

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE POLICY, MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE
COMMITTEE OF THE WANTAGE TOWN COUNCIL HELD IN WANTAGE
CIVIC HALL, PORTWAY, ON MONDAY, 10 NOVEMBER, 2008, AT 7.30 P.M.**

Present: Councillor B H Armitage (Chairman)
Councillors Mrs P Brundle, M Green, Mrs J Hannaby, P Kent,
Major J Sibbald, Mrs L Todd, Dr I C E Turcu and Mrs E A Turner.

Clerk: Mr W P Falkenau.

One member of the public.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Crawford, A J Geden, E C Goldsmith, Ms N J Hanna, J Morgan, Mrs J Reynolds and P M O'Leary.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Mrs Hannaby declared a personal interest in the Police Neighbourhood Action Group and Councillor Green declared a personal interest, as a Trustee, in the Vale and Downland Museum Trust.

Minutes of Meeting held on 22 September, 2008

The minutes were approved and signed.

40. Statements and Questions from the Public

None.

41. Matters Arising

(a) Analysis of Administration Costs

Due to higher priority being given to other matters, the Clerk had been unable to prepare the analysis. It was agreed that this action be deferred for the time being until there was time available to attend to it.

(b) Vale and Downland Museum Trust

Councillor Green, a Trustee of the Museum, reported on the level of cash balances currently being held by the Museum. These were reasonably healthy. He felt that the financial position was improving due to the attention that had been given to this. He reported that the Museum was operating within its budget, and the building repairs had recently been completed.

The Clerk had received the statutory accounts from the Museum for the year ended 31 March, 2008. He had not yet had the opportunity to review them. The third instalment of grant to cover the period up to the 31 December, 2008, had recently been paid. The next, and final, instalment was due in January, 2009.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Mrs Hannaby,
SECONDED by Councillor Major Sibbald,
IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Clerk write to the Museum advising that the Council was encouraged by the report from the Trustee, Councillor Green. The work carried out by the Trustees to deal with the difficult financial situation, was appreciated. The Town Council would continue to monitor the financial situation. **Action : Clerk**

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(c) Council's Tax Base

The District Council had advised, despite previous advice, that for precept purposes the boundary change would now proceed with effect from the beginning of the next financial year. An analysis of dwellings by rate band across the parish was noted. The discount effect of single-occupation dwellings was fairly significant.

(d) Refurbishment of Market Place

The consultants had been asked to make a presentation to a Planning Committee meeting in December.

(e) Display Columns/Floral Displays

An e-mail from Robin Turnbull, the Display Committee Chairman, dated 12 October, 2008, was considered. It advised that it would be impractical to install columns in Mill Street and Grove Street, and as an alternative, property owners were being asked to allow wall lights to be hung from their buildings. There was a request that the £6,000 put aside by the Town Council for the purchase of columns, be used instead to support the cost of renting lighting displays.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Armitage,
SECONDED by Councillor Mrs Hannaby,
IT WAS MOVED that the request for the Display Committee to receive the grant to use for the renting of displays be accepted. This was approved 8 in favour, none against. The Display Committee was to be asked to give attention to the other roads leading into the Market Place. The Committee was to be reminded of the need to ensure that suitable insurance cover was provided either independently or through the Town Council's insurance policy. If the proposed arrangements proceeded this year, the Clerk was to issue a press statement reporting on the £6,000 donation by the Town Council to support the displays.

Action : Clerk

(f) Flooding

A letter dated 27 October, 2008 from Bill Farrar, Deputy Director of Commercial Services at the Vale of White Horse District Council was noted. The letter gave an update on the progress of the District Council with respect to flooding in the Vale, and asked support from the Council for the District Council's plans for the formation and development of local community flood groups and the fair and equitable distribution of earmarked grant funding. A parish liaison meeting had been held on 5 November, 2008 in Wantage Civic Hall at which parish and town clerks were able to ask questions regarding flood prevention.

It was reported that Sally Wallington, the Letcombe Brook Officer, would like to give a presentation to the Town Council with a view to it endorsing actions being taken to establish community groups to address flooding problems along the Letcombe Brook. She wished to give a report on the activities of the Wantage Group. It was agreed that Ms Wallington be invited to the Council meeting to be held on 1 December, 2008.

Action : Clerk

POLICY

42. Report from Joint Economic Forum Meeting held on 6 November, 2008

The draft minutes were considered.

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4(e) – JEF Website. It was noted that good quality pictures of Wantage were featured in the almshouses calendar for 2009. It was agreed that the Camera Club be asked to provide photographs.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Armitage,
SECONDED by Councillor Dr Turcu,
IT WAS RESOLVED to invite King Alfred’s Community and Sports College and others to provide new photographs for the website through a competition, and that two prizes of £25 be given for junior and adult winners. The Clerk was to advertise this through “What’s On in Wantage”.
Action : Clerk

43. Report from Police Neighbourhood Action Group

The Clerk had not been able to arrange for PC Darren James to attend the meeting. He will advise him of meeting dates for the coming year.
Action : Clerk

There had been a recent incident where Poppy Appeal boxes had been stolen from two locations. A letter had appeared in the Wantage Herald from the Chairman of the Police Neighbourhood Action Group defending the behaviour of local youth. It was agreed that the Clerk should write to NAG giving support to the comments made by the Chairman.

Action : Clerk

44. Ridgeway Partnership – NHS Foundation Trust Application

It was agreed that Councillors should respond to the consultation on an individual basis, and that the Council itself should not comment.

45. Proposal by Church of England Primary School to name the footpath from the Cemetery to the School after the late Councillor Moley

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Armitage,
SECONDED by Councillor Dr Turcu,
IT WAS RESOLVED to support the proposal that the footpath from the Cemetery to the Church of England Primary School be named after the late Councillor Moley. The Clerk was to obtain information from the school on where the name sign bearing Councillor Moley’s name was to be installed.
Action : Clerk

46. Use of Charlton Primary School as a Polling Station

Councillor Dr Turcu declared a personal interest as a Governor of the School.

It was agreed to support the District Council’s proposal that the School be used again as the Polling Station for the Charlton Ward.

MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE

47. Notice of Conclusion of Audit for the Year Ended 31 March, 2008

The conclusion of the audit was noted. The auditors had no points to bring to the Council’s attention.

48. Estimates 2009/2010

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Dr Turcu,
SECONDED by Councillor Armitage,

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IT WAS RESOLVED that an inflation factor of 2.5% be applied generally across the figures of 2008/2009 to give figures for 2009/2010. **Action : Clerk**

There was a need to consider providing extra funding to support the use of the Civic Hall by community groups. It was agreed that this be considered at the Precept Meeting in January, 2009. **Action : Clerk**

49. Request for Donations

Wantage Town Lands Governors Appeal Fund

The Governors were seeking grants and donations to support the refurbishment of the Mill Street almshouses. It was agreed that the request be referred to the Wantage Joint Environmental Trust with a view to seeking financial support for improvement of the frontage of the properties in Mill Street. The Governors were to be advised that if the Joint Environmental Trust was unable to contribute, the matter would be referred back to the Town Council for it to consider providing a donation from its funds. Councillors noted that it was unlikely that this expenditure would come within the normal powers of the Town Council, and therefore it would be deemed a Section 137 payment. **Action : Clerk**

50. Accounts for Payment

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Armitage,
SECONDED by Councillor Dr Turcu,
IT WAS RESOLVED that accounts for payment in the sum of £23,664.94 be approved.

51. General Correspondence

None

Confidential Items 52 and 53

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Armitage,
SECONDED by Councillor Dr Turcu,
IT WAS RESOLVED that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it was advisable in the public interest that the public and press be temporarily excluded, and they were instructed to withdraw.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Armitage,
SECONDED by Councillor Dr Turcu,
IT WAS RESOLVED that the resolutions made in confidential session be adopted.

The meeting closed at 9.32 p.m.

WPF/KR