

**MINUTES OF THE WANTAGE JOINT ECONOMIC
FORUM HELD IN WANTAGE CIVIC HALL, PORTWAY
ON THURSDAY 29 MAY 2008 AT 7.00 P.M.**

Members present:

Wantage Town Council	Councillors B Armitage, Mrs P Brundle, E. Goldsmith and Mrs L. Todd (substitute for P. O'Leary).
Vale of White Horse D.C.	Councillors Mrs J.T. Hannaby and Mrs J. Hutchinson
Chamber of Commerce	Mr M. Chapman and Mr H Hill

Others present:

District Council Officer	Mr T Warren
Wantage & Grove Healthcheck	P Scatchard and Mrs V Scatchard – up to item 6
Clerk	Mr W P Falkenau

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from R. Turnbull and Miss C. Falkenau, Town Councillors P O'Leary and Dr ICE Turcu, and observers Councillor Mrs. J. Nunn-Price, Councillor A.Tomkins and Mrs. E. Kahlon.

The Chairman being absent, it was agreed that Councillor Armitage be the Chairman for the meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

These were to be given as the meeting proceeded.

3. Election of Chairman for 2008/2009.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Mrs. Hannaby,
SECONDED by Councillor Mrs. Hutchinson,
IT WAS RESOLVED that Robin Turnbull be re-elected as Chairman.

4. Election of Vice-Chairman for 2008/2009.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Mrs. Hannaby,
SECONDED by Councillor Goldsmith,
IT WAS RESOLVED that Councillor Mrs. Hutchinson be Vice-Chairman.

5. Minutes of Meeting held on 7 February 2008

The minutes were approved and signed.

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6. Financial Statement 2007/2008

The Financial Statement for year ended 31 March 2008 was noted. (attached)

7. Wantage Health Check – Draft Action Plan and public consultation

An updated draft action plan had been distributed to members of the Forum, the Health Check Steering Group, Wantage Town Council and Grove Parish Council. Everyone had been invited to give comment. It was agreed to write to the District and County Councils advising them of the state of progress and seeking their support. A draft copy of the Action Plan was also to be passed to Ann Tweney of the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council. She now had responsibility for as Market Towns Coordinator. She was to be forewarned that it was hoped to apply for a grant from the Market Towns' Fund for receipt in 2009/10. **Action: Clerk**

A significant area of action identified, related to public transport and highway infrastructure. There were concerns that these actions could be significantly affected by the outcome of the Southern Central Oxfordshire Transport Strategy (SCOTS). This was due to be published in June. It may be necessary to call a special meeting of the Forum to consider this. **Action: Chairman**

Wantage and Grove also lacked involvement and representation on Quadrant. This forum had representation from South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Harwell Business Park, Milton Park Business Park and SEEDA. Its role was to consider the linking of the employment growth areas with those identified for future housing development. The Clerk was to write to Quadrant seeking representation for the Wantage area. **Action: Clerk**

Public consultation for the Action Plan had been set for 16th July in Wantage and 17th July in Grove. It was agreed that the volunteers who had conducted the SWOT analysis work should be invited to participate. **Action: Clerk**

There was a need to consider how the Action Plan should be taken forward after the consultation. The Joint Economic Forum would continue to hold a sponsoring role, but it was agreed that it was essential for the Steering Group to continue. Catherine Chater had provided an outline for the next stages of the Health Check process.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Mrs. Hannaby,
SECONDED by Councillor Mrs. Hutchinson,
IT WAS RESOLVED to enquire whether Catherine Chater could continue to provide ongoing support paid for by the Forum. **Action: Clerk**

It was agreed that the Steering Group should meet as soon as possible to sort out the arrangements for the public consultation. **Action: Clerk**

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Armitage
SECONDED by Councillor Mrs. Hannaby,
IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to commit up to £5,000 for the costs of the consultation activity. **Action: Clerk**

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It was noted that the support and development of Wantage.com website would play a major part in addressing matters raised by the action plan. Howard Hill said that he would welcome the interest and support in developing the website for this purpose.

The difficulty of raising funds for the floral and lighting displays was raised. Wantage Town Council had committed £6,000 for the purchase of additional poles in the streets leading to the Market Place. The Displays committee would struggle to raise the funds to pay for the hanging baskets. It was suggested that the Committee might consider seeking grant funding for the poles from elsewhere and ask the Town Council to pay for the hanging baskets. It was also suggested that the baskets be sought from a local horticulture group. **Action: Hutchinson**

P Scatchard and Mrs V Scatchard left the meeting.

8. Matters arising from the previous meeting:-

(a) Regent Cinema. The appeal by the owner had been rejected. The owner's agent was engaging with organisations interested in re-opening it as a cinema.

(b) Business Directory on Wantage.com. Mr Hill was willing to consider extending the business directory features of the Wantage.com website, but he was concerned that the integrity of the sites funding model should not be adversely affected. Currently any business could be listed free of charge on the directory but a fee was payable, if a more substantial display was required. The fees for the additional displays provided funds to enable community websites to be provided free of charge. He would give this further consideration. **Action: Hill**

Mr Chapman said that for the next production run of re-useable shopping bags, he would arrange for details of "Wantage.com" to be printed on them. **Action: Chapman**

(c) Undercroft car park in Mill Street. The undercroft had been handed over to the District Council but no date had been announced for its opening..

(d) French Markets. Following the success of the market in March, dates for two further markets had provisionally been set for 13th July and 16th November 2008..

(e) JEF Website. The Clerk was to provide information to Mr Hill regarding content. **Action: Clerk**

8. General Correspondence and Other Business

Wantage Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber would be holding an open meeting on 10 June 2008 at 7.30 pm at the Bear Hotel. Everyone was invited to attend.

9. Dates of Future Meetings

7th August and 6th November 2008 and 12th February 2009 at 7.30 pm.

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm.
