

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WANTAGE JOINT ECONOMIC
FORUM HELD IN WANTAGE CIVIC HALL, PORTWAY, ON
THURSDAY, 7 AUGUST, 2008, AT 7.00 P.M.**

Members present:

Wantage Town Council

Councillors B H Armitage, P O'Leary
and Dr I C E Turcu.

Vale of White Horse D.C.

Councillors Mrs J Hannaby, Mrs J Hutchinson,
Mrs Z Patrick and W Mellotti.

Chamber of Commerce

Mr M Chapman, Mrs S Mudway and
Mr R Turnbull (Chairman).

Others Present:

Grove Parish Council

Councillor Mrs J E Nunn-Price.

District Council Officer

Mr T Warren

Wantage & Grove Health-Check

Mrs V Scatchard

Deputy Clerk

Mrs H Kell

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs P Brundle, E C Goldsmith, A Tomkins (East Challow Parish Council observer), W P Falkenau (Clerk) , Mr H Hill and Miss C Falkenau (Chamber of Commerce).

2. Declarations of Interest

These were to be given as the meeting proceeded.

3. Minutes of Meeting held on 29 May, 2008

The minutes were amended.

Item 8(c) – Undercroft car park in Mill Street

This should read “The undercroft had not been handed over

The minutes, as amended, were approved and signed.

4. Wantage Health-Check

The Forum received an up-date on the Wantage Check-Health. Following the recent consultations over 70 responses had been received. It was now intended to pursue wider consultation in order to demonstrate general community support. The Forum proposed that an ecological consultant should be approached either through one of the Oxford colleges or the County and District Councils. It was reported that Simon Kenton was the County Council's Ecological Officer.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Mrs Hutchinson,
SECONDED by Councillor Mrs Hannaby,

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IT WAS RESOLVED that additional consultations be obtained by taking displays to local villages and schools. It was agreed that displays should be made available in Childrey early in September, and at the Grove Parish Council Reception on 19 September, 2008.

5. French Markets

Matthew Chapman reported that the recent French market had proved a success. The Chamber of Commerce had again funded the waste skip, but could not continue to fund this amenity at approximately £250 per market. Recognizing that the Health-Check supported additional vitality for the Town Centre, it was agreed that alternative methods for collection of the waste should be considered, i.e. the provision of a smaller skip on the Market Place or approaching some of the larger retailers to contribute to the cost.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Mrs Hannaby,
SECONDED by Councillor Armitage,
IT WAS RESOLVED that if no alternative funding could be found for the skip hire for the French market to be held on 16 November, the cost should be borne by the Joint Economic Forum.

6. Matters Arising

(a) Business Directory

In the absence of Howard Hill, it was reported that improvements to the website were required in order for it to be used more effectively. An increased funding of £1,800 had been requested. The redesigned website would include new photographs of the town, a diary of what is on in Wantage, classified advertisements and a business directory. Mr Warren confirmed that the website must be community-owned in order to apply for a grant from the District Council's South-East Area Committee.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Armitage,
SECONDED by Councillor Mrs Patrick,
IT WAS RESOLVED that ownership of the Wantage.com website should be ascertained in order for a community grant to be applied for, and £500 should be set aside from the Joint Economic Forum budget in order for improvements to commence.

(b) Undercroft Car Park in Mill Street

It was reported that the District Council had confirmed that the developers had accepted responsibility for the problems being experienced at the undercroft car park at the Limborough Road development.

(c) JEF Website

In the absence of Howard Hill, members suggested that details of the times and venues for meetings should be linked to the dates and eventually agendas and minutes be included on the website.

9. General Correspondence

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None.

10. Any Other Business

(a) Displays

The Forum received a report from the Displays Committee that difficulty was being encountered by the Committee and Oxfordshire County Council in locating suitable sites for new displays. The Town Council had set aside £6,000 in its budgets for the provision of new display columns, but because the Committee was having difficulty obtaining funding for the floral displays, requested that the Town Council consider allocating its budget for the purchase of floral displays instead of the display columns.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Armitage,
SECONDED by Councillor Mrs Hannaby,
IT WAS RESOLVED that this matter should be referred for further consideration by the Policy, Management and Finance Committee of the Town Council at its next meeting.

(b) Road Works within the Town Centre

The Forum noted that new electrical cables were being installed around the town. This was causing some problems for pedestrians in certain areas.

Mr Turnbull reported that the Chamber would be contributing £235 for weed clearing in the Town Centre.

(c) Harwell Bicycle User Group

Councillor Turcu reported that he had met with Mr Wisdom, the County Council officer responsible for cycling and cycle-paths in Oxfordshire. He was delighted Mr Wisdom considered cycling to be not just a leisure facility. He was proposing to produce cycle maps for all areas.

(d) Wantage Town Council Website

Councillor Armitage enquired whether the Chamber of Commerce had photographs and details of activities in Wantage which could be used on the revamped Town Council website.

(e) Museum Leaflets

Mr Warren reported that Tony Hadland had requested a reprint of the Museum leaflet at a cost of £1,800. The Forum agreed in principle to meet the cost.

(f) “Welcome Heroes Back” Campaign

Mr Warren reported that many towns around the country were becoming involved in the “Welcoming Heroes Back” campaign, and requested that the Chamber of Commerce

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consider getting its members involved in displays, etc. around the Town Centre indicating the town welcomed back its heroes.

(g) Pedestrian Crossing at Limborough Road Development

Complaints had been received that a pedestrian crossing had not been provided at the development. It was agreed that enquiries should be made as to whether this should have been provided as part of the Section 106 contribution from the developer.

Action: Clerk

(f) King Alfred's Statue

The Forum was pleased to note that the Statue had now been repaired and cleaned. The Town Mayor, Councillor O'Leary, suggested that the Wantage Silver Band be invited to attend on the Market Place and for the Council to mark the refurbishment and cleaning of the Statue.

10. Date of Next Meeting

6 November, 2008, at 7.00 p.m. in Wantage Civic Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.45 p.m.

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