

# Charney Chatter

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CHARNEY BASSETT  
PARISH COUNCIL**

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## Your councillors:-

Geoff Rumble (Chairman), Buckland Road 868738  
Jim Harper (Vice-chairman), Barnfield 868288  
John Stiles, Barnfield 868191  
Jos Bath, Buckland Road 868260  
Mike Cox, New Road 868276

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

**The next meeting is on 10th September, 2008**

## ADVERTS AND EVENTS

### Personalised Home-made Cards

If you can't find the right card for that special occasion, Eunice will make one for you. Ring her on 868646. Proceeds to charity

### Village Diner

The Village Diner provides home-made food from local sources in Buckland Village Hall, at 12.15 p.m. every third Wednesday in the month. For £4 you get a two-course meal, tea or coffee. Next date: 17th September.

### Village Hall Bookings

Contact Eunice Davies on 868646 for hire of the Hall, crockery, cutlery and the gazebos.

### WANTED - Project Manager

A Project Manager for the £130,000 Village Hall Project is urgently needed. The design is

complete and ready for tendering, so all the hard work has been done and it's a piece of cake from now on!

### Special Coffee Hour

The traditional sale of Christmas cards in aid of Sobell House will take place at Coffee Hour, 10.30 a.m. on Tuesday October 21st.

### CHAFT Public Meeting

The next CHAFT public meeting will be held on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> September, when the possibility of holding the traditional bonfire and fireworks will be discussed, subject to finding a team of people to organise and carry out the activities needed to stage the event. The provisional date for the fireworks is Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> November.

## SOUTH AND VALE CARERS

### Have you Time to Spare to Meet Someone New and Help them?

Our scheme to train and place volunteers is gathering speed and we already have a terrific team in the field. But here at the South & Vale Carers Centre in Didcot we would like to recruit more: would you be interested in helping out someone caring for a relative in their own home? You would be introduced to a household where the carer and the cared-for person are living and asked to stay in the home while the carer took some time off: perhaps an hour a month, perhaps an afternoon a week.

This would all start off with an interview for you with references sought. Then a short training course would equip you for any situation and send you free from anxiety into your future as a volunteer! We will take care in matching volunteers and cared-for people and you would have constant support by phone when you need it as well as ongoing face-to-face meetings with colleagues and with Chris Elliott, scheme co-ordinator.

Chris is waiting to hear from anyone interested and has much more information to give. E-mail her at the Carers Centre on chris@svcarers.org.uk or phone her on 01235 510212. She'll be delighted you've called!

## PROJECT CHAFFINCH

Despite a number of ribald comments on the contrived initiative, Project Chaffinch:- **CHALLENGE - Avoid Further Flooding IN CHARNEY**, the name has stuck and will continue to stick! Every good campaign has a snappy name to identify it and Chaffinch it is! There is actually a link with flooding because the chaffinch has an appropriate nickname - "the rain bird"! The name certainly interested the media and prompted coverage on local TV and radio stations.

The Project was effectively launched on July 31st when a commendably large group of villagers (20+) turned out to walk the various watercourses in and around the village in the company of the Vale Council land drainage engineer, Peter Dela. The result was an overall view of the state of the watercourses and a rough idea of the areas where work to improve flood drainage could be carried out.

We now have a much better idea of what happened in July 2007 and, more importantly, why. John Daghish has pieced together a map showing where the flooding occurred and the direction of the flows of water involved.

On August 12th, the person in the Environment Agency (EA)

charged with supporting self-help flooding groups, Keith Lead, visited the village to see the watercourses for himself. As a result of this and a discussion afterwards with him, a broad plan has been drawn up which will need refinement as more facts are unearthed and consultation continues with the EA and the Vale Council.

There are effectively three watercourses which could carry flood water through or past the village, the main one of which is the River Ock. The next most important is Charney Wick Ditch, which runs alongside the Stanford bridle path, under Main Street, between Orchard Close gardens and Charney Manor grounds to the Ock near Lyford Bridge. The third one is the millstream which is fed from a spur off Charney Wick Ditch, flowing past Wick Cottage, under the Ock Green road bridge, through Mill Cottage garden and the mill, rejoining the Ock some 200 metres past the mill.

The broad plan so far is first to ensure that these three watercourses are as free as possible of obstructions which could prevent a free flow of flood water. In the longer term, with EA advice, we may need to consider modifying the flows in the latter two.

## HEADLINES

- *Project Chaffinch launched.*
- *Come to the World's Biggest Coffee Morning!*
- *Weight limit through Charney?*

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**Coffee Hour** in the Village Hall on Tuesdays (10.30-11.30) resumes on 16th September until 16th December. Call in and chat. 50p buys you as much tea or coffee as you can drink - with biscuits too! Everyone welcome.

Deadline for copy for the next edition in November 2008: 20 October 2008

Contributions are welcome, preferably by e-mail. Adverts are free!

Charney Chatter can be e-mailed free to anyone giving their e-mail address to the Editor

Visit [www.charneybassettpc.org.uk](http://www.charneybassettpc.org.uk) for the very latest village news

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## PROJECT CHAFFINCH - CONTINUED

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Meanwhile, work has actually started on achieving the broad aim of ensuring the watercourses are free. Colin McGuire and Diana Martin have concentrated on the Ock itself and with the aid of some impressively brutal machinery have removed a number of obstructions, mainly willow trees which had fallen into the river. They have done a first-class job without, it has to be said, any assistance from the EA. We are now satisfied that the Ock flows freely without serious impediments, although some further work will be needed. We will be questioning the EA which has identified the Ock as a "main river" for which they are responsible, as to their plans for maintenance, which has been neglected over many years. Unfortunately, the EA's funding, like many other agencies, has been cut back and back and they have little or no resources to perform maintenance and what little resources they do have are concentrated on urban areas, such as Oxford and Abingdon, where flooding damage was more widespread than in Charney Bassett. They have fallen back on the concept of landowners' riparian rights which leaves maintenance to the landowner through whose property the watercourse flows. Colin and Diana have conscientiously undertaken their duties - not every landowner in the area has yet!

On August 14th, the Charney Army, armed with nothing more brutal than strimmers, spades and loppers, tackled the millstream at Ock Green. However, they discovered three willow trees firmly embedded in the stream which obviously needed removal. Fortunately, while struggling with these willows, Diana Martin happened to pass and immediately volunteered her tractor to pull the trees out - an operation successfully achieved with some very skilful tractor driving in the confined space. At the same time, a separate group of Army volunteers was dispatched to Charney Wick Ditch where they successfully

cleared vegetation from the weir which diverts water down the millstream.

What next? The next Charney Army meeting will continue to clear the millstream downstream of Ock Green, that is, between the Green and the mill, including the garden of Mill Cottage. The ditch downstream of the mill to its confluence with the Ock will also be surveyed and, if possible cleared; if not, ways to clear it will be identified. This will leave the stretch between Charney Wick Ditch and Ock Green to be cleared in association with the Browns of Wick Cottage.

As mentioned above, all the work so far has been undertaken without EA assistance, other than the provision of advice. The next interaction with the EA will be during early September when Keith Lead will return from leave and the EA Conservation Officer, Alison Footer, will visit and advise how to carry out clearance work using best practice in an eco-friendly way. She has already visited the millstream work and has expressed satisfaction that we know what we are doing! We have to keep the EA on board because they have draconian powers at their disposal to apply if they consider clearance work is not following best practice. Clanfield parish council received a dressing down from them when volunteers completely cleared Clanfield Brook and the Hanneys Flood Group is also in their bad books for clearing Letcombe Brook. However, we are clear that should there be a conflict between protecting water vole habitats and preventing houses from flooding, there'll be no contest, draconian powers or not - and our MP supports this view!

Once we've had further consultations with the EA we will be planning a village meeting so that everyone affected can have a say in future planning. If you want to be kept informed by e-mail of developments, send your address to The Clerk - and watch the village web site.

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## FROM YOUR MP - ED VAIZEY

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You may be away as this edition of the Chatter hits your doormat. MPs certainly give the impression of having disappeared. From the moment Parliament rose for its summer recess on 22nd July, the Palace of Westminster became a very unwelcoming place. The carpets are ripped up, scaffolding is erected, dust sheets are thrown over furniture, a skeleton staff is in place. Horror of horrors, the terrace is opened to everyone! All this to help maintain a building that is more than 150 years old and used by 10,000 people a day.

Of course, MPs do not put their feet up for two months. (Yes, right, I hear you mutter). Most of us carry on a 9 to 5 existence, made much easier in the 21st century because we can work from home on e-mails and answer our correspondence as and when it comes in. It is also a chance for us to read the numerous reports and documents that accumulate on our desk, as well as visit places around the country that may be relevant to our responsibilities as shadow spokesmen. And, indeed, the

recess gives us more time to get stuck into thorny constituency issues.

MPs do also use the time to go on foreign visits, which otherwise would cut into parliamentary time. This year I am going to China after the Olympics, and not, you will be pleased to hear, at your expense. We will be a group of Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat MPs and will be meeting our counterparts in Beijing. As someone who was lucky enough to meet the Dalai Lama recently, I shall certainly be raising the issue of Tibet and human rights more generally.

In any event, you should not see any drop off in service from me or my office. If you have an urgent problem that needs my help, we will deal with it as quickly as when Parliament is sitting. You can contact me at the House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA, on 0207 219 6350 or at [vaizeye@parliament.uk](mailto:vaizeye@parliament.uk), my website can be found at [www.vaizey.com](http://www.vaizey.com)

Next local surgery (from 5.30 to 7.00 p.m.)  
Faringdon Corn Exchange 5th September.

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## CHARNEY ARMY

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The Charney Army has continued its activities, and is now carrying out tasks arising from Project Chaffinch. You can see evidence of its work on the millstream at Ock Green - but that was just a start!

The Army meets at 10.00 a.m. on the second and last Thursdays of the month. To receive automatic notification of activities send your e-mail address to the Editor.

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## CLET

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Charney and Lyford Education Trust, CLET, supports a range of educational projects, with grants both to individuals under the age of 25 and to the community in Charney and Lyford.

Applications will be considered by the Trustees who meet in January, May and September. Details from the Clerk: Frances Rothwell, "Oldwalls", Buckland Road, Tel: 868704 E-mail: [fc.rothwell@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:fc.rothwell@tiscali.co.uk).

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## 100 CLUB DRAW

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The July draw was made at the Garden Party on August 7th. First prize of £25 went to J Stiles (was that John or June?, No. 39) and second (£25) to The Leavers (56).

Visit [www.charneybassettpc.org.uk](http://www.charneybassettpc.org.uk) for the very latest village news

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## CHAFT NEWS

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It is with a mixture of sadness and grateful thanks that we shortly say goodbye to Elisabeth and Jash Dahele, who are leaving the village and moving to Norfolk. Elisabeth has been a fully committed supporter of our community in all the time they have lived in the village and most recently has been the driving force in the project to modernise the Village Hall. Although no visible work has started on the building, an enormous amount of "behind the scenes" activity has produced detailed plans and raised over £80,000 towards carrying out the work. We are currently awaiting tenders from a number of builders in the hope we can very shortly start modifying the hall to provide some more space and better facilities for the groups that depend on our community centre for their activities.

However, we already know from our architects and quantity surveyor that we still need to raise a lot more money to carry out the project and Elisabeth will again be missed for her tireless pursuit of grants and donations. Her final fundraising event was the CHAFT Garden Party on 7<sup>th</sup> August in Charney Manor grounds. In what has been a dismal summer, she managed to conjure up sunshine and after adding Gift Aid, over £400 from donations to

add to the hall fund.

The event was well supported by over forty people who enjoyed strawberries and cream as well as a wide selection of donated homemade cakes. We managed to surprise Elisabeth with a bouquet of flowers and some garden tokens for her new home as well as a special card made by Eunice Davies and signed by many of Elisabeth's friends in the village. She thanked everyone for her gifts and asked that she is kept informed on the hall development so she can be present for the opening ceremony.

The dismal and wet summer has had one positive outcome on Charney Field. The tree planting at the beginning of the year appears to have been successful with nearly every tree and shrub producing leaf and hopefully starting to establish roots. It will be another year or two before we can see how well this area develops but it looks like a good start.

Our thanks again to Tim Fitzgerald O'Connor for cutting the grass on the playing field. Anyone who has had to cut grass this year will know how fast it has been growing and despite this, he has kept the field in excellent condition. We are most grateful for his generous action in carrying out this task.

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## WEIGHT LIMIT

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The Parish Council is putting together a case for a weight limit through the village - again! It's asked for one before without success but a number of new factors have arisen which it believes strengthens the case. Among these is the fact that Charney Bassett is now an officially-designated diversion route in the event of an accident on the A420 and this route is now marked by the yellow signs which have appeared on existing traffic signposts. Obviously, HGVs using the route would be most unwelcome and although OCC says they won't, the temptation will be there. In addition, we've discovered that there is a weight limit through Goosey for no other

reason than the Parish Meeting's wish to have one to stop lorries passing through and the recent roadworks on the A420 have resulted in a 7.5 tonne weight limit through Hatford and Gainfield. Coupled with concern over the route which lorries will use to and from the new grain barn in West Hanney and the existing lorry traffic to and from Cobweb Buildings at Lyford, the case for a Charney weight limit seems overwhelming!

Meanwhile, The Council is keen to gather data on heavy vehicles passing through so if you see one, please note its number plate, company name and route and let us know.

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## NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION GROUP - NAG2

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Neighbourhood policing aims to put the "local" back into local policing. With this aim in mind, Thames Valley Police has been setting up Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAGs). Charney Bassett (and 16 other villages) is covered by Faringdon East NAG2.

### News from the NAG2 Team

There is concern at the number of family dogs going missing. If you have any information regarding this please contact the NAG2 team on 08458 505 505. I would be particularly interested if anyone has paid a reward for the recovery of their dog.

The number one concern identified from public survey is speeding. The NAG2 team is trained in the use of laser speed enforcement equipment which when used in a speed check can result in points on offending drivers' licences and a fine of £60! Successful speed checks have recently been carried out in Hanney, Southmoor and Stanford-in-the-Vale.

There is an increase in reports of illegal hare coursing on farmland in the area. If you see this taking place, please call the police. We may not be able to attend immediately, but this helps build up an intelligence picture if vehicle details and descriptions are provided.

Overnight on August 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> at locations on the A420 near Littleworth and Shrevenham damage was caused by offenders firing a paintball gun. This is a frightening and dangerous activity and I appeal to anyone with

information to get in touch.

Since the middle of June we have had two reported dwelling burglaries which is a big reduction on previous months. A juvenile will appear in court charged with handling stolen property from burglaries in Great Coxwell. Another person is currently on bail with curfew conditions pending sentence for burglaries and car crimes in Faringdon.

Theft of metal, especially lead, from properties remains high as it does across the country, and any information about this would be gratefully (and confidentially) received.

Second highest concern in the NAG2 area survey is anti-social environmental behaviour.

In a new move to stamp this out, you can now report problems like graffiti, fly-tipping, noisy neighbours, litter, vandalism, abandoned vehicles, parking issues, drug and substance abuse, etc. more easily. You don't need to know who is responsible for dealing with a problem. If you contact the Community Safety Team at the Vale of White Horse District Council on 01235 520202, the details will be passed to the relevant enforcement authority for action. Alternatively you can e-mail: [communitysafety@whitehorsedc.gov.uk](mailto:communitysafety@whitehorsedc.gov.uk) or go online to [www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk](http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk). If you see serious anti-social behaviour in progress, treat the situation as an emergency and dial 999 or 112.

**PC Paul Rowland**

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## WORLD'S BIGGEST COFFEE MORNING

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There will be a special coffee morning on Friday 26th September from 10.30 a.m. to 12.00 noon in Charney Bassett Village Hall. It is a fundraising event in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support and is part of their "World's Biggest Coffee Morning". As well as refreshment, there will be a raffle, a sale of cards made by Eunice Davies and anyone who comes can take part in a Bring & Buy Stall.

Donations can be gift aided, which adds 25% to the value of money collected. John Lewis are supporting the Charity and anyone attending can enter a competition to win a shopping spree, with a first prize value of £7,000. If you wish to support this worthwhile charity, please join the coffee morning and bring some friends. For more information, contact Julie Rumble on 868738