

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WANTAGE AND GROVE  
TRAFFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE HELD IN WANTAGE CIVIC HALL, PORTWAY, WANTAGE  
ON THURSDAY 25 JUNE 2009 AT 7.00 PM**

Present:	Grove Parish Council	Councillors W Evans, C Phillips and Mrs J Stock
	Wantage Town Council	Councillors E Goldsmith and Major J Sibbald
	Oxfordshire County Council	Councillor Mrs Z Patrick
	Vale of White Horse District Council	Councillor Mrs J Hannaby and Mrs J Hutchinson
	Oxfordshire County Council Officers	Mr P Ronald (Engineer)
	Vale of White Horse District Council Officers	Mr G Willcox (Engineer)
	Thames Valley Police	Mr C Hulme and Ms S Harris (PCSO)
	Clerk	Mrs H Kell
	Others	One member of the public

**1. Election of Chairman**

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor B Evans  
SECONDED by Councillor Z Patrick  
IT WAS RESOLVED that Councillor Mrs J Stock be elected Chairman of the Wantage and Grove Traffic Advisory Committee for the 2009/10 civic year.

**2. Election of Vice Chairman**

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Mrs J Stock  
SECONDED BY Councillor Z Patrick  
IT WAS RESOLVED that Councillor Mrs J Hannaby be elected Vice Chairman of the Wantage and Grove Traffic Advisory Committee for the 2009/10 civic year.

The Chairman opened the meeting by inviting all members to introduce themselves.

**3. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Mrs S Marchant and Ms J Cox of Oxfordshire County Council.

**4. Declarations of Interest**

None

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5. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 April 2009**

Following an amendment to include apologies for absence from Councillor Mrs Hutchinson, the minutes were approved and signed.

6. **Statements and Questions from the Public**

None

7. **Update on Southern Central Oxfordshire Transport Strategy (SCOTS)**

Members expressed disappointment that a representative of Oxfordshire County Council was not present to update the members on the report which was to be presented to the County Council's Cabinet. There was also concern that details on the County Council's website did not include comments made by the District Councils.

Mr Willcox reported that the SCOTS report will form part of the Local Development Framework, and includes the north east relief road for Wantage. The County Council had already considered some suggestions and amendments had been made to the Halcrow report. The District Council had hoped to see the final strategy, but the County Council were still welcoming formal comments on the draft report. The District Council had reiterated their comments in a letter to the County Council. Members expressed concerns that no proposals had been considered to improve the A338.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor W Evans

SECONDED by Councillor Mrs J Stock

IT WAS RESOLVED that a letter be sent to the County Council outlining the Committee's disappointment that an officer was unable to attend the meeting of the Wantage and Grove Traffic Advisory Committee in order to give a full report to the members. **Action: Clerk**

8. **Matters Arising**

(6a) Undercroft car park on the Limborough Road development. It was reported that completion of legal proceedings between Sainsbury's and the District Council had now taken place.

(6b) Speeding in Ormond Road. Mr Ronald reported that the County Council had replied to the letter and that a traffic survey had indicated that there were no significant incidents of speeding in Ormond Road.

(6c) Yellow Lines – Main Street, Grove. The County Council had accepted the proposal for provision of yellow lines in Main Street, although there had been objections from local residents. Grove Parish Council and Councillor Mrs Z Patrick had supported the proposals.

(7) Parking on pavements in the vicinity of Grove Recreation Ground. Concern was again expressed at the number of illegally parked vehicles on Sunday mornings. The Police agreed to look at the problem. **Action: Police**

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9. **Requests from Grove Parish Council**

- (a) Keep Clear markings on the road at the top of Vale Avenue, junction with St John's Road.

Mr Ronald advised that road markings were not appropriate at this T junction.

- (b) Yellow lines – Vale Avenue. Mr Ronald suggested a site meeting with a County Councillor to look at the problem.

**Action: Ronald**

10. **Requests from Wantage Town Council**

- (a) Update on pedestrian crossing and proposed refuge at Sainsbury's. Mr Ronald reported that the County Council had proposed a refuge island at a cost of £ 6,000. The developer of the retirement flats was not willing to allow £ 6,000 of the £ 40,000 section 106 money to be used for a refuge island.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Mrs Hannaby

SECONDED by Councillor Major Sibbald

IT WAS RESOLVED that a site meeting be held with Wantage members and the Area Engineer, Mr Short to find a way forward.

**Action: Clerk**

- (b) Speeding Traffic in Chain Hill and lack of pavement. Mr Ronald reported that the County Council had undertaken a speed survey of Chain Hill, which showed in no significant speeding on the road. The cost of widening the narrow footpath by a maximum of 30cm was too expensive to consider.

11. **Requests to consider the following issues**

- (a) Speed restrictions and safety in Mably Way. It was noted that speed restrictions in Mably Way were to be reviewed by the County Council's Road Safety Committee, and that a petition with almost a thousand signatures was to be presented to the County Council. Mr Ronald reported that many suggestions had been received on how to improve safety in the area, however, both the police and County Council did not believe a reduction in the speed limit would improve safety.

- (b) Crossings at Ham Road, Limborough Road and Leverton Gardens. The County Council Officer reported that money might be available through School Travel Plans.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Mrs Hannaby

SECONDED by Councillor Mrs Hutchinson

IT WAS RESOLVED that letters be sent to the heads of all the local schools inviting them to apply for funding through the Schools Travel Plan.

**Action: Clerk**

- (c) Parking by Charlton Primary School. Proposals to stop parking in the vicinity of the school were discussed. It was agreed to draw to the school's attention that if cars were not parked in the vicinity of the school, speeding would increase and this could be more of a danger to pupils. **Action: Clerk**

12. **Wantage Market Place**

It was reported that Wantage Town Council has undertaken public consultation with regard to altering the layout of the Market Place. Approximately 75% of questionnaires returned were in support of the concept plan. The Town Council was proposing to move the stop over parking for buses from the

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Market Place to Seesen Way. Mr Ronald advised that the proposals should be referred to the appropriate officer at the County Council.

**13. Report of Director of Environment and Economy**

The attached report of the Director of Environment and Economy was received and noted.

**14. District Council Officer's Report**

Civil Parking Enforcement. The attached report was presented by Mr Willcox. He reported that the District Council was planning to commence administration of the Civic Parking Enforcement in 2010.

**15. General correspondence**

None.

**16. Date of future meetings**

The next meeting of the Traffic Advisory Committee will be held on Thursday 1 October 2009 at 7 pm.

The meeting closed at 8.20 pm

HK/ME

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## VALE OF WHITE HORSE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### Briefing Report to the Wantage Traffic Advisory Committee 25 June 2009

#### Civil Parking Enforcement previously known as Decriminalised Parking Enforcement

#### 1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Department for Transport (DfT) have a stated objective that decriminalised parking enforcement should bring together the control and enforcement of both on-street and off-street parking in the interest of public understanding. Historically, parking enforcement has been controlled by two tiers of local government with County Councils responsible for on-street Traffic Regulation Orders, with the police or traffic wardens responsible for enforcement; and District Councils responsible for the management and enforcement of off-street parking. The two tier situation often leads to confusion for the public.
- 1.2 Members will be aware of the pressures on police resources. Parking enforcement has been removed from the “core activities” prescribed by the Home Office for the police force with attendant reductions in resource allocation. The County Council have been advised by the Thames Valley Police Authority that the pressures on police budgets and other priorities have increased the likelihood of Thames Valley Police diverting resources even further from enforcement.
- 1.3 The DfT has addressed this situation through decriminalised parking legislation whereby all on-street parking enforcement can be transferred from the Police to Local Highway Authorities (Oxfordshire County Council). It is the DfT’s clear objective that both on-street and off-street parking should be treated in the same way, and seen to be under the umbrella of a single management/enforcement regime, in the interest of better public understanding.
- 1.4 The DfT believe that there are significant advantages for local authorities having traffic and parking enforcement under their control, specifically:
- Local authorities will be able to ensure that their parking policies are implemented effectively, with consequent benefits through improved traffic flow, better management of overall traffic levels, fewer accidents, a fairer distribution of available parking places and a more pleasant environment.
  - The integration of enforcement and parking policy responsibilities should enable better monitoring of the effectiveness and value of parking controls, so that parking provision becomes more responsive to public needs.
  - Local authorities will be able to use the revenue they receive from penalty charges to fund their enforcement activities. Any surpluses can be used to improve parking facilities or fund other related transport/environmental schemes.

## 2.0 Legislation

- 2.1 Whilst only Highway Authorities who may apply to the DfT for decriminalised parking powers, the Highway Authority may, by way of agency agreement, delegate these responsibilities to District Council's
- 2.2 The Vale currently manages its off-street car parks under the Road Traffic Act 1984. The legislation for decriminalised parking enforcement was the Road Traffic Act 1994 however; in April 2008 this legislation was superseded by the Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA). Accordingly, the enforcement of traffic regulations and parking under the new TMA is now called "Civil Parking Enforcement" (CPE).
- 2.3 The TMA brings forward a number of changes to the scheme and also creates some new contraventions. However, there are two changes which will be fundamental to the on-going negotiations with OCC:
- Firstly, the DfT no longer requires Highway Authorities to show that CPE will be self financing (as was the case with DPE) and secondly,
  - The legislation allows a highway authority to choose between 2 tiers of charges where, within each tier there will be a "higher" and "lower" grade of contravention. This provides the ability to have differential fines for various levels of offence.

## 3.0 Enforcement and Fines

- 3.1 Under current arrangements, for non compliance with either on-street Traffic Orders or off-street Parking Orders, enforcement is a criminal sanction. When an offence is committed and the driver fails to pay the normal fine, the prosecuting authority has to prove its case to the Magistrates beyond reasonable doubt. Where Magistrates uphold a prosecution, the parking fine no longer comes to the appropriate Council, but is accrued to the Exchequer.
- 3.2 In the future, a single authority will have responsibility for enforcing parking controls. A Civil Enforcement Officer will place a penalty charge notice (PCN) on a vehicle that contravenes parking restrictions (both on and off-street). A PCN has the effect of giving notice that a sum of money is owed. A PCN can, in appropriate cases authorise the clamping and towing away of vehicles.
- 3.3 The penalty charges are debts, due to the local authority and enforceable through a streamlined version of the normal debt recovery processes in the civil courts. The process for English authorities is centralised and involves the electronic transfer of data to the Northampton County Court. Motorists wishing to contest liability for a penalty charge may make representations to the local authority and, if these are rejected, they may have grounds to appeal to independent adjudicators, whose decision is final (i.e. there is no right of further appeal through the courts). The standard of proof that applies in such cases is the lower civil standard - the case has to be proved on the balance of probabilities.

3.4 If no representations are made, or if the outcome of an appeal is that the notice still applies, the authority to whom the debt is owed can recover the debt through the county court. The local traffic authority retains the proceeds from the penalty charges, which are used to finance the enforcement and adjudication systems.

#### 4.0 Negotiations with Oxfordshire County Council

4.1 In March 2006 and again in April 2008 the Vale's Executive confirmed its support for DPE and requested its officers to work with the County Council to enable a scheme for decriminalised parking in the Vale to be progressed

4.2 The four rural District Council's in Oxfordshire have for several years been negotiating with Oxfordshire County Council to achieve decriminalised parking in each of the districts. Progress has been delayed principally because agreement can not be reached on the financial arrangements. This relates to the need for CPE to be self financing whereby the cost of running the service is met by the income received through fines.

4.2 Both the Vale and South Oxfordshire District Council have, to date, not been satisfied that CPE in the two districts could meet the financial objectives. However, the two authorities are currently working to bring their parking services together into a joint parking team which would work across both authorities. It is likely that such a reorganisation will bring significant operational and efficiency savings. In turn, this will open the door to bring CPE to both the Vale and SODC, with a target start date of autumn 2010.

Gordon Willcox  
June 2009

**WANTAGE AND GROVE**  
**TRAFFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Report of Directors of Environment and Economy.

Vale Avenue, Grove

Proposals have now been informally consulted upon and several objections have been received.

We will now take the proposal to formal consultation.

Denchworth Road

Having looked at the problem, we would suggest that Thames Valley Police issue tickets to vehicles parking along the footway. We will then review later to see if vehicles continue to park on the carriageway causing an unnecessary safety hazard.

Chain Hill

No funds are available to provide minimal widening of the footway to 1m width.

Cane Lane/Playing Field

Keep clear markings and bollard ordered.