

**PUBLISHED BY
CHARNEY BASSETT
PARISH COUNCIL**

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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 14th January, 2009

ADVERTS AND EVENTS

Personalised Home-made Cards

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: 21st January 2009.

Village Hall Bookings

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

Table Tennis

Interested in playing table tennis in the Village Hall? Contact Dave Sibbert on 868734 for more details.

Street cleaner wanted for litter picking.

£5.52 per hour. 8 hours max per month. Details from Clerk (868646).

CHAFT EVENT - FAMILY QUIZ NIGHT

At the Chequers, Charney Bassett, Sunday 15th February 2009, 6.30 - approx. 9.30 p.m. Aimed at adults and children of an age appropriate to participate in team responses. All rounds will include some child-friendly questions. Teams of approx. 4-6 per table. Hot "brain-food" served at half-time.

Team questions - no individuals put under the spotlight! Answers on sheets returned to

quiz-master at the end of each round.

Make and bring your team's Joker and win a prize for the funniest or most interesting joker card!

~ Prizes and raffle ~

In aid of Village Hall Development Project

Tickets £5.00 per person

from Lucy (01235 868782) by 9th February
(so that we have time to arrange the catering)

PADDOCK WALL - EMMA BUCHANAN WRITES

I just thought I should put you / the village in the picture regarding the wall by the Cottage on The Green. A recycling lorry reversed into it at the end of September. Luckily it was witnessed by Kathy Lendrum in the Cottage and she stopped the driver and took all the details. It has been a slow old process going through the council to Veolia who run

the lorries, and then to their insurers. I wanted to get quotes from proper stone wall experts, and this has slightly held things up too. Three quotes are now with the insurers and it is just a matter of who can do it the soonest. It is likely to be some time in January, and in the meantime sorry for the messy appearance by the Green.

Deadline for copy for the next edition in March 2009: 20 February 2009

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
It's already international with copies going to France, Australia and Wales!

**Charney Chatter**

NUMBER 31

DECEMBER 2008

CHARNEY FIELD TREES

As regular readers and users of Charney Field will know, the Charney Army has been highly successful in reclaiming a fair bit of land on the Field from the dreaded white poplars by halting them in their tracks. We recently took the opportunity of a free survey of the remaining trees by David Rees of the Oxfordshire Woodland Group. The main conclusions of his report are laid out below.

Charney Field Trees

"The trees are white poplar at around 30 years of age and have grown strongly despite the crowns being pressed to leeward. They might be expected to continue increasing in size for another 20 years or so. Their location adjacent to the bridle path makes any defect, such as dead branches, a risk. Some damage to branches can be expected from time to time because as they grow they will cast more shade onto the lower-lying branches, starving them of light, increasing the number of dead branches in future.

Trees of the poplar genus tend to sucker and excessive shading may possibly stimulate this. It may be possible to stop root penetration into the field by digging a surface trench but this is not recommended since it could temporarily stimulate strong suckering from the

truncated root network.

The trees have been planted too close together and they may suffer from excessive shading. To manage them I suggest the following plan:

In the short-term, thin up to a third of the large trees and possibly more smaller trees to allow them more space and reduce shading.

Prepare a long-term (20-30 years) programme for replacement of the poplars with more appropriate species, for example hornbeam, oak and ash where there is more space for larger trees. Remove a proportion of the trees roughly every 5 years, starting with the most risky sections next to housing by removing all poplar from a section, otherwise the replacement trees will not grow well. Fell up to, but not including, a strong tree that can withstand the additional exposure created by the adjacent felling.

Prepare a tree management statement taking advice from a qualified arboriculturalist including a risk assessment and an action plan to maintain acceptable standards of safety to users and to property."

The parish council and the Charney Army propose to accept these findings.

HEADLINES

- *Too many white poplars!*
- *Excellent Project Chaffinch progress.*
- *Major revision to Village Hall plans.*

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Coffee Hour in the Village Hall on Tuesdays (10.30-11.30) has closed for a Christmas break and resumes on January 13th. Call in and chat. 50p buys you as much tea or coffee as you can drink - with biscuits too! Everyone welcome.

Visit www.charneybassettpc.org.uk for the very latest village news

NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION GROUP - NAG2

News update by PC Paul Rowland:

There has been an increase in the theft of fuel in the area. Two offenders have been arrested.

Thieves have been targeting unattended vehicles with items like satnav systems on display along with other small gadgets such as MP3 players. Make sure such items are out of sight and secure before leaving your vehicle.

I am moving to the Trading Standards doorstep crime team targeting rogue traders; my replacement will be PC Mike Bennett. PCSO Sue Haynes will also join the NAG2 team.

If you see any suspicious activity or have any information to help the police, ring 08458 505505 or call Crimestoppers on 0800 555111 anonymously. For more information about your neighbourhood team ring 08458 505505.

Introductory report from PC Mike Bennett:

I took over from Paul Rowland as the Faringdon Neighbourhood Specialist Officer a month ago and am still feeling my way around.

I have been with Thames Valley Police for 21 years, serving at Bracknell and for the past 11 years at Carterton, for most of which I was the Burford beat officer. I would like to think I am bringing with me a great deal of experience that can be used to resolve local issues. I am very impressed with the current team at Faringdon police station and look forward to seeing as many of the residents of Faringdon and the

local villages as possible in the coming months.

There have been three distraction-type burglaries in the area recently (one of them in Longworth) and on each occasion the victims were elderly. No persons were hurt, but sums of money were stolen.

Due to some good intelligence, a drink driver was arrested and dealt with in Stanford-in-the-Vale - a timely reminder that at this time of year in most incidents involving a car the driver will be breathalysed.

Despite the above unfortunate occurrences, we all wish you a very happy Christmas.

NAG2 Survey

There was a disappointing, but perhaps not surprising, response to the survey questionnaire which went out with the last issue. Of the 120 forms sent out, only eight were returned, one of which said "can't think of anything". The remaining seven identified 16 issues which they considered impacted on their safety and quality of life. Only one respondent did not feel safe walking around the village and that was due to speeding, which got the most "votes" with four. Of the other 12 issues, these included mobile use by drivers (especially

tractor drivers), foreign lorries using satnav, hare coursing, dog fouling, dog barking, lack of a bus service, door-step salesmen, anti-social behaviour (but no example given!), careless driving on country roads, unnecessary noise, lack of a police presence and (unfair in my opinion!) lack of interest of the parish council in elderly residents.

The results will be passed on to the police but they are inconclusive and question whether NAG2 is relevant to Charney Bassett. Despite hearing gripes about the lack of policing, this does not seem to worry most people.

There is advice on the Thames Valley Police web site (www.thamesvalley.police.uk) on how to prevent distraction burglaries. The main thing is to look out for your elderly neighbours and report any suspicious characters calling or hanging/driving around. Ring 08458 505 505

and ask for the Crime Reduction Advisor for specific help.

The Vale of White Horse DC may also be able to help with home improvements for vulnerable people to increase their security. Contact the Housing Operations Team on 01235 520202.

FROM YOUR MP - ED VAIZEY

I went to visit the Advice Centre in Wantage the other day. It is always short of funds, and I am pleased that some of the money I raised for charity has gone to support it. Could I urge all readers to consider making a donation. It is interesting that 12 people living in Charney have used the services of the Advice Centre this year and there have been 21 free transport trips provided by volunteer drivers to those living in the village. Drop by when you are next in Wantage, they are brilliant people.

I held a debate on the reservoir in Parliament a couple of weeks ago. MPs can apply for short debates to raise issues that are important to their constituency. I have only held one before, on the threat of the closure of mental health services in Oxfordshire. Getting an adjournment debate is always pot luck, you have to apply to the Speaker and a ballot is held. I had applied for six weeks before my ship came in, and it coincided with the evening I was meant to appear on the BBC's Question Time - so Question Time was sunk by the reservoir.

The threat of a large reservoir south of Abingdon has been hovering over us for almost two decades, but now it seems more likely than ever. Thames Water says it is needed to supply water to the growing

population in the south east, as well as to cope with climate change. It seems hard to believe but we live in one of the most water-stressed area of the planet.

There used to be two well-worn arguments against the reservoir - that Thames Water should fix its leaking pipes, and people should use water meters. These issues are now being dealt with. So we are concentrating on two other arguments - first, whether Thames Water's water use predictions are right - they predict 165 litres per person per day, whereas the Government suggests 130 litres, a significant difference. Also, are there alternative sources of water, such as effluent re-use, used by other water companies?

The crux of my argument, though, is that we need a public inquiry. All the arguments need to be tested in an open tribunal, so people know whether or not the right decision has been made. The Government wants to make the decision behind closed doors, using its new Planning Infrastructure Committee, and whatever one's views on the reservoir, that is not acceptable.

You can contact me at the House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA, on 0207 219 6350 or at vaizeye@parliament.uk. My website can be found at www.vaizey.com

CLET

Charney and Lyford Education Trust, CLET, Applications will be considered by the supports a range of educational projects, with 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.

100 CLUB DRAW - THE CHRISTMAS BIG ONE!

The 2008 Christmas draw was made at Coffee Hour on 16th December. First prize of £100 went to Diane and Dean Ewart (No. 4) and second of £50 to Gordon Rothwell (55).

CHARNEY ARMY

The Charney Army has continued its various activities, the latest of which was to erect the Christmas tree on the Village Green. The tree was generously donated by Barbara and David Douglas, saving the parish council the cost of purchasing one. They offered the tree as it had become unmanageable and it had to go! If anybody else has such a tree and would like to donate it for Christmas 2009, we'd like to hear from you. We'll come and cut it down and move it to the Green (but not yet!).

Further Project Chaffinch tasks have been undertaken including the removal of fallen trees from Charney Wick Ditch, resulting in

improvements of water flow in the Ditch and the millstream. We have also managed to clear the two weirs at the junction of the Ditch and the millstream, which also improved flow. We are now planning to tackle the stretch of millstream between Charney Wick Ditch and Colin McGuire's garden (see item on page 3) but we'll either have to wait for the waders we've been promised or else wait until the water level has gone down.

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.

VILLAGE HALL PROJECT

The Hall Development Project has now been running for several years and has seen a lot of time and effort contributed by committee members and a lot of generosity by many villagers and by grant awarding organisations. So, you ask, where are we now?

First the good news: We have raised, in total, approximately £95,000 towards the Hall Project and although we have had to spend approximately £9,000 on architects fees, quantity surveyors fees, structural engineers fees and planning fees, we still have £86,000 available to carry out the work. Also, our main sponsor, TOE (Trust for Oxfordshire Environment) has agreed to extend the deadline on their grant of £50,000 for six months. This means we have some breathing space but must start building work by April/May at the latest.

Now the bad news: Our quantity surveyor estimated a building cost of around £120,000 + VAT. The lowest tender price received in September was £173,000 + VAT. Undeterred, we have re-examined the project specification (that was set when we hoped to get a generous grant from the Lotteries Community Building Fund) and come up with a more modest specification. This has attracted a quote of

£100,000 + VAT, while a second quote is awaited as this goes to press. It looks as if we are still short of money but we do seem to be quite close now and a combination of fundraising and generosity from the Village could bridge the gap.

The second piece of bad news is that the revised specification alters (slightly) the external appearance of the modernised hall and therefore requires a new planning application. As this article goes to press I am hopeful that we will be able to submit a new application in December, with a view to having approval by the end of February. This will add to the cost of fees that have already eaten into our funds but hopefully by only a few hundred pounds.

If you want to see the revised plans, please contact me or come along to the next CHAFT meeting in January (provisional date Wednesday 7th but watch the noticeboard for confirmation). This will be a key meeting to confirm design details and to discuss ways of bridging the gap in funds that can make the project possible.

Of the £86,000 we have available, £77,500 is in grant funds. It would be a disaster to give it all back!

Geoff Rumble

NEWS FROM THE COUNTY COUNCIL

My favourite piece of news from County Hall at the moment is the promise to "Transform Oxford". I was really pleasantly surprised when the Elected Members were given a preview of the plans, and very excited about it all. There are plans to pedestrianise the city centre, get rid of the buses in the High and Queen Street and use electric buses to ferry people about and to and from the bus terminus. It will take some time to accomplish, and will be a moving feast, the idea being that as one phase is completed it is re-evaluated to make sure each phase follows smoothly. There will be consultation before it all starts so don't hesitate to let me know what you think.

The County - like many other Local Authorities - had some investment in Iceland. We had £5m invested. We are still hopeful of getting all, or some of it, back.

I am also going to meetings at the moment about the possibility of a "Children's" Centre in Kingston Bagpuize Division. If it is successfully launched it will serve all the villages along the A420 From Kingston Bagpuize to Stanford-in-the-Vale.

I would like to wish everyone a very happy Christmas and prosperous 2009.

Melinda Tilley, Kingston Bagpuize Division.
Tel: 01865 820385. Mob: 07816 834234

E-mail: melinda.tilley@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

PROJECT CHAFFINCH

Work on flood protection has continued steadily and the news that landowners along the millstream and elsewhere have been doing their bit is contained in the news item sent to the Editor by Colin McGuire:-

"Just to let you know that the mill stream has been cleared from the bridge, upstream to the end of my garden section. There is a small section which we could not get to, which is the bit at the very end of my garden and the end of Bill Lindsey's garden. The work was done by machine, accessing the whole length from David Godfrey's track. The spoil is in various piles on David's land, waiting to dry out a bit before it is moved. We have kept a degree of reeds, mainly by default, because the machine reach was such that we couldn't get right across,

On Poplars farm, we have just finished, after 3 weeks of work, to clear the ditch around the perimeter, the ditch along the road, and a ditch across the middle. Generally levels have dropped around 18 inches and a huge amount of debris came out, hence the bonfires! We

have separated the wood and rubbish from the mud. All rubbish is being burnt, all the silt is spread over the land to dry out. Further tasks will be to clear the silt of debris by hand, then allow it to dry and power harrow it in the spring."

The Vale Council has indicated it will have funds available to provide self-help flood groups working under the auspices of their parish councils with equipment to assist in their projects. Your parish council has agreed that the flood work undertaken by the Charney Army is indeed under its auspices, so Project Chaffinch has been registered with the Vale council as a bona fide self-help group and now we await the announcement of the provision of funding.

We have consulted with the Hanneys Flood group on their requirements and have put in a similar order to them for waders, safety gear (hard hats, lifejackets etc.), weed removal tools and an allowance for hire of mechanical equipment from time to time. The waders are possibly the most urgent things we need.