

CHARNEY BASSETT PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman's Report 2023/2024.

May 8th 2024

I have had the honour of being the Parish Council's Chairman for the past 10 years. This is the second report of my third term's tenure.

Against the backdrop of world uncertainty and domestic instability, the Parish Council always aims to maintain standards of the highest order, for the enjoyment and benefit of residents and visitors alike.

Financial

As is the usual practice, the report sets out the way the Parish Council has conducted its business on your behalf over the past 12 months.

Council expenditure comes from a precept on the Vale of White Horse District Council and derives its income from Council Tax. The PC proposed and agreed a change to the precept from £8500 to £11,500 for the coming year 2024/25. This allows for financial cover of key projects, primarily the costs of setting up our new allotment site, to allow us to exit 2024/25 with general reserves covering the cost of our non-discretionary spending.

I am pleased to say that, through the excellent work of The Clerk and Nick Adamson, our Financial Officer, controlling both receipts and expenditure, and good housekeeping in general, our accounts have been well managed. We are also indebted to Brian Trotman, our Internal Auditor, who has maintained a watching brief over our activities for the past year, and we are pleased he has agreed to continue in his role for a further 12 months.

I am also delighted to say that Nick Adamson is willing to continue in the role of Financial Officer for the coming year.

Emerging Local Plan and Planning

The current Plan and its supporting studies set out the future for development in South Oxfordshire up to 2035, although this timescale has extended to 2041. The Plan identifies locations for housing, retail and employment land as well as the infrastructure

required to support this growth. The policies in the development plan are the starting point for making decisions on planning applications in the district.

It has reached the Preferred Option stage and we find it encouraging that the last consultation showed Charney Bassett remaining in an area where there should be no expansion, to which we responded enthusiastically, as Councillors believed that residents would feel this to be the right approach.

Planning applications for the development of existing properties have continued throughout the year, and the aim is always for this to be in keeping with the character of the village. None more so than the protracted discussions that took place with the architects and developers for new properties in McBains' yard, including the Old School building.

The PC, headed by Kay Adamson, was forceful in its stance of maintaining the correct standards of design, and we believe it may have paid off. We still await the first signs of site development.

Kay , in her role of Planning Coordinator for the PC , has been especially busy with matters outside the village - Lyford Business Park, Blenheim Field, Long Meadow Barn to name but 3. She has managed these admirably, calling in the necessary assistance from our retired planning 'Guru', when necessary. We thank her for her significant contribution to all matters involving local development projects.

The Playing field and surrounding area.

The field continues to remain at the heart of activity for the village. Last year Lucy Gildersleeves and her team of volunteers were widely praised in their efforts to re-establish the woodland area ,with special mention of the work of John and Stephanie Wright.

Attention has now switched to the northern area of the field where the Parish Council has secured a lease with OCC for **allotment development.**

It is anticipated that we will have sufficient space for approximately 10 plot holders, and work has started to develop the site to meet the required standards set by the various authorities.

The Allotment acquisition and Lease securing has been the single biggest project for the Parish Council in 2023 and will continue to capture the headlines until the site is fully operational and self contained.

Special mention must go to key people who have been integral in the development so far:- Trevor Brown; Tim Fitzgerald O'Connor; Mike Gooding and the CLAP committee; Peter Noll (Fencing contractor) and finally, Ruth Kerry of Oxfordshire County Council

who has been very supportive of the project from the start.

We are also indebted to those who have already provided or promised financial assistance for the set up costs, including our County Councillor Juliette Ash and CHAFT.

The Charney Army

Sadly Ian Taylor will be leaving the village in the near future so has relinquished his duties as 'Head of the Army'. Fortunately we have a very capable replacement in the wings in the form of one Charles Eld, and I believe he will tell us something shortly of how he suggests the Army can be taken forward. The Army operates under Terms of Reference set by the Parish Council and the lead officer has to be approved by Councillors. I hope we will be endorsing Charles in the role at the PC meeting that follows this Assembly.

Thank you to all those volunteers who make such a difference in continuing to maintain the high standards. Volunteers are always welcome!

Road Safety Group

Statistics for the impact of the 20mph initiative throughout Oxfordshire continue to be assessed. Our own **Speedwatch** team continue to monitor vehicle speeds under the watchful eye of Rosemary McLintock. Our thanks to Rosemary for organising the sessions and the volunteers who brave conditions and occasional abuse! The Police are on record as saying they are unlikely to have the resources to enforce speed limits but the Speedwatch Team is our visible enforcement tool and police letters are sent to transgressors so we can be effective. The more volunteers we have the more sessions we can run. My plea to all residents is to please consider being involved. One hour per month – not too much to ask.

MVAS. (Motorised vehicle activated signs) these units' positions are changed every 6 weeks - legal requirement. Our thanks to Steve Champion, Peter Hawkins and Mike Gooding for this unenviable task! Again they could do with a couple of able bodied persons to make the task easier.

Village Support

It is always impossible to mention all the people who help to make the village such a nice place to live. Our village welcomes new faces, our community spirit continues

unabated and thanks must go to all those who have volunteered their help and support in times of need.

Succession planning is critical in maintaining 'freshness' and new ideas, and I would like to draw particular attention to the as yet unfilled roles required to keep our village magazine 'Charney Chatter' rolling. It has been such a boon to the village and we will all miss it if we can't fill the editorial vacancies. Our grateful thanks to Stephanie Wright and Amanda Graham for all their work over the years.

There are many key groups that work tirelessly to maintain the village's high standards.

John Wright's contribution to The Village website (John is stepping down); our History Group headed up by Ian Graham; Steve Champion and Peter Hawkins who keep the Mill in a very presentable state at all times.

Our thanks to them all for their contributions.

David Sibbert and Jim Harper

Last year we were saddened that we'd lost both David Sibbert and Jim Harper within a short time of each other. Both individuals made huge contributions to our village - David on Chaff and Jim on the Parish Council.

Tributes to their achievements have been received from far and wide and they will both be fondly remembered and sorely missed. Our thoughts are with their widows, Barbara and Ruth.

Conclusion

I have always said that the running of Charney Bassett Parish Council depends on a strong unified team, and I am very fortunate in having such a supportive group of Councillors. Thank you to you all.

And finally, I am relieved to say that Trevor Brown, Parish Clerk, has re-signed a 2 year contract. I cannot begin to say how grateful we all are for the work he carries out on our behalf. I know I speak for all the Committee members when I simply say 'thank you'.

I am very privileged to head up the Charney Bassett Parish Council. Thank you to all involved, both past and present, for the support and hard work you give on behalf of the residents of Charney Bassett.

David Roberts
Charney Bassett Parish Council Chairman.
May 8th 2024

