

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE POLICY, MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE
COMMITTEE OF THE WANTAGE TOWN COUNCIL HELD IN WANTAGE
CIVIC HALL, PORTWAY, ON MONDAY, 22 SEPTEMBER, 2008,
AT 7.30 P.M.**

Present: Councillor B H Armitage (Chairman)
Councillors Mrs P Brundle, A J Geden, M Green, J Morgan,
P M O'Leary, Mrs J Reynolds, Major J Sibbald, Mrs L Todd and
Mrs E A Turner.

Clerk: Mr W P Falkenau.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Crawford, E C Goldsmith, Ms N J Hanna, Mrs J Hannaby and Dr I C E Turcu.

Declarations of Interest

These were to be given as the meeting proceeded.

Minutes of Meeting held on 21 July, 2008

The minutes were approved and signed.

27. Statements and Questions from the Public

Note.

28. Matters Arising

(a) Analysis of Administration Costs

The Clerk had not yet been able to progress this.

Action: Clerk

(b) St. Mary's School Site Development

From the agreement, the responsibility for the provision of the gate in the school boundary appeared to lay with the County Council.

(c) Vale and Downland Museum Trust

The Clerk had reviewed the proposed Memorandum and Articles of Association (M&As) for a new company limited by guarantee which would become responsible for the Museum. The M&As themselves were reasonably straightforward, but there were a number of important points and issues that these did not cover which were left to the trustees' discretion, e.g. who were to be the members of the company. There needed to be much fuller information and consideration of what the Trustees of the Museum intended. Currently, items that had originally been taken over by the Museum when it was established were deemed to be the property of the Town Council, on loan to the Museum. Any new items directly relating to Wantage that were added to the collection were also deemed to be owned by the Town Council and on loan to the Museum. This had the benefit that should the Museum become insolvent, the collection would not be at risk to debtors. The Museum had requested that the Town Council review the current acquisitions policy as part of the arrangements to review Museum accreditation by the County Council. The Committee agreed that the Town Council would not be in a position to make any

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE POLICY, MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE
COMMITTEE OF THE WANTAGE TOWN COUNCIL HELD IN WANTAGE
CIVIC HALL, PORTWAY, ON MONDAY, 22 SEPTEMBER, 2008,
AT 7.30 P.M.

decisions until more information was provided, and that for the time being the status quo should be maintained. There was a need to secure advice from responsible officers at the Oxfordshire Museums Service. **Action: Clerk**

The County Council was currently charging a significant amount for the storage of collection items which were not on display. There was a need to re-assess the collection to find out what items could be stored under ordinary conditions, what items should be thrown away and what items required professional storage.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Major Sibbald,
SECONDED by Councillor Armitage,
IT WAS RESOLVED that when the new company came into existence with responsibility for the Museum, the collection deemed as owned by the Town Council should be revalued, and a new agreement made to recognize the Town Council's interest. **Action: Clerk**

The Clerk was to take these matters forward with the Trustees of the Museum. **Action: Clerk**

(d) Willow Walk Cycleway

A letter from Mr Grant Audley-Miller of the District Council dated 28 July, 2008 advising of proposed actions was noted. No Town Council representative had been in attendance at the recent Joint Environmental Trust meeting, and therefore the Trust had been unable to make any decisions.

(e) Flooding

Responses to the Council's letters had been received from Ed Vaizey, MP, Keith Mitchell, Chairman of Oxfordshire County Council, and from County Council officers who all agreed that a strategic approach was required, but there were no proposals to address this.

(f) Council's Tax Base

The Clerk had received detailed information on the Tax Rate Base from the District Council's Strategic Director and Chief Finance Officer. These seemed to show that although there appeared to be a significant increase in the number of dwellings within the town, the actual number subject to rates had not increased significantly, and therefore the impact on the Band D Council Tax rate was very modest. Councillors were sceptical about this. The Clerk agreed to distribute copies of the papers received. **Action: Clerk**

The Clerk had referred back to Mrs. Beviere of the District Council the issue of boundary changes not being implemented until 2011. She had re-checked the legislation, and was adamant that the change could not come into effect earlier. She had, however, agreed to seek further advice from others.

(g) Wantage Health-Check : Update

The Steering Group was proceeding with further consultations in Childrey and Grove. The consultation events in July had firmly endorsed the proposed actions. Ms Ann Tweney of the ORCC was to attend the next Steering Group meeting to give guidance on funding from the Market Towns Initiative.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE POLICY, MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE
COMMITTEE OF THE WANTAGE TOWN COUNCIL HELD IN WANTAGE
CIVIC HALL, PORTWAY, ON MONDAY, 22 SEPTEMBER, 2008,
AT 7.30 P.M.

(h) Refurbishment of Market Place

BHP Harwood intended to consult with County and District Council officers during September and meet with representatives of the Town Council during October. It was agreed that the Chairman of the Committee and the Deputy Town Clerk should visit BHP Harwood for a progress update.

**Action: Armitage/
Deputy Clerk**

(i) Banking and Payroll Arrangements

The Clerk was arranging for mandates to be completed.

Action: Clerk

POLICY

29. Minutes of Joint Environment Trust Meeting held on 19 June, 2008 and Consideration of Substitutes for Future Meetings

It was agreed that there was a need for members to more actively seek out substitutes when they were unable to attend meetings. The minutes were noted.

30. Minutes of the Joint Economic Forum Meeting held on 7 August, 2008

5 - French Market

It was agreed to write to the organizers of the French market thanking them for taking on responsibility for removing their own refuse.

10(f) – “Welcome Heroes Back” Campaign

It was felt that it would be appropriate to do something to recognize individuals returning from overseas conflicts. It was agreed that this be referred back to the Joint Economic Forum with a request that it considers what could be done.

Action: Clerk

31. Community Group Discounts : Wantage Civic Hall

Councillors Mrs Turner, Morgan and Major Sibbald declared personal interests being associated with local organizations that might make use of the Civic Hall facilities.

A letter from Mr Chris Webb, Leisure Facilities Manager of the District Council dated 31 July, 2008, was noted. It was proposed to phase out community group discounts with effect from 1 April, 2009. He asked whether the Town Council would be willing to provide funding support to those organizations affected.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Armitage,
SECONDED by Councillor Mrs Turner,
IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to recommend that the Town Council give consideration to providing grants to organizations seeking to use the Civic Hall, subject to normal grant criteria being applied.

32. Report from Police Neighbourhood Action Group

Darren James, the Wantage Community Police Officer, had advised the Clerk that he would be happy to attend Council Committee meetings on invitation. It was unlikely

that he would be able to attend the whole meeting. It was agreed to invite him to the next meeting, and arrange business to enable him to depart as soon as practicable.

Action: Clerk

MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE

33. Consideration of the Chamber of Commerce Displays Committee's Request that the Council's Budget for Additional Display Columns (£6,000) be used for the Purchase of Floral Displays instead of Display Columns

There was a full discussion concerning the floral and Christmas light displays.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Armitage,
SECONDED by Councillor Major Sibbald,

IT WAS RESOLVED to advise the Displays Committee that the £6,000 fund had principally been set aside for the purchase of poles and attachments for floral displays and Christmas lighting. Subject to the Committee indicating more clearly what it was seeking, the Council might consider separately increasing the annual contribution for the purchase of floral and Christmas displays.

34. Financial Statements to September, 2008

The statements were noted. The Clerk reminded Councillors that the annual estimates for 2009/10 would be considered during the next cycle of meetings.

35. Requests for Donations

(a) Wantage Town Land Governors Almshouses : Mill Street

It was noted that the Trustees needed to raise £378,000 to undertake repairs to the retaining wall and to upgrade the properties in Mill Street. Papers had been received from the Trustees, but had not been circulated. The Clerk was to distribute copies so that consideration could be given to the matter at a future meeting.

Action: Clerk

(b) Waitrose Donations

It was noted that Waitrose Ltd. was donating £12,000 per annum to community organizations. Each month, customers were invited to indicate how the fund should be distributed by placing tokens against one of three organizations. It was agreed that Waitrose be thanked for this initiative.

Action: Clerk

36. Accounts for Payment

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Armitage,
SECONDED by Councillor Major Sibbald,

IT WAS RESOLVED that accounts for payment in the sum of £18,915.70 be approved.

37. General Correspondence

(a) Request by Mr. David Buckle, Chief Executive of Vale of White Horse District to meet the Council and Clerk

It was agreed that Mr. Buckle be invited to the next meeting.

Action: Clerk

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE POLICY, MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE
COMMITTEE OF THE WANTAGE TOWN COUNCIL HELD IN WANTAGE
CIVIC HALL, PORTWAY, ON MONDAY, 22 SEPTEMBER, 2008,
AT 7.30 P.M.

(b) Grove Road Allotments :

Letter from Smith Settlement Trusts in Partnership dated 9 September, 2008

It was noted that the rent for the Grove Road allotment site would be increased to £285 plus VAT as from 1 September, 2009.

38. Confidential Minutes of Meeting held on 21 July, 2008

The minutes were approved and signed.

39. Confidential Matters Arising and Other Matters

There was nothing further to report.

The meeting closed at 9.30 p.m.

WPF/KR