

CHARNEY BASSETT PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL AT 7.30 PM ON WEDNESDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2011

Present:

Mr M Cox, Chairman
Mr D Nellist, Vice-chairman
Miss P Edwards
Mr D Hughes
Mr J Harper

Dr S K Cowlam, Clerk

Eleven members of the public were in attendance.

11/52 Apologies and Declarations of Interest

District Councillor Anthony Hayward had sent his apologies for absence. There were no declarations of interest.

11/53 To Approve the Minutes of the May Meeting, and Matters Arising

RESOLVED: the minutes of the July 2011 meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman.

Matters arising from the July 2011 meeting were as follows.

- 11/25 Councillor Hughes had found an expert to access land ownership records in connection with riparian ownership along the River Ock. He had offered to arrange for this expert to brief the Council, but this now seems unlikely. The Clerk had shown Councillor Hughes blockages in the river, and had provided him with map references of land adjoining the river. Councillor Hughes was encouraged to complete the work on riparian ownership without further delay.
- 11/47 RESOLVED now that the Clerk had actioned all of the points raised by residents at July's meeting. These are covered at paragraph 11/58 on flooding/Project CHAFFINCH, and reported in an appendix to the minutes.
- 11/49 Councillor Hughes has still to raise the topic of naming Charney Field with CHAFT.
- 11/49 RESOLVED that the PC discuss parish/community plans. This is covered at paragraph 11/59.
- 11/49 RESOLVED. The Clerk had written to OCC with the PC's response on increasing funding for the Wantage IAC car scheme. We suggested that the whole range of community transport schemes be reviewed to see how to make best use of limited funds. OCC proposes to do this and report in Spring/Summer 2012, and meanwhile is making a 2.5% increase to its funding of the scheme.
- 11/50 RESOLVED. The Clerk had placed a note in Charney Chatter to encourage residents to maintain tidy gutters and footpaths outside their own properties.
- 11/50 RESOLVED. Thames Water has removed the rubble from Denchworth Road.

11/54 County Councillor's Matters

Melinda Tilley reported as follows.

- Hanson has made a new planning application for gravel extraction via Pinewoods Road.
- The Springhill site in Longworth is to be cleaned up.
- Melinda and her neighbouring County Councillors have some funding for road repairs.

RESOLVED: the Clerk to identify to her road repair needs in Charney Bassett.

- Results of the Boundary Commission's review include enlarging the area that includes Charney Bassett, but with the same County Councillor, (Melinda if she stands and is re-elected).
- The budget process for 2012/13 is under way, and likely to be difficult!
- The refuse site at Stanford in the Vale is due to close in 2014, but there is growing recognition that it is busy and much needed. Closure may be avoided.
- Melinda is now the cabinet member for schools. OCC policy is that "every child in Oxfordshire be offered a good education".

11/55 District Councillor's Matters

None reported.

11/56 Clerk's Financial Report

- The external audit for 2010/11 had been completed. There were no matters arising from it.

RESOLVED: The audit was approved and accepted by the PC.

- The Clerk presented his financial report CBPC/FIN/11/05 (appended to minutes) which had been distributed to councillors.

RESOLVED: the report was adopted.

- VWHDC had advised of changes to the timetable for setting the precept. We shall have to consider the budget at the November meeting, rather than January as hitherto.

11/57 Planning Matters

The Clerk reported as follows.

- Outline planning permission was granted for a dwelling on land adjoining Llanreath, Longworth Road.
- Permission was granted for demolition of a conservatory and erection of a single storey extension at 29 New Road.
- Permission was granted to replace a greenhouse at 14 Orchard Close.

11/58 Flooding/Project CHAFFINCH

- The Clerk had actioned the points raised by residents noted at paragraph 11/47. Gordon Hunt of OCC Highways had visited us to advise on these points. The notes of his visit are provided as an appendix to these minutes.
- Jim Gardiner had carried out a study of the local geography and the watercourses. This concludes that excess water should not be routed along the Charney Wick Ditch, as this is the lowest lying part of the village. He favours strengthening the ability of the R Ock to cope with it.
- Keith Harris had carried out an analysis of rainfall in 2007. This was abnormally very high (a 1 in 100 year event) rendering engineered flood measures not cost-effective. He favours better maintenance of the existing systems, with more diligent clearance of debris and blockages.
- Hugh Brookes has provided information from maps that should help to identify riparian owners. He is investigating the accuracy of height data. He is also seeking information from the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology at Wallingford.
- The EA has not responded yet to advise us of a successor to Keith Lead and to be able to progress the actions he took from his last meeting with us before retiring.
- There are known to be partial blockages in the Charney Wick Ditch downstream of Orchard Close. These need to be investigated, and added to the work on riparian owners to be undertaken by Councillor Hughes.

RESOLVED that Councillor Hughes should identify riparian owners along the Charney Wick Ditch. Councillor Nellist briefed the meeting on his investigation of the myForest database. We had been shown this by David Rees of the Oxfordshire Woodland Project. The database provides an opportunity to record for posterity the trees that have been planted (and those already there) on Charney Field. The database can also be used to identify commercial sources of timber. Our use of the database would need an email address and a website address. The meeting concluded that the matter would best be left to those in the community who have an interest in the subject. RESOLVED that the Clerk would discuss the myForest database with the village website manager, and elicit possible interest of CHAFT.

11/59 Parish/Community Plans

After discussion, and after seeking the view of residents present, the PC concluded that there is no appetite at present for preparing such a document. We have the village website, Charney Chatter, and the welcome booklet for new residents. There is a more urgent requirement to understand the implications for us of the Localism Bill and changes to the planning laws.

RESOLVED that the PC should familiarize itself with the Localism Bill and changes to the planning laws.

11/60 Village College

Lynn Brookes reported as follows.

- Yoga and pilates classes are fully subscribed, and have waiting lists.
- The patchwork and needlecraft classes are proving a great success, and are being expanded.
- A digital photography course is in progress for five weeks and will be followed by a French conversation class.
- Lynn had met the VWHDC arts development officer in connection with a new “taking part” scheme. VWHDC can provide part funding for one-day courses, and longer-term follow-up courses. Lynn will publish details in due course.

11/61 Clerk’s Correspondence

None.

11/62 Information Exchange

- The Chairman reported that the NAG for our area, under David Sibbert’s chairmanship is regarded as one of the most successful in the Thames Valley Constabulary’s area. A new telephone number (101) would be introduced soon for calls to the police that do not warrant the urgency of a 999 call.
- A resident asked about ownership of the grassy area at the junction of Buckland Road and Longworth Road.

RESOLVED that the Clerk would investigate this.

11/63 Date of Next Meeting

9 November 2011, at 7:30 pm in the Village Hall.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8:30pm.

Signed Date

Chairman

Notes of a meeting with Gordon Hunt, OCC Highways Dept, held in Main Street, Charney Bassett on 14-09-11 to discuss aspects of flood alleviation.

Present: Mike Cox Keith Harris
 Stephen Cowlam Gordon Hunt
 John Daglish David Nellist
 Jim Gardiner Geoff Rumble

1. July's PC meeting had prompted some questions from residents in Charney Wick. As a result of this I had asked Gordon Hunt to meet a group of us to give advice on these.
2. The questions were as follows.
 - Does the culvert carrying Charney Wick Ditch under Main Street need to be enlarged to carry a greater flow at times of flood?
 - Does this culvert need to be cleared of silt to provide for greater flow?
 - Do the storm drains/gullies along Main Street in Charney Wick need to be cleared more frequently?
3. Gordon's advice was as follows.
 - The culvert is designed to restrict flow downstream of Main Street in order to protect the properties in Orchard Close from flooding. So enlargement is not a sensible proposal.
 - A first action of prime importance is to clear the Charney Wick Ditch of debris and obstructions.
 - It is only worth removing silt from the culvert if silt is removed upstream and downstream of it beforehand, otherwise silt will be deposited there immediately afterwards.
 - The storm drains/gullies in Main Street are emptied by OCC annually, and this frequency will not be increased.
 - The storm drains/gullies at the point of interest here discharge into the Charney Wick Ditch. OCC would consider enlarging them, but only after work had been done to clear the Charney Wick Ditch of debris and obstructions, as mentioned above.
 - The storm drains/gullies from Barnfield discharge into the Charney Wick Ditch upstream of the culvert. Flap valves could be fitted to these to prevent flow of water back up them at times of flood, though this was not the only source of flooding in Barnfield in 2007.
4. Finally, Gordon recommended that we organize a combined visit from OCC(himself or representative)/VWHDC(Peter Dela or representative)/EA(Keith Lead's replacement) to walk the R Ock and Charney Wick Ditch to identify actions to be taken. [NB. OCC has prime responsibility for flood measures, VWHDC is the land drainage authority, and EA is the authority for main rivers. Both the R Ock and Charney Wick Ditch come within the definition of main rivers for EA's purpose].

Stephen Cowlam.
Clerk to the PC.
15 September 2011.