

GROVE PARISH COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD
ON 22nd APRIL 2008 AT OLD MILL HALL, GROVE**

Present:

Cllr F D Parnell (Chairman)	Cllr A P Harker
Cllr W Evans (Vice-Chairman)	Cllr K Jones
Cllr W R Ackers	Cllr M Mellersh
Cllr J Amys	Cllr J E Nunn-Price
Cllr I M J Caldicott	Cllr C Phillips
Cllr S K Dexter	Cllr J M Stock
Cllr P L Hadcroft	Cllr I Woodbridge

In attendance: District councillor J McGee, 7 members of the public and one member of the Press

Clerk: Mr G M Mundy

167 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from parish councillors B Williamson and H Webb and county councillor Z Patrick.

168 Declaration of Personal or Personal and Prejudicial Interests in respect of items on the agenda for this meeting

Cllrs M Mellersh, K Jones, J Nunn-Price and A Harker declared an interest in item 178.

169 Sign minutes of the meeting held 11th March 2008

It was **MOVED** the chairman and **RESOLVED** unanimously

“that the minutes of the meeting be signed as a true record of the meeting”

170 Matters arising from the minutes of the meeting

- Clerk
- a. Item 150(b) – Letter to the EA regarding Faber Maunsell. The Clerk read out the reply from the EA. The Clerk was asked to respond to the EA and ask how the EA ensure that there is no conflict of interest on the part of Faber Maunsell when both the EA and the Airfield Developers engage them.
 - b. Item 150(c) – Letters sent to residents regarding their concerns over flooding issues. The Clerk informed the meeting that he had responded to the 3 letters from Grove residents who were concerned with flooding issues. No replies are expected.
 - c. Item 150(d) – Response to Jeff Bishop. The Clerk informed the council that he had responded to Jeff Bishop with suggestions on how to distribute the next Airfield Newsletter. A note of thanks had been received from Jeff Bishop.
 - d. Item 155 – Twinning Reception 20th April 2008. Cllr Nunn-Price reported that the reception to welcome the guests from Mably had taken place on Sunday 20th April.
 - e. Item 157 – OALC courses. The Clerk informed the meeting that no response had yet been received from Councillors with regard to attending the programmed OALC courses.

- Parnell/
Dexter/
Harker
- f. Item 158 – Report from the EA regarding flooding. Following a short discussion it was generally agreed that the Chairman, Cllrs Dexter and Harker meet to discuss questions to put to the EA before a meeting is arranged.
 - g. Item 160 – Enhancing the entrances to Grove. The Clerk informed the meeting that he had written to both of the Grove Primary Schools. It was confirmed that judging of the entries for the competition would take place prior to the schools summer holidays.
 - h. Item 161 – Celebrating Youth in the Vale. The Clerk informed the council that Harry Oliver’s name had been submitted to the Vale as the nomination from the Parish Council.
 - i. Item 162 – Article in the press by District Cllr J McGee. The chairman informed the meeting that despite a meeting having been arranged to discuss this issue, District Councillor McGee had then informed the chairman that he would not attend.

Cllr McGee stated that he was surprised that the Parish Council had not responded to his letter by submitting a response through the local press. The chairman said that the Parish Council did not and never had responded to articles in the press in that way, but would rather meet informally with the author of any letter and try and sort out any issues that way.

Cllr Hadcroft remarked that the Parish Council did not object to the content of the letter, but rather the tone of it. The chairman said that there were inaccuracies in the letter which included:

- the lay of the land (the airfield slopes in two directions)
- Letcombe Brook survey
- Ignoring the referendum

On the last point above, the chairman further remarked and said that in the Parish Council’s opinion, the referendum was not ignored, but the Parish Council had felt that the wrong question was being posed, and had informed the Grove Residents Group as such.

Cllr Evans said that he was concerned that Cllr McGee had questioned the integrity of the Parish Council over certain facts contained within his letter and asked Cllr McGee how long he had known about the lay of the land. Cllr McGee replied that he had known about the slopes of the land since he had become a District Councillor.

Cllr Hadcroft added that the Parish Council was a non-political authority and it was generally agreed by the council members that party political issues (albeit local) should be kept out of Parish Council matters. Cllr McGee said that that was irrelevant.

Cllr Phillips remarked that if Cllr McGee had attended more meeting in the previous year then perhaps he would have picked up on the point that the Council had objected to the airfield development up to a point where the local plan inspector had said that the development will go ahead on the former airfield. Cllr McGee said that this was irrelevant also.

Cllr McGee then said that there had been no public involvement in the consultation process, the Council do nothing to publicise the events or findings of the reports.

Cllr Caldicott said that he agreed with Cllr McGee and that the Parish Council needed to communicate with the electorate more.

The chairman replied that the last nine months had been a learning curve in so much as listening to the newly elected councillors and their ideas for communicating with the residents of the parish. He added that the Council was using the Parish Newsletter more; minutes are posted on to the council website, and displayed in Old Mill Hall.

The chairman also said that because of the associated costs to the parish council mail drops or information leaflets to all Grove residents would be inhibitive.

The chairman then said that there will be an update at the Annual Parish Meeting (to be held on Friday 2nd May 2008) regarding the airfield development, Thames Water reservoir etc.

The chairman then ended this discussion and moved on to the next item on the agenda.

171 Questions from the public

- a. Question from Mr Summers. *“Will the parish Council request that the Environment Agency ensure that the computer model developed for them by Faber Maunsell is fully representative and reliable and that the model should include the effects of the recent and planned development in Wantage; including the St Mary’s School development as well as the Garston Lane, Limborough Road and Wharf schemes”.*

Parnell

The chairman replied and said that he would include this question in the meeting with the Environment Agency.

172 County and district councillors’ reports

- a. County councillor report – County councillor Patrick had previously submitted a written report due to her absence from this meeting. A copy of the written report is attached as Appendix 1.
- b. District councillor report – District councillor McGee informed that council that Oxford City Council will be conducting a trial in road safety by imposing speed restrictions to 20 mph, and that eventually if successful could be rolled out in towns and villages.

173 Local Plan

- a. Current issues – The chairman said that according to Persimmon, the outline planning application for the airfield development would not now be submitted until September 2008 at the earliest.
- b. Correspondence from Mr Paul Davis of Persimmon Homes - Cllr Dexter said that the parish council had no criticism of Kemp & Kemp, but of BDOR and Jeff Bishop.

Clerk

It was generally agreed that the Clerk try and organise a meeting with Paul Davis, it was also suggested and agreed that user groups involved in the public consultation process so far are also invited to the meeting.

174 Council Chairman’s Communications

- a. Correspondence from the leader of OCC. The correspondence was noted.
- b. Vale & Downland Museum AGM. The Clerk informed the meeting that the AGM will be held on Friday 16th May commencing at 7.30 pm.

- Clerk
- c. Your Vale – Your Future. The Clerk informed the meeting that a forum meeting is being held on Tuesday 13th May at Wantage Civic Hall from 7 – 9 pm to discuss the Vale Sustainable Community Strategy.
 - d. Abingdon Town Council Annual Meeting. The Clerk informed the meeting that the Chairman and guest had been invited to the annual meeting of Abingdon Town Council on Wednesday 14th May 2008. It was agreed that the Clerk brings forward this invitation to the Annual Council Meeting on 6th May 2008.
 - e. Association of Small Historic Towns & Villages (ASHTAV). The Clerk informed the meeting that ASHTAV would be holding a meeting on Saturday 10th May regarding their village shop. This was noted.
 - f. Reservoir Affected Parishes (RAP) meeting. The Clerk informed the meeting the RAP would be holding a meeting regarding the reservoir on Friday 16th May at Hanney War Memorial Hall. Doors open at 7.15 pm.
 - g. Thames Water exhibition. The chairman informed the meeting that Thames Water will be holding their re-arranged exhibition on Wednesday 21st May in Old Mill Hall from midday to 9pm.
 - h. Oxford Brookes meeting. The chairman informed the meeting that Oxford Brookes University would be hosting a lecture regarding the proposed reservoir and recent changes in legislation. The lecture will take place on Wednesday 30th April at 6pm on the Gypsy Lane Campus.

175. Renewal quotation from Allianz Insurance for 2008/2009

Clerk The Clerk informed the meeting that Allianz had increased their excess relating to claims arising from flood damage to £1000 per claim. The Clerk was asked to write to the insurance company and ask why the excess has gone up and if the rise is specific to Grove or is it a general increase.

It was **PROPOSED** the chairman **SECONDED** Cllr Stock and **RESOLVED** unanimously

Clerk **“to accept the quotation from Allianz Insurance to the sum of £8,515.95 for 2008/09”**

176. Interim report from the Leisure & Recreation committee regarding the Dog Ban consultation

Cllr Ackers gave a brief history in to the background of this issue and requested that the council provide more guidance over this matter. Cllr Ackers said that the landowners agents had written to the council and informed them that the area of land known as Wasbrough Field should be retained for the use of all of the community (including dog walkers) and that dogs should not be banned from this land.

The Clerk informed the meeting that he had received various correspondences from residents, both in favour of a dog ban and against. One particular resident (who actually lived in Wantage) had written and said that her husband, who was disabled had an assistance dog, who had to be exercised regularly off the lead, and that the banning of dogs or a dog control order stipulating that dogs be kept on leads would contravene the agreement they had for keeping such a dog.

Cllr Caldicott said that regardless of personal circumstances the health and safety of users of the Recreation Ground and Wasbrough Field was more important.

A short discussion took place regarding the possibility of banning dogs from the Recreation Ground (parish owned land) but imposing a dog control order for Wasbrough Field stipulating that dogs must be kept on leads and to the perimeter of Wasbrough Field. It was generally agreed that this was impractical due to the nature of the two adjoining fields and the confusion that it may cause.

Cllr Harker said that dog walkers are already using the community wood area to exercise their dogs.

It was also suggested that an area of land could be fenced off to accommodate dog walkers, but this was subject to the costs involved. The Clerk said that the area behind the Rugby clubhouse (currently the Rangers FC pitch) is the most accessible and easiest to ring fence for dog walkers, but would mean the Rangers FC moving to the front of the clubhouse.

It was **PROPOSED** Cllr Evans **SECONDED** Cllr Ackers **“that the Council proceed with a Dog Control Order in which it would be stipulated that dogs must be kept on leads and restricted to the outer perimeter of both the Recreation Ground and Wasbrough Field”**.

It was further **PROPOSED** Cllr Dexter **SECONDED** Cllr Hadcroft **“to proceed with a Dog Control Order in which it would be stipulated that dogs must be kept on leads and restricted to the outer perimeter of both the Recreation Ground and Wasbrough Field subject to an agreement from the land owner of Wasbrough Field”**.

Voting took place on the amendment to the proposal by Cllr Dexter and there were 12 in favour and 2 against.

Therefore it was **RESOLVED** to accept the amended proposal by Cllr Dexter.

The Clerk reminded the meeting that the public consultation stage of this matter would not be complete until the 27th May 2008.

Cllr Ackers was then asked how the Dog Control Order would be policed, and he replied that the local neighbourhood policing team and the Environmental Wardens have said that they would assist the parish council in policing the areas.

177 Correspondence from SEERA regarding the Regional Housing Strategy

The correspondence was noted.

178 Grant Applications

The Clerk informed the meeting that there had been 7 applications received for this half of the year. Following discussion it was agreed that only the application from the Wantage & Grove Croquet Club would not be supported this time. The Clerk was asked to inform them accordingly and suggest that they re-apply for the October grants. Therefore, it was **MOVED** the chairman **SECONDED** Cllr Hadcroft and **RESOLVED** unanimously

“that Grove parish Council award grant aid as follows:

Home Start Southern Oxon - £50	Wantage Diving Club - £25
Ryder Cheshire Volunteers - £30	Grove CE School - £100
Fitzwaryn School - £100	Root & Branch - £30”

Clerk

The total grant aid awarded for the first half of the year was £335. The second half-year applications will be awarded at the Full Council meeting on 21st October 2008.

Clerk

179 Summary of East Hendred Parish Plan

The summary was noted.

180. Wantage Town Council minutes

The minutes were noted. The Clerk informed that meeting that the Wantage Town Clerk had been asked to enquire with the District Council regarding the Boundary Commission change to the parish boundary for the Mably Grove and Warmans Close areas.

The Clerk was also asked to make enquires with regard to these areas and also to the area of the Grove Technology Park and ask if the latter is to become part of Grove Parish.

181 Reports relating to the following

- a. Joint Environmental Trust for Grove – The next JET meeting is to be held on Thursday 24th April at 6.30 pm in Old Mill Hall.
- b. Wantage Joint Economic Forum – Cllr Nunn-Price informed the council that the Forum had agreed a proposed action plan regarding the on-going Wantage & Grove Healthcheck and that there will a public consultation event which will take place at Old Mill Hall on Thursday 26th May from Midday to 3 pm and then from 6 pm to 8 pm. The Clerk was asked to book the Dixon Suite on behalf of the Healthcheck.
- c. Fair Trade Village update – There was nothing to report.

Clerk

182 Committee Reports

- a. Report of Environmental Services Committee meeting held on 18th March 2008 – The report was presented by Cllr J E Nunn-Price.
- b. Report of Planning Committee meetings held on 25th March and 15th April 2008 - Cllr J Stock presented the reports.
- c. Report of Leisure and Recreation Committee meeting held on 1st April 2008 - Cllr R Ackers presented the report.
- d. Report of Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 8th April 2008 - The report was presented by the vice chairman.

183 Accounts for payment as per Appendix 2

It was **MOVED** the Chairman **SECONDED** Cllr S Dexter and **RESOLVED** unanimously

“that the accounts for the sum of £20,492.84 be adopted.”

184 Confidential items

It was **MOVED** the chairman and **RESOLVED** unanimously in accordance with Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as amended by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972 ...

“that the press and public be excluded from the meeting to permit the committee to consider the confidential items.”

Confirmed 6th May 2008

Chairman

