

Charney Chatter

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BASSETT PARISH COUNCIL

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Penny McGuire, Main Street 868666
John Stiles, Barnfield 868191
Stafford Taylor, Threshers Barn 868973

Meetings are at 7.30 p.m. in the Village Hall on the
second Wednesdays of odd-numbered months.

The next meeting is on 8 September 2004.

CLERK'S CORNER

Good Neighbour

Tim Fitzgerald O'Connor has continued to mow Charney Field and I think you'll agree that this summer it has looked in pretty good nick. Nevertheless he is still concerned at the possible spread of dock so any time you're on the Field and you spot a dock plant - pull it up before it spreads its seeds!

Brandy Barrel

Apologies to those who rushed to buy a 40-gallon drum from Haynes of Challow on the strength of my report in Cherbury News that they contained brandy. The one I purchased for the Council may have had brandy in it once but it certainly wasn't drinkable. I complained but was told I should have strained it through muslin first! Oh yeah! Anyway the drum has been put to good use in carrying water to the

trees on Charney Field on John Daghlish's trailer, unfortunately too late to save the oaks which have perished. We hope to have these replaced - again!

Seats

There was a positive response to my appeal in the May issue for sponsors of seats to be placed at strategic places in the village and a seat has been donated for the bus stop green. Anyone else like to donate one?

Audit

The audit of the Council's accounts for 2003/4 has been completed and, subject to two minor points of clarification which the auditors failed to understand (but should have!) I expect them to be approved. Trust me - I'm The Clerk!

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Do you have difficulty finding just the right card for that special occasion? Eunice will make one for you. Give her a ring on 868646 or see her large stock at "Narrogin", Longworth Road which was on display in the church on Fete day. Proceeds to St. Peter's church.

VILLAGE

The Council has now made three grant applications which are aimed at improving the village environment. Two have been made to the Vale Council Village Improvement Scheme:- for repairs to the fencing around Ock Green and for provision of four seats, three for Charney Field and one for the bus stop green. (*Anybody think of a better name? - Ed*) This Scheme usually offers a 75% grant towards the cost of projects and it is hoped that when the applications are considered in early September they will be successful.

The third application has been made to the Trust for

Oxfordshire Environment (TOE), the landfill tax body which provided the funds for purchasing Charney Field. The proposal is to carry out basic repairs to Bridle Path to allow access for disabled buggies and for children's pushchairs.

The Bridle Path situation is complicated. It is owned by the Council but OCC is the highways body which has to keep it fit for purpose as a bridle path, which despite the potholes, it is. Residents at the end of Bridle Path must keep it fit for vehicular traffic, which, despite the potholes, it is. The way out of this impasse is to seek TOE funds to give buggies a smoother ride.

CHAFT

The "crisis" reported in the last issue by the outgoing CHAFT Chairman, Kay Adamson - the inability to form a complete committee - has been resolved and Charney Chatter will claim some of the credit for that!

A meeting convened between the Council and CHAFT learnt that sufficient interested people had come forward to enable CHAFT to continue to

function. Lucy Gildersleeves remains Secretary and volunteers to keep CHAFT going include John Stiles, Emma Buchanan, Colin McGuire and Anna Greenacre.

The final composition of the committee will be decided at the next CHAFT meeting on 13 October (all welcome!) at which a successor to Kay will be appointed.

HEADLINE TOPICS

- *Improving the village environment*
- *CHAFT "crisis" averted*
- *We've got the best beat officer!*
- *Children's play area gets the OK..*
- *Charity Bike Ride*
- *Village College resumes*

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Coffee Hour

The next session of Coffee Hour (10.30 to 11.30) resumes in the Village Hall on 14 September

VILLAGE COLLEGE

Jackie Cross is grateful to all those students who completed the course feedback form. There was a good response and a number of ideas will be followed up from the suggestions for future courses, including calligraphy and basket making.

Classes will resume in September although Yoga has continued into the summer. The tutor has now taken a break for a visit to India (*I wonder what ideas she'll come back with?! - Ed*) and the course will resume in October. Meanwhile, a four-session course of Pilates is planned for September to fill in the gap and if this interests you, please let Jackie know. If you don't know what Pilates is - and I certainly didn't - an Internet search revealed it's a method of strengthening core postural muscles and developing body alignment. It avoids the muscle and ligament damage sometimes associated with other fitness regimes.

At the moment, the resumption of French Conversation is in doubt as Kay, the tutor, is now a full-time teacher and would find an extra evening's teaching too much; she will be sorely missed. Abingdon & Witney College are actively seeking a replacement. If all else fails, I'm sure the fun evening all the students have come to expect will continue even if we don't have a tutor to correct our howlers!

A willow weaving day course on creating Christmas decorations will be held on 3 November and there are only two places left on it. A five-session Flower Arranging course on Thursday evenings will start in the Autumn; places are available on this.

College management contacts:

Jackie Cross (868706)

Peter Davies (868646)

Elisabeth Dahele (868673).

E-mail: villagecollege@hotmail.com

Letters: Village Hall post box.

CHARNEY FIELD

The equipment in the children's play area has undergone its first annual inspection and risk assessment by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA). In general, the installation is satisfactory and meets the requisite standards but with a few minor maintenance jobs needed to reduce a couple of "medium" risks. So, mums, dads and grandparents can continue to take their charges to the equipment knowing their safety should be assured.

It's interesting to read in the report what is considered a risk these days and among them is tarmac which is an absolute no-no for children's play areas. I sometimes think this is depriving children of the "grazed knees"

and "wounded soldier" effect of which I remember being proud when I was a kid! There's also a slightly mysterious recommendation that the play area should have another gate in the fence "to reduce the risk of intimidation and bullying". Is this to give two options for running away?

Two "stop-gap" seats have been placed in the area for the benefit of adults supervising their charges. They will be replaced with proper benches if the grant application referred to on page 1 is successful. But you can't win! The RoSPA report says they're too close to the fence and could encourage children to climb on the fence!

POLICE NEWS

PC Martyn Holder, our local bobby, has won the award of Community Beat Officer of the Year for South Oxfordshire. In offering its congratulations, the Council commented that "Our experiences with the service you give the village means that the award does not come as a surprise and is thoroughly deserved. We look forward to continuing to work with you in the future".

In a recent exchange of e-mails, Martyn made a very important point about being prompt with reporting incidents to him. In his role as beat officer he is effectively a

one-man band and therefore cannot be on the beat 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. So, unless things are reported to him immediately they crop up, there could be a delay before he can react by, for example, making appropriate enquiries and this could result in the trail going cold. If in doubt, ring him immediately at home on 01367 870232 or on his mobile 07970 145294. In emergencies ring 999 and for non-urgent incidents, if Martyn cannot be contacted, ring 08458 505505. Make a note of these numbers, you might need them.

CHARNEY MILL

Stafford Taylor, as a Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, has undertaken a further survey of Charney Mill which supports the claim that the roof repairs carried out by OCC as a condition of the leasing of the Mill by the Council are not of an adequate standard for the Grade II listing of the building.

In addition, Stafford has identified a number of other building faults which should be monitored with a view to fixing them in the

longer term, should they deteriorate further. These generally involve small movements of walls and beams and have probably been going on for many years. They are not of immediate concern.

The report has been forwarded to Grant Audley-Miller, the Conservation Officer on the Vale Council responsible for listed buildings, for his opinion on the action the Council needs to take to rectify the roof "repairs". His response is awaited.

CHARITY BIKE RIDE

This autumn, Dave Belcher, of Orchard Close, will cycle from Land's End to John O'Groats to raise money for BLISS, the premature baby charity. Dave will undertake the ride of approximately 1,000 miles from September 6th to 26th.

The charity is close to his heart because, on September 1st, 2000, his daughter, Ruby, was born 10 weeks prematurely, weighing only 2lbs 6oz. Thanks to the skill and professionalism of hospital staff, Ruby's life

was saved and she is now a healthy little girl.

BLISS is dedicated to making sure that more babies born prematurely or sick in the UK survive and that each one has the best quality of life.

If you would like to sponsor Dave or make a donation to BLISS, please contact his wife, Kate, on 867023, or belcherkate@aol.com, or pledge online at: - [www.justgiving.co.uk/LeJog for BLISS](http://www.justgiving.co.uk/LeJog_for_BLISS).