

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE POLICY, MANAGEMENT AND
FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THE WANTAGE TOWN COUNCIL
HELD IN WANTAGE CIVIC HALL, PORTWAY, ON
MONDAY, 21 JULY, 2008, AT 7.30 P M**

Present: Councillor B H Armitage (Chairman)
Councillors Mrs P Brundle, A Crawford (part), A J Geden,
M Green, Mrs J T Hannaby (part), J Morgan, P M O'Leary,
Mrs J Reynolds, Major J Sibbald, Mrs L Todd, Dr I C E
Turcu and Mrs E A Turner.

Clerk: Mr W P Falkenau.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E C Goldsmith, B Griffin and Ms N J Hanna.

Declarations of Interest

None.

Minutes of Meeting held on 16 June, 2008

The minutes were approved and signed.

17. Statements and Questions from the Public

None.

Councillor Mrs Hannaby arrived.

18. Matters Arising

(a) Analysis of Administration Costs

The Clerk had not yet been able to prepare the analysis of administration costs.

Action : Clerk

(b) St. Mary's School Site Development

A completed legal agreement had been received. The Clerk had not yet checked who was responsible for the provision of the gate in the school's perimeter fence.

Action : Clerk

(c) Vale and Downland Museum Trust

The Clerk had received a copy of the proposed Memorandum and Articles of Association for the company limited by guarantee which was to be set up to take over responsibility for the Trust. There were a number of points and issues which he felt required more detailed consideration. He agreed to prepare a memorandum for referral to Councillors.

Action : Clerk

The Committee Chairman and the Clerk had received an e-mail from the Museum's Administrator concerning ownership of future exhibit items received by the Museum. Responsibility for, and ownership of, items needed to be settled as part of a re-

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accreditation process for the Museum. The current arrangements related to an agreement dating back to the 1970's. The Clerk and the Chairman were to give full consideration to these matters, and report back. **Action : Clerk/Chairman**

(d) Willow Walk Cycleway

The Clerk's letter to Mr Terry Stock, the District Council's Chief Executive, had been referred by him to District Council's Conservation Officer, Mr Grant Audley-Miller. It was reported that the District Council had now agreed to progress a planning application for the cycleway. This was to be dealt with by Mrs Mary Lambe, the District Council's Landscaping Officer. The Council's members of the Joint Environmental Trust were asked to press for this to be progressed.

Action : JET Members

(e) Flooding

The Clerk had not yet written to the various parties regarding the overall management of the local waterways.

Action : Clerk

(f) Civic Visit to Seesen in September, 2008

The Town Mayor had received a letter indicating that Stadt Seesen would be pleased to receive the Town Mayor and Councillors Mrs Hannaby and Sibbald on an informal visit in September.

Councillor Crawford arrived.

(g) Council's Tax Base

The Clerk had conducted some investigative work, and found that if Council Tax was payable in full on all properties within the parish, it would generate an income well in excess of the current precept. It was noted that many of the new properties constructed in Wantage would be occupied by residents entitled to tax reductions. It would, therefore, be difficult to precisely correlate movements in tax income with changes in the numbers of dwellings. In setting the Council Tax rate for the parish, the District Council needed to estimate a Council Tax rate that would closely bring in the amount precepted by the Town Council. In the past, the District Council would have separately accounted for any excess or deficit against each parish arising from this estimation. The Clerk was to enquire how this was now being dealt with.

Action : Clerk

Councillors expressed concern about the effect social housing was having on the local community. At the St. Mary's School site development, as well as 40% social housing, the Vale Housing Association was purchasing a further 40% of the development for social housing purposes. It was agreed to request a meeting with Mr Paul Stainer of the District Council for him to brief the Planning Committee on planning policies concerning social housing.

Action : Clerk

(h) Wantage Health-Check : Update

The consultation events held on 16 and 17 July, 2008, had proved successful. There was a need to consult more widely, including villages and schools.

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ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Mrs Hannaby,
SECONDED by Councillor Dr Turcu,
IT WAS RESOLVED to thank all of those involved in progressing the Health-Check.
Action : Clerk

(i) Wantage Town Council Website

The Clerk had checked and confirmed that the underlying systems were available to develop the Council's website in the manner proposed. A working group meeting was to be held to confirm what changes should be made. **Action : Clerk**

(j) Refurbishment of Market Place

The Clerk had confirmed with BHP Harwood the contract for support to the next stage of public consultation. He was to arrange a meeting with BHP Harwood to progress this. **Action : Clerk**

(k) Review of Council's Risk Assessment

The Clerk had not received any comments or suggestions concerning the risk assessment memorandum.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Dr Turcu,
SECONDED by Councillor Mrs Hannaby,
IT WAS RESOLVED that the risk assessment, as presented to the previous meeting, be accepted.

(l) Banking and Payroll Arrangements

The Clerk advised that in order to provide better local banking facilities, he would wish to proceed with the opening of a bank account with Barclays Bank. He would also seek to contract the payroll services to Barclays. For the time being, he proposed that both the Co-operative Bank and Barclays Bank accounts be operated together, and that in due course consideration be given to operating with just one bank.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Dr Turcu,
SECONDED by Councillor Armitage,
IT WAS RESOLVED to accept the request of the Clerk to proceed with the opening of an account with Barclays Bank and also the contracting-out of the payroll services to them.

POLICY

19. Report of the Joint Environmental Trust Meeting held on 19 June, 2008

The minutes of the meeting had not yet been received. It was agreed to defer this matter for consideration at the next Committee meeting. **Action : Clerk**

20. Wantage Churches Together : Street Pastors

The scheme was intended to look after people on the street who were vulnerable in the community. It was agreed to take no further action on this matter until a formal approach had been received.

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21. Report from Police Neighbourhood Action Group

The Clerk was to enquire whether NAG could provide a written report to the Town Council on its activities. He was also to enquire why Community Policemen were not attending Town Council meetings when they appeared to attend all meetings of parish councils in surrounding villages. **Action : Clerk**

MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE

22. Requests for Donations

None.

23. Accounts for Payment

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Dr Turcu,
SECONDED by Councillor Armitage,
IT WAS RESOLVED that accounts for payment in the sum of £8,520.03 be approved.

24. General Correspondence

Local Council Liaison Event 2008 :
Letter from the Leader of Oxfordshire County Council received on 30 June, 2008

The letter gave details of a liaison event involving the County Council, District Council and town and parish councils to be held at Wantage Civic Hall on Wednesday, 5 November, 2008.

Confidential Items 25 and 26

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 Turcu,
IT WAS RESOLVED that the resolutions made in confidential session be adopted.

The meeting closed at 8.56 p m.

WPF/KR