

Minutes of Management Committee of Charney Hall & Field Trust

Virtual Zoom meeting 23rd June 2021 at 6.30 pm.

Present

Trustees

David Sibbert (Interim Chair)	History Group representative
Neil Dobson (Vice Chair)	Table Tennis representative
Christine Trotman (Treasurer)	Village College representative
Annabel Brown (Secretary)	Elected Village representative
Lucy Gildersleeves	St. Peter's PCC representative
Evelyn Campbell	Parish Council representative
Mary Castle	Parish Council representative
David Jones	Elected Village representative
Philippa McRobert	Elected Village representative
Bruce Royan	Field Safety Officer

1. Apologies for absence - None
2. Declaration of Interests – None
3. Approval of Minutes of the Management Committee held in Virtual Zoom on 12th May 2021
Agreed Proposed MC/Seconded LG
4. Matters Arising from the Minutes (not otherwise on the agenda)
 - a) Purchase of gazebos – CT reported that she had investigated the purchase of three 3sqm gazebos, 2 with sides and one without, so that they could be joined together as necessary at cost of £400 approx. ND enquired if they were for use on the green for the Fete and whether they came with pegs. CT replied that they were intended for the Fete and that pegs might need to be separately purchased.

Agreed Proposed DJ/Seconded LG

CT also reported that there had been an enquiry as to whether it would be possible to borrow the gazebos. There was some discussion around this question. LG noted that in the past there was a charge for this. If the loan was to a Charney Resident they could be borrowed through John Wright and a donation would be expected. If the borrower was a person outside the village a Hiring agreement would need to be drawn up with a fee and a replacement clause. It was also noted that the gazebos would need to be checked for damage before and after the hire but as they are simple to erect this should not be a problem. There was a suggestion from DS that loan outside the village should only be via a local resident who would be responsible for collection and return in good condition therefore avoid the need for a hiring agreement. However, the general feeling of the meeting was that a hiring agreement was best and CT agreed to draw one up ready for consideration at the next meeting.

5. Management of Village Hall and Charney Field – DS suggested and the Trustees agreed that this item could be chaired by ND in order that DS could present his report and answer questions.

Neil Dobson in the Chair

The report had been circulated prior to the meeting and responds to issues in the Draft Memorandum of Understanding in need of clarification. Advice had been sought from Community First and ACRE (the advisors are not legally trained but are experienced in village hall matters and have access to specialist advice).

Ownership of the Hall and Field – it appears that the Parish Council do not own but are the Custodian Trustee and hold the legal title on behalf of CHAFT. The property is held by the CHAFT trustees in trust on behalf of the community. The Trustees are individually and collectively responsible for the management and financial control of the land and properties.

The Parish Clerk is undertaking research to ascertain whether the property was transferred to the charity in accordance with rules applying at the time. ND asked if when the constitution was originally drawn was it correctly signed by the charity and the Parish Council but the Land Registry documentation was not completed correctly. DS thought that this might be the case and stated that The Parish Council could own the property in charity if it sets up its own sole trustee charity status. ND said that presumably amending the Land Registry Document should not be too costly a process. ND indicated that he had researched charity law and said that the property should be recorded in the Parish Council Assets Register as having zero value. He asked why ownership is important and DS indicated by way of example that the owner of the land is responsible:

- Environmental issues
- Illegal encampment
- Health and Safety
- General Management
- Riparian duties

LG stated that clarification is important in case cooperation/goodwill with the PC fails in the future.

A proposal was made:

Do Trustees agree to action being taken to amend the Land Registry Documents to specifically indicate the Parish Council is the Custodian Trustee subject to any further information being obtained via from PC research (paragraph 2.3 of the report)

Proposed LG/ Secoded CT /7 agreed /2 abstentions(MC/EC)

Managing the Whole Parcel of Land- Trustees discussed the options laid out in the report presented by DS. Whilst no firm advice had been given the advisors felt that managing the whole parcel of land was probably compliant with Charity Law and the Governing Document providing there was support from the PC and appropriate management processes were in place. Separate sub-committees could be set up to manage The Bridle Path and The Bridleway & Charney Wick Ditch as necessary with written terms of reference and clear lines of communication. CHAFT needs to ensure that it has sufficient capacity, skills and administrative support to manage the Land Parcel. The Governing Document may need to be reviewed as the emphasis at present is on Village Hall Groups and it will need to encompass the wider issues in the larger land parcel. ND asked if Trustees would be needed to represent the different areas of the Land Parcel. DS thought this would be necessary.

DS referred to two other options being available

Option 1

Management of the Bridle Path brings issues of

- Parking
- Maintenance to the banks of Charney Wick Ditch
- Riparian Responsibilities
- Environmental Issues

Trustees might wish to consider asking PC to agree a joint approach to the Charity Commission for the ownership of the Bridle Path to be removed from the Land Parcel with management responsibility being taken by the PC.(paragraph 3.1a of report)

Option 2

Management of The Bridleway and Charney Wick Ditch brings issues of

- Riparian Responsibilities
- Flooding with the experience of Project Chaffinch
- Links with the District Council and Environment Agency
- Need for equipment

- Involvement of Charney Army

Historically the Parish Council has managed the Bridleway and Charney Wick Ditch. Trustees may want to ask the Parish Council to agree to joint enquiries being made to the Charity Commission with a view to ownership of the Bridleway and Charney Wick Ditch being transferred to the PC.(paragraph 3.1b of report).

ND pointed out that CHAFT would be responsible for the care of species such as water voles and grass snakes found in CWD at the end of the Bridle Path as well as the cleaning out of the pipe running from CWD under the road to avoid flooding occurring. The Parish Council have good links with the Environment Agency and the District Council.

MC asked if there were 2 additional groups managing the areas of the Bridle Path and the Bridleway/CWD would there be an overlap of areas of interest with the Woodland Group.

LG said that she was uncomfortable with a separation of the bridleway and edges of CWD into separate areas of management as this might cause conflict in the future.

MC noted that the residential part of the Bridle Path has not been managed by the PC but by the last 3 properties on the right hand side facing the field and the legal situation is unclear. EC mentioned that she thought that the property owners were responsible for the areas of the CWD adjacent to their properties. DS explained that the first 2 houses in Barnfield do have Riparian Responsibility for the part of CWD adjacent to their properties but responsibility for the part adjacent to Bridle Cottage is unclear.

LG felt that if each area was under the control of a different sub-committee it would make management very complicated. An option would be for the Woodland Group to expand its remit to include the Bridleway and the adjacent part of CWD with the collaboration of the Parish Council, although it was pointed out that the PC does not have representation on the Woodland Group. MC suggested that she would bring this back to the PC and see whether they would now be prepared for a Councillor to become part of this group.

DS was concerned that CHAFT does not have the capacity, expertise or funding to manage these two areas. PMc suggested that it was quite possible to illicit help when necessary from organisations like the Environment Agency or District Council.

ND felt that it would not be expected that the Charney Army would take on the work of clearing and maintaining CWD and the pipe under Main Street but that it would be sensible to employ outside agencies to do this with support and a grant from the PC.

ND felt that it was unlikely that the PC would accept either of the two proposed options and it was better to collaborate with them on the management of the land via a subcommittee reporting back to the Management Team.

Trustees were asked if they want to debate/vote on these two options now or would they prefer to defer taking a firm position and enter into further discussions with the Parish Council on the advice given on the formation of an appropriate subcommittee(s) preferably with formal Parish Council Representation. (Paragraph 3.3 of report)

CT felt that the issues should be discussed within the Joint Liaison Group first before Trustees made decisions. She also felt that we need clarity on the wording of the Land Registry Documents.

It was proposed that the ongoing management of the Bridle Path, the Bridleway and Charney Wick Ditch would be referred to the Joint Liaison Group

Proposed DJ/Seconded EC Agreed

DS noted that there was a final question for Trustees.

Do the trustees agree that any new responsibilities relating to the management of the Bridle Path, Charney Wick Ditch and the woodland area will result in additional expenditure and that the Parish Council should be asked to consider agreeing the principle of an appropriate subvention and or grant?(paragraph 4.2 of the report).

CT felt that this would be part of the discussion within the JLG. LG felt this had already been decided in previous meetings. ND noted that further Tree Surgeon Work is likely in coming years as there are some Elms that are likely to succumb to Dutch Elm Disease and will need to be removed.

The Chair then referred to recommendations in the report. Some further discussion took place as to whether the MOU should come back to CHAFT for approval before being sent to Community First.

Further debate occurred on the set up of a subcommittee to manage the new areas of the property. LG suggested that the Woodland Group could extend its remit to include the bridleway and CWD with collaborative support from the Parish Council as CHAFT has indicated that it does not have the expertise, resources or contacts to manage all the issues in the new land parcel. ND asked if Options 1 and 2 (3.1a and 3.1b) should be removed from the Report to be sent to the Parish Council. DS said this would be inappropriate as it was a forma report which had already been published but the views of the Trustees would be reflected in referring the report and these minutes to the Parish Council.

Summary of discussion

- a) Forward a copy of the Management of Charney Hall and Field Report to the Parish Council
- b) Inform the Parish Council of the decisions taken at paragraphs 2.3, 3.1, 3.3 and 4.2 of the report as below

Paragraph 2.3 – Action should be taken to amend the Land Registry Documents to specifically indicate the Parish Council is the Custodian Trustee subject to any further information being obtained via from PC research

Paragraph 3.1 and 3.3- The vote on the two options referred to at paragraphs 3.1 did not take place but the mood of the meeting was that neither of the two options were desirable. The approach referred to in paragraph 3.3 was adopted as a basis for considering future policy development and would be referred to the Joint Liaison Group for further discussion based on an initial preference for managing the Bridle Path and CWD through one sub-group with collaboration and representation from the Parish Council

Paragraph 4.2 – Ask the Parish Council to agree to the principle of an annual subvention or annual grant for any additional expenditure incurred in relation to the management of any responsibilities relating to the management of the Bridle Path, Charney Wick Ditch and the woodland area.

- c) Indicate their belief that the continued support of the Parish Council, in its Parish Council Role, is important if these valuable community facilities are to continue to provide maximum benefits for local residents
- d) Authorise its representatives on the PC/CHAFT Joint Liaison Group to address any outstanding issues and agree with Parish Council a final draft of the MOU for review by Community First

6. Financial Update (CT)- Financial Papers have been circulated with transactions up until 19th June and questions or queries have been noted. A further £8000 Government Grant has been received bringing the total of grants received to date to £27,900. A donation of £251 was received from the Plant Stall, £5 from Amazon Smile and £500 from the Vale of the White Horse for the use of the Hall for the recent elections.

7. Woodland Renovation Group Update (LG/ND)- LG informed Trustees that she had been in touch with Wessex regarding the scheduled spraying of the Aspen Suckers which are now evident. This was delayed from the original May date as the cold weather had delayed the growth and no suckering was apparent at that time.

Ruth Clements has been very proactive with eliciting community involvement in the consultation of a woodland plan. She found that leafletting received far more responses than communication through Charney Chatter. Ruth Clements and Stephanie Wright will have one more push through Charney Chatter to make sure that all residents realise that they can take part in this consultation.

LG reported that responses indicated that a variety of species and colours were desirable giving different canopy heights. She will take these recommendations back to the Forestry Commission in order to get a relaxation in limited number of species allowed by the Felling License. Jez from Wessex will meet with the Woodland Group to agree which whips will be supplied.

The dry hedging construction will probably be left until after the School holiday to allow time for the spraying and harrowing of the area.

ND explained that it was desirable to soften the edges of the Woodland Area to allow space for paths and areas for picnicking.

LG proposed that the Group's remit be extended to the whole field to allow a holistic approach to planting.

DS proposed that this should be left until a future meeting when the Woodland Renovation Group's terms of reference could be discussed and redefined if necessary.

Proposed DS/Seconded ND Agreed

LG reported that Stephanie and John Wright would be moving a pile of rotten wood (insect habitat) in the middle of the planting area to the copse over the next few days.

Many thanks are due to Ruth Clements, Stephanie and John Wright for their extensive work on behalf of CHAFT.

8. Events

HAVE YOUR SAY! – A lot of discussion occurred around this proposed event. Presentation Boards could be produced to illustrate the work of the PC and CHAFT which would enable new people to the village to find out what goes on. It would also be a way of welcoming new people to the village and also getting the community back together after such a long period of social distancing. MC indicated that she would be very happy to produce an afternoon cream tea (the previous event had been so successful). MC said timing could be difficult until we know when restrictions will be relaxed and towards the end of August might be more realistic. It was suggested that the event could be run at the same time as the Fete but LG felt it could get rather lost amid the other events at that time and would call upon the same team of volunteers. CT suggested that an event like the fete would attract interest from a wider section of the community. DS felt it was very important that someone agreed to take overall responsibility for the event. MC said she was doing this already for the PC and ND agreed to coordinate for CHAFT.

Agreed

Fete- LG reported that notices had been put in Charney Chatter and Village Voices. She had another volunteer to help with organisation in the form of Julia Johnson from the Church. The Ukulele Group has agreed to perform. LG also mooted an idea that she would get in touch

with RAF Benson regarding a helicopter event. MC suggested that she spoke to the Parish Clerk before approaching RAF Benson as the PC have been in discussions with the Commanding Officer at Benson. Some trustees were considered about this idea as the recent Helicopter Survey showed there was a very mixed response to the Helicopter presence in the Charney Skies. ND thought that an information stall could be possible but the landing of an actual helicopter could be problematic.

A vote was taken as to whether LG should approach RAF Benson.

5 in favour/ 3 against/ 1 abstention

ND reported that the Chequers can provided a mobile bar and suggested that this could be hired for the Fete. LG was concerned about licensing but ND thought that it would be covered by the Chequers.

9. Annual Report of Trustees 20/21- DS reported that a draft would be circulated on the 24th June for Trustees Comments. All comments should be received by Monday 28th June so that it could be released by 1st July. Agreed
PMc will be standing down at this meeting. Many thanks were given to Phillipa McRobert for her commitment to CHAFT during her term of office. We understand that she has many other responsibilities especially during the Pandemic and will miss her but hope she will continue to be able to lend her support occasionally.

10. Arrangements for the AGM – This will be held by virtually by Zoom in view of current restrictions. Notices have gone out.

11. Hall Update – CT reported that the Hall reopened on 17th May and is being used by one Pilates Group of 7 members. The Ukulele Group also uses the Hall on a Monday. There was an enquiry by an outside group for a regular day time use of the Hall. Details were sent to this group but no follow up has been received.
DJ reported that most of the trip hazards have now been dealt with. A three-man monitoring group has been set up. Quotations are being sought for all the jobs but it is a difficult process. ND mentioned the damaged fence adjacent to the Village Hall. LG said that she had contacted the owners and they had fixed it but it had collapsed again. She will give contact details to DJ.

12. Field Update

- a) Replacement of the bark in the Play Area -A document was circulated prior to the meeting. Thanks to Peter Busby for his advice and for acquiring quotes also to BR for the time spent on this issue.
BR reported that the area no longer needed as a fall zone for the play equipment would be turfed over and the original areas would need to be dug out, new membrane placed and the areas filled to the depth of the wood edging. The quotations for this vary between £2000 and £3600. BR stated that it is important to do the job properly and then no action should be needed for a couple of years. ND said that it was very important that it was actioned as soon as possible with the School Holidays coming shortly. He also mentioned that the edging wood has survived really well.
A proposal was made to delegate the decisions necessary to CT/BR/ND with a maximum spend of £3600 at their disposal. Proposed MC/Seconded ND Agreed

13. Forward Diary – outstanding items carried forward for the new Management Team

- a) Review of Equal Opportunities and Environmental Policies
- b) Briefing on Google Docs
- c) Incursion of Rabbits on the Field
- d) PAT Testing- LG reported that the equipment is likely to be available towards the end of August

- e) Safeguarding Training – AB stated that she will be taking part in Community First Safeguarding Training on Thursday 1st July by Zoom and will report back to Trustees.
- f) Footpath 158/8 and Horse-riding
- g) Mobile Defibrillator – LG reported on investigation that the running costs (replacement of batteries) was very high and as we have a defibrillator already in the village we should not take up the offer of the Mobile one.

14. Questions from the Public – none

15. A.O.B

Meeting closed at 9.15 pm

Minutes Submitted by A.J. Brown 28.6.21

Approved by