

CHARNEY BASSETT PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL AT 7.30 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY 9 SEPTEMBER 2009

Present: Mr G Rumble, Chairman
Mr M Cox, Vice-chairman
Mr D Hughes

Mr P G Davies (Clerk)

09/44 Apologies

Apologies had been received from Councillors Mr J Harper and Mrs J Bath. County Councillor Melinda Tilley and three members of the public were also in attendance. There were no declarations of interest.

09/45 Minutes of the July 2009 Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the July 2009 meeting be approved and signed by the Chairman.

09/46 Matter arising: The Green (see minute 09/42/06)

Following the Council's agreement in principle to support the proposal by residents of The Green to bring their access road up to highway standards, The Clerk had had a discussion with OALC on the legal implications of making a financial contribution to the costs. While OALC believed a modest contribution under S137 of the Local Government Act 1972 would be legal, provided it was commensurate with the benefit to the village, it counselled against any further action by the Council until ownership of the road was established. At present there does not appear to be an owner although various claims have been made. A Land Registry search might resolve ownership but councillors agreed that the onus was on the residents to determine ownership and the Council should not pay the £52 this would cost. Councillor Tilley offered to raise the ownership issue again with the county who might be persuaded to do the Land Registry search. The current status of the proposed scheme is not known but it is understood a number of issues have arisen to prevent finalisation of a design.

09/47 County Council Matters

Councillor Tilley announced that Brian Hook had been appointed an Honorary Alderman of the County. Councillors welcomed this news warmly and The Clerk was asked to write to Mr Hook conveying the Council's congratulations.

The planning and road traffic implications of a proposal by Hanson to extract sand and gravel at Longworth continue to vex county planners. Not only are there properties very close to the proposed site, the requirement to close part of one east-bound lane of the Southmoor by-pass to allow heavily loaded lorries to exit from Longworth is meeting much opposition. The business case for more sand also now seems weak in the light of a surplus of this material in the UK. This proposal would affect traffic from Charney Bassett to Longworth and Councillor Tilley undertook to keep the Council in touch with developments.

RESOLVED that the Council's congratulations to Mr Brian Hook be conveyed to him in writing.

09/48 District Council Matters

In the absence of District Councillor Hayward, Councillor Tilley reported that the expected problems of integrating services between VWHDC and South Oxon DC were beginning to emerge. This seems to be due to the fact that the ruling political parties of the two councils are different and the stresses of working under this divided regime are affecting staff morale. The Clerk commented that this was apparent when he recently tried

to obtain information on a planning application but was told that due to sickness in the department there was nobody there to answer his query.

09/49 Clerk's Financial Report

The Clerk presented his financial report CBPC/FIN/09/04 (appended to minutes) which had been distributed to councillors. The Internal Auditor had commented favourably on its content.

RESOLVED that the report be adopted

09/50 Planning Matters

There were no planning applications awaiting Council comments. The application for two workers' cottages at New Manor Farm had been refused by the Vale but the applicant, Mr. N Walker, successfully appealed against the refusal. The Vale Council took this result to the High Court where it lost the case, meaning that the application has been approved. Because the Council had been highly critical of the decision by the Vale Council to take the case to the High Court, the Clerk was asked to determine the cost of this abortive exercise.

09/51 Village Hall Project

With the tendering process over, a contract will be signed very shortly with Ed Hughes & Sons with a start date of September 14th and completion expected by mid-January 2010. Alternative arrangements had been made with Denchworth Village Hall while the Charney Bassett Hall is out of action.

09/52 Clerk's Correspondence

09/52/01 Flooding: The Clerk reported that as a result of meetings between Charles Dingwall and the Vale of White Horse District Council concerning the roadside ditch in Longworth Road, Mr Dingwall had agreed to clear out the ditch with a target start date of November 2009.

09/52/02 Children's Play Area, Charney Field

The annual report by Playsafety Ltd (licensed by RoSPA) has given a clean bill of health to the children's play area. Although CHAFT was concerned about rotting of the timber surrounds, this was not considered a safety issue by the inspector and he recommended a simple solution which did not involve any cost.

09/53 Telephone Box

The Clerk has had a number of exchanges with BT concerning the poster which appeared in the telephone box explaining the "Adopt a Kiosk" programme. Parish Councils are being invited either to sponsor a box for £300 per annum to keep it working or to purchase the box for the nominal sum of £1. While it has been established that the box is not on this year's "Street Rationalisation" list, it seems likely that it will be closed in the near future. Councillors agreed that expenditure of 10% of the precept to keep the box operational could not be justified and the option of purchasing the box for £1 should be pursued when notice of closure was received. The Council's commitment would subsequently be maintaining the box in good condition and, if lighting was to be maintained, payment of the cost of running a 40W light on 365 days of the year. It was considered that the painting task could be delegated to the Charney Army. The box has come to the attention of the media with an interview with The Clerk on BBC Radio Oxford and articles in local papers, all of which erroneously reported that the Council had already bought the kiosk.

RESOLVED that when notification of closure of the kiosk is received from BT, the Council will adopt the kiosk for the nominal sum of £1.00.

09/54 Charney Field Trees

The Clerk reported that he proposed to write to three tree surgeons seeking quotations for felling and/or topping a number of trees on Charney Field, following the recommendations made by The Oxfordshire Woodland Trust. In order to limit the Council's financial exposure the invitation to quote would seek the cost of one day's work. To maximise the amount of work which could be done in a day, the work specification would not require the chosen contractor to remove the trunks of felled trees, a task which could be undertaken by the Charney Army. Experience of the work done in a day would enable an estimate to be made of further expenditure to continue the felling programme. Felling priority would be given to those trees which threaten property, notably Bridle Cottage. The Council approved this proposed course of action.

RESOLVED that The Clerk seek tenders for one day's tree felling on Charney Field

09/55 Information Exchange

09/55/01 Football parking: Mr Cox reported that his concern at possible chaos caused by parking for boys football had proved groundless and it had not caused any obstruction to village traffic.

09/55/02 Dog fouling: The Clerk reported that the Chairman of Charney Rangers had reported to him that when marking out the pitch they had had to remove several piles of dog faeces. The Council is at a loss to know how to prevent this and the only possible action is another strongly-worded item in the next issue of Charney Chatter.

09/56 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held at 7.30 p.m. on Wednesday November 11th at a venue to be decided.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.00 p.m. with thanks to all those who attended.

Signed
Chairman