent speeders and can note his or her number plates - let PC Holder know.

Burglaries in Charney are, fortunately, rare but Minmere Farm has now been done twice recently within a fortnight - in broad daylight! Don't relax your guard thinking burglars only strike under cover of darkness!

CHARNEY MILL

"Concerning Time" was the title of an exhibition held in Oxford by two mature Fine Arts students. It starred Charney Mill, along with Mapledurham Mill and Venn Mill, Marcham and, they wrote, "certain objects from Charney Bassett watermill in the upper gallery space (of the exhibition) will give ... a greater significance, a physical, sculptural quality and underline the

ideas we are working on". The objects loaned from Charney included the old paddles and the older of the two meal bins.

The mill restorers would welcome help on alternate Sundays from 09.30 to 12.00. Knowledge of D-I-Y would be an advantage but there's plenty of other work to be done.

COUNCIL FINANCES

The Council has donated £30 each to South and Vale Carers and the Oxon Association for the Blind. Two other £30 donations are included in the budget: Abingdon Citizens Advice Bureau and the Hanney Branch of the Royal British Legion. The latter is an annual donation as thanks for the placing of wreaths on the war memorial.

The new Field footpath has attracted a grant of £91 from the Vale Council.

The 2004/5 precept will be decided at the 14 January Council meeting. If you want to know how the Council proposes to spend part of your council tax, come and hear the precept-setting discussion. If you have views on what the Council should spend your money on (and how much) speak to a councillor. Unlike the council tax, the precept has remained at £2000 since 1999 and, hopefully, no increase will be necessary next year.