

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WANTAGE JOINT ECONOMIC
FORUM HELD IN WANTAGE CIVIC HALL, PORTWAY, ON
THURSDAY, 12 FEBRUARY, 2009, AT 7.00 P.M.**

Members present:

Wantage Town Council	Councillors E Goldsmith and Dr I C E Turcu.
Vale of White Horse D.C.	Councillor Mrs Z Patrick.
Chamber of Commerce	Mr M Chapman and Mr R Turnbull (Chairman).

Others present:

Grove Parish Council (Observer)	Councillor Mrs J E Nunn-Price.
Town Clerk	Mr W P Falkenau.
District Council Officer	Mr T Warren

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B.H. Armitage, Mrs J.T. Hannaby, Mrs J. Hutchinson and P O'Leary.

2. Declarations of Interest

These were to be given as the meeting proceeded.

3. Minutes of Meeting held on 6 November, 2008

The minutes were approved and signed.

4. Matters Arising

(a) Wantage Health-Check : Progress Update

The Steering Group were meeting monthly The next meeting was to be held on 18 February 2009 at 7.30pm at the Civic Hall. Further consultation had been conducted over the Christmas period with questionnaires distributed through local newsletters. The responses had been fully supportive of the proposed actions. The group intended to review each of the action areas over a three month cycle to identify and engage with any local organisations or agencies that were able to progress these. Attention was being given to identifying funding sources.

(b) French Markets

The next French market was due to be held on 15 March, 2009. Further visits were planned for 12th July and 15 November 2009. It was intended that the November visit should have a Christmas theme. It was agreed that there was a need to more actively advertise the market visits, particularly to the outlying villages. It was suggested that leaflets should be distributed and advertisements placed in Roundabout and the Grove Parish Newsletter.

(c) Business Directory on Wantage.com

A further report from Howard Hill on developments to the Wantage.com website, were awaited.

The Wantage Town Council website had been modified to accommodate meeting agendas and minutes. There were links to the District and County Council websites

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and other authorities. It was suggested that a link to the Civic Hall website should be added.

(d) Undercroft Car Park in Mill Street

The problems with the undercroft were still unresolved. Graffiti and vandalism were becoming a problem. The District Council were to be urged to resolve this. It was to be asked whether alternative uses should be considered if it was found that it was unusable as a car park. **Action: Clerk**

(e) JEF Website

The site still needed to be developed to give more specific information on the Forum's membership and work. **Action: Clerk**

(f) Welcome Heroes Back campaign

Councillor O'Leary had, at the previous meeting, agreed to seek the views of the local British Legion.

(g) Pedestrian Crossing at Limborough Road Development

A developer had paid for the installation of a crossing. The County Council had yet to decide upon its location.

(h) King Alfred's Statue

The installation of the plaque was to be dealt with by Roger Humphries. It was hoped that he would be able to attend to this within the next few weeks.

5. Town Council Market Place fund – to consider ways of finding additional funding (also Thriving Economies Grant).

Improvements to the Christmas lighting displays were welcomed. It was hoped to instal a tree of lights at the eastern end of the Square, next year, adjacent to the yucca tree. The Display Committee needed more storage for items relating to the Christmas and floral displays.

Public access between the Sainsburys shopping development and Mill Street would be improved if Angel Walk was useable. Bill Atkinson of Bushbuy had advised that it was likely to be 4 to 6 months before it would be opened.

Consideration was being given to improving the look of empty shops by dressing their windows with display boards. An estimated cost for the Woolworth shop was almost £1000. It was agreed to write to the owners of empty shops requesting that action be taken to improve the appearance of the shops. **Action: Clerk**

There was a need to pursue actions that encouraged shoppers to walk to the Market Place from the Sainsburys car park. The introduction of notice boards and direction signs would assist. There was a need to conduct a survey to assess signing for both cars and pedestrians throughout the town. "You are here" maps could assist. It was agree to investigate whether consultant help could be enlisted to attend to this. The clerk was to seek the advice of Oxfordshire County Council. **Action: Clerk**

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6. **General Correspondence and Other Business**

(a) Fairtrade Fortnight 23 February to 8 March 2009

The promotional event was being supported in Grove. There would be a stall in Millbrook Square on 21 February 2009.

(b) Chamber of Commerce Officers

Matthew Chapman had become President, Jim Hetherington, Chairman, John Naish, Vice Chairman and Alison Neale, Administrator.

(c) Treatment to shopping area walkways in icy conditions

In the recent bad weather, many of the shopping walkways on private and public land had been left untreated and slippery. Enquiries were to be made with the owners and responsible authorities about arrangements to deal with these in similar conditions.
Action: Clerk

7. **Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday, 28 May, 2009.

The meeting closed at 8.22 p.m.

WPF/KR