

GROVE PARISH COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD
ON 29th JANUARY 2008 AT OLD MILL HALL, GROVE**

Present:	Cllr F D Parnell (Chairman)	Cllr K Jones
	Cllr W Evans (Vice-Chairman)	Cllr M Mellersh
	Cllr W R Ackers	Cllr J E Nunn-Price
	Cllr I M J Caldicott	Cllr C Philips
	Cllr S K Dexter	Cllr J M Stock
	Cllr P L Hadcroft	Cllr H A Webb
	Cllr A P Harker	Cllr I J Woodbridge
In attendance:	County Councillor Z Patrick	District Councillor J McGee
	District Councillor S Marchant	17 members of the public
Clerk:	Mr G M Mundy	

Prior to the start of the meeting the Chairman asked all those present to stand in a minutes silence in memory of the late Councillor Jim Moley

123 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from councillor D M Hadcroft.

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

Cllr Dexter and Cllr Jones both declared an interest in item 133. Cllr Dexter also declared an interest in items 129(c) and 136.

Cllr Z Patrick arrived

125 Sign minutes of the meeting held 4th December 2007

The chairman informed the meeting that Mr Chown had sent an amendment for inclusion in the minutes of the 4th December that he read out. Therefore it was **MOVED** the chairman and **RESOLVED** unanimously

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

126 Matters arising from the minutes of the meeting

(a) Item 104(a) – Policy of selling council land – The clerk informed the council that he is putting together a file listing all council owned land. He informed the council that he would arrange a meeting of the sub committee when this is completed.

(b) Item 104(b) – Raising the Councils’ profile – The clerk informed the council that he was still waiting for 3 councillor profiles to be submitted and several photographs.

127 Questions from the public

(a) Statement from Mr Geoff Chown – “As you are aware, Don Summers and myself have assisted the Council Flood Action sub committee and we hope our input has helped.

In tandem with this and as part of Grove Residents Group (GRG) activities we have examined flood issues from the Airfield Development. It is planned to present the results to local residents in the near future. As a matter of courtesy I have brought an advanced copy on CD which you may like to show this evening

In addition there are several questions that we wish to put to council.”

- (b) Question from Don Summers – “I assume that this council has been informed by District representatives of the recommendation for the Vale to approve the application by Persimmon homes to ban all elected councillors from attending Grove Development team meetings. My question is "what action does the Parish Council propose to take to protest at this attempt to exclude local participation?"

The chairman asked the District Councillors to respond. District Cllrs Patrick and Marchant informed the council that they were not aware of this. Cllr P Hadcroft (member of the District Councils’ Standards Committee) was also not aware of this, but said that he would investigate.

Hadcroft

Clerks Note: Cllr P Hadcroft has investigated item 127(b) above and replies as follows:

“The Local Code of Conduct for Members and Officers dealing with planning matters came before the Full Council of the VoWHDC at their last meeting in December 2007. It was decided to pass this document for perusal and comment by the executive and various committees and finally to the Standards Committee. The Standards Committee will have first sight of this document at its meeting next Monday and will be the last to pass suggestions and comments, before the new Code for Planning can be accepted by full council. Only then can a decision be made regarding the application made by Persimmon to ban all elected members from attending Grove Development team meetings. The relevant paragraph (4.6) of the new Code of Conduct reads "In response to large proposed developments, where a formal officers' team has been formed, local members will be invited to observe and take part in pre-application discussions. It is important that members restrict their involvement to receiving and gathering information on the proposals and providing views on the issues likely to be of concern in the locality.”

- (c) Question from Don Summers – “In an email sent by the Environment Agency on 24th January, I had been informed that design of the drainage system for the development was not yet complete, and the critical rainstorm event had not been determined. Council is asked to contact the VoWHDC and Faber Maunsell Ltd requesting confirmation from the VoWHDC chief engineer that drainage would be to the BS 12056 Standard of 54mm of rain in one hour”.

The chairman replied and the clerk was asked to write to the District Council and Faber Maunsell to ensure that the drainage system will comply with BS12056.

Clerk

- (d) Question from Geoff Chown – “In the minutes to the VoWHDC meeting dated 4th December 2007, section 12 Development Policies and Responses to consultation on Major Infrastructure – Influence on Future Flooding Incidents, it states that ‘This Council as Planning Authority will itself check reports from the under-funded Environmental Agency and developer’s agents with regard to flood impact.’

The Strategic and Local Planning Advisory Group has since discussed this motion and recognises that the Environmental Agency is the appropriate body to provide independent technical advice on flooding matters relating to planning applications and

the surface water drainage strategies of large-scale development proposals submitted as part of environmental statements.

The Environment Agency is the expert in this field and has a statutory duty to prepare and update flood maps and advise on the flooding implications of development proposals.

“Therefore why has the Environment Agency seen fit to ask the drainage engineer from Faber Maunsell, who is acting on behalf of the developers, as to the amount of rain required for a 1 in 100 year event?”

This information has been requested from the Environment Agency since September 2007 and they have been unable to give figures and now following emails between the two sides, Faber Maunsell has advised the Environmental Agency that it is between 40 – 54mm for this event.

Therefore, will the Parish Council request an immediate and formal update from the Environment Agency and VoWHDC regarding the flooding implications for the area based upon the development proposal?”

Clerk

The Chairman replied that the Parish Council would write and request the information.

- (e) Question from Geoff Chown – “We understand that the Vale has a Principal Engineer responsible for reviewing planning applications and all applications within any flood zone and provides technical advice on drainage and flooding matters.

Will the Parish request what information the Principal Engineer has supplied the developers regarding drainage and flooding for the development and confirm that this is correct by consulting with independent consultants?”

The chairman replied that the Parish Council will ask the principal engineer for the information but could not commit to engaging an independent specialist because of the costs involved.

Clerk

- (f) Question from Mrs Gregory – “Why do the developer’s plans show the incorrect fall of the land (falling south when it actually falls north) and why have the Parish or County/District Councillors not corrected this matter with the planners as it will have a major effect on the proposal regarding drainage?”

The chairman replied that according to the local plan the land falls both to the north and south (depending on where you are). He further informed Mrs Gregory that this was raised as a comment as part of the local plan inquiry.

- (g) Question from Mrs Long – Mrs Long informed the council that recently her grandson fell in dog faeces whilst on the Recreation Ground and was covered ‘head to foot’. She asked the council if the area was for sports or dog walking area, it could not be both and the council needs to find an area away from the sports pitches for dog walkers.

Mr Jim Homer agreed with the question in item (g) above and made a statement indicating the amount of dog walkers using the Recreation Ground over a set period time.

The chairman replied that this matter would be discussed later in the agenda.

128 County and district councillors' reports

- (a) County councillor report – County councillor Patrick read out her report. A written report is attached as Appendix 1.
- (b) District councillor reports – District councillor Marchant and District Councillor McGee gave verbal reports.

129 Local Plan

- (a) Current issues – The chairman reported that nothing had moved forward recently and that the developers are still awaiting further information from the Environment Agency and Thames Water.
- (b) Council response to the Scoping Opinion issued in November 2007 – Cllr Harker informed the council that because the Environmental Impact Assessment process is so far on that the Scoping Opinion is out of date. That said, he further reported that despite repeatedly informing the District Council, there are still two issues which are still missing from the opinion;
- there is no clear definition of the study area, and
 - no reference is made to the Baseline Studies

Harker/
Clerk

It was suggested and agreed that the Clerk writes to the Vale and ask why these two issues are still missing from the Scoping Opinion.

- (c) Correspondence from Grove RFC regarding the Grove Airfield Development – The chairman said the question needs to be asked is; ‘why did the switching round of the community park and recreation area become part of the plans without consultation’.

Clerk

The Clerk was asked to write to Persimmon Homes and ask why they have still not contacted Grove Rugby Club with a view to relocating the clubhouse and compensation etc.

It was **PROPOSED** Cllr Dexter **SECONDED** and **RESOLVED** 12 in favour and 2 abstentions (Cllr Evans and Cllr Stock abstained)

Clerk

“to write to the Chief Executives of Persimmon Homes and the Vale of White Horse District Council and express this councils’ concern at the way the running of the Community Workshops and Development Forum meetings in relation to the Community Park by BDOR (Jeff Bishop) and feel that this is undermining confidence in the Grove Airfield Development by the lack of negotiations and consultation.”

130 Council Chairman’s Communications

- (a) Letter from Oxfordshire Association for the Blind re council grant – This was noted.
- (b) Letter from the Grove Day Centre for the Elderly re donation – The letter was noted.
- (c) Development North of Grove – The chairman explained that the office had received a letter and draft plan of a proposed development north of Grove between the Bellingers Garage and Williams F1. The letter invited comments by 8th February 2008. The Clerk was asked to reply to the letter but offer no comments due to insufficient time to

Clerk

Clerk consider the plan. The Clerk was also asked to invite the proposed developers to present their plans at a future meeting in February/March. The Clerk was also asked to copy the letter and plan to all Councillors.

- (d) Thames Water pipeline – The chairman informed the council that notification has been received from Thames Water that they will be carrying out refurbishment work on a pipe along the area of the Mably Way road. This was noted.
- (e) Correspondence from the Parish Church – The chairman informed the council that the Parish Church would be holding a fete on Saturday 28th June 2008. The date was noted.
- (f) Reservoir meeting – The chairman informed the council that GARD (Group Against the Reservoir Development) is holding a meeting on Friday 8th February 2008 at Steventon Village Hall commencing at 7.30pm.

131 Report from the working group regarding flood issues in Grove

Cllr Caldicott on behalf the working group thanked Mr Summers, Mr Chown and Ms Wallington for their assistance in formulating the draft report.

Cllr Caldicott updated the council on the Emergency Disaster Plan which covered various scenarios including flooding.

Cllr Evans asked who would be paying for the emergency planning equipment and did not think that the parish should be responsible.

Cllr Parnell explained that the remit of the working group was to find out what the parish council could do in the event of another flood or other disaster and it was suggested and agreed that this should be carried out in conjunction with the District Council's Emergency Disaster Plan.

Caldicott

Cllr Caldicott said that the District Council's Emergency Disaster Plan was still in draft format and that he would consider this when amending the Parish Disaster Plan.

Caldicott

Cllr Dexter said that Cllr Caldicott and the rest of the working group should be commended for their efforts so far and that this was a good starting point for this issue to be carried forward.

All

It was suggested and agreed that comments and or suggestions on the Emergency Disaster Plan should be directed to Cllr Caldicott through the Clerk.

132 Correspondence from East Hanney Parish Council regarding installing a flow meter in the Letcombe Brook

The chairman invited Cllr Harker to speak on this matter. Cllr Harker asked if they meant a 'level' meter. He also said that the Letcombe Brook Project Officer (Sally Wallington) is speaking to East Hanney Parish Council regarding what equipment they need. Cllr Harker further said that a flow meter would be of no benefit to Grove, but a level meter would be.

County Cllr Patrick said that the Environment Agency would be installing a 'level' meter in the brook in the near future. It was therefore suggested and agreed that the Clerk reply to East Hanney Parish Council and inform them that Grove Parish Council will not be installing a 'flow' meter, but if East Hanney Parish Council wished to do so in Grove, they could.

Clerk

133 Correspondence from the Vale & Downland Museum regarding funding

Cllr Dexter and Cllr Jones left the room and took no part in this item. Following a short discussion regarding the Vale & Downland Museum finances it was generally agreed not to increase the grant to the Museum Trust. The Clerk was asked to inform them accordingly. Cllr Dexter and Cllr Jones rejoined the meeting.

Clerk

134 Wantage Town Council minutes

The minutes received from Wantage Town Council were noted.

135 Military Service personnel who live in the community

A short discussion ensued where Cllr P Hadcroft said that there is no reason why the Parish Council should specially honour the service personnel who live in the community. Cllr Nunn-Price suggested and it was agreed that members of the service community could be invited to the Parish Reception.

Clerk

136 Correspondence regarding dog walking/dog waste in the Recreation Ground/Wasbrough Field

The chairman explained that following the publication of the article in the local press and other complaints regarding dog waste on the Recreation Ground/Wasbrough Field this matter had been brought to Full Council for discussion.

A discussion ensued where Cllr Caldicott said that it would only take one victim to fall ill as a result of dog waste and the council could be in serious trouble. He further added that it was time the council was more proactive than just reactive.

The Clerk informed the Council that he had been speaking to the Environment Wardens at the Vale who have been patrolling the area more regularly and are compiling a Dog Control Order pack for distribution to the Council. The Clerk further explained that Dog Control Orders (part of the Clean Neighbourhood Act) would have to be enforced at Parish Council level through the courts if necessary.

Following further discussion it was **PROPOSED** Cllr P Hadcroft **SECONDED** Cllr Caldicott and **RESOLVED** 13 in favour and 1 abstention

“that the Council agrees in principle to work towards banning dogs from the Recreation Ground/Wasbrough Field subject to finding an alternative area for dog walkers and resolving any legal issues and to defer this matter to the Leisure & Recreation Committee to propose a viable solution.”

Clerk

137 Parish Councillor vacancy

The chairman explained that due to self-disqualification of Mr Sewell, the Parish Council now had a vacancy for Parish Councillor and having displayed a notice informing the public of this no electors had requested an election, therefore the council could co-opt.

Clerk

The Clerk informed the Council that he would post the co-option notice on the notice boards advertising the vacancy. The Clerk also informed the council that the closing date for applications would be Thursday 6th March, allowing the council to choose a co-opted member at its next meeting on the 11th March.

138 Meetings timetable for 2008/2009

Clerk The draft meeting timetable for 2008/2009 was agreed. The Clerk was asked to distribute the timetable to the County & District Councillors.

139 Committee Recommendations

- a) Environmental Services Committee – On the proposition by Cllr Harker seconded by Cllr P Hadcroft “**to recommend to Full Council that the budget estimate for 2008/09 from the Environmental Services Committee be set at £5,020.**”

it was **PROPOSED** Cllr Ackers **SECONDED** Cllr P Hadcroft and **RESOLVED** unanimously

Clerk “**to accept the recommendation from the Environmental Services Committee and set the budget estimate for 2008/2009 at £5,020.**”

- b) Leisure & Recreation Committee

On the proposition by Cllr Ackers seconded by Cllr Stock “**to recommend to Full Council that the budget estimate of the Leisure and Recreation Committee be set at £29,650**”

it was **PROPOSED** Cllr Ackers **SECONDED** Cllr Stock and **RESOLVED** unanimously

Clerk “**to accept the recommendation from the Leisure & Recreation Committee and set the budget estimate for 2008/2009 at £29,650.**”

- c) Finance & General Purposes Committee –

(i) On the proposition by Cllr Parnell seconded by Cllr P Hadcroft “**to recommend to Full Council that the budget estimate of the Finance & General Purposes Committee be set at £179,918 and also a specific reserve is established for the Planning Consultant**”

it was **MOVED** Cllr Parnell **SECONDED** Cllr P Hadcroft and **RESOLVED** unanimously

Clerk “**to accept the recommendation from the Finance & General Purposes Committee and set the budget estimate for 2008/2009 at £179,918**”

(ii) On the proposition by Cllr Parnell seconded Cllr Stock and resolved 4 in favour and 1 abstention

“**to recommend to Full Council to accept the Precept Statement**”

The chairman explained that because the Council had been drawing from its Reserves over recent years there are several options open to the council:

- accept the Precept Statement as it is and take one big rise in one go, or
- stage the increase over several years, or
- continue to offset the Precept from the Reserves.

Following discussion it was **PROPOSED** Cllr Nunn-Price **SECONDED** Cllr Ackers and **RESOLVED** 13 in favour and 1 abstention (Cllr Evans abstained)

Clerk **“to accept the Statement and set the Council Precept for 2008/2009 at £214,588**

140 Reports relating to the following

- Clerk
- a) Joint Environmental Trust for Grove - With regard to locations and suggestions to enhance the entrances to Grove, the Clerk was asked to write to the local Primary Schools and ask if the school children would like to suggest ideas for enhancing the entrances to Grove.
 - b) Wantage Joint Economic Forum. – No meeting had taken place.
 - c) Fair Trade Village update. – Cllr Mellersh informed the Council that as part of Fair Trade Fortnight, a Fair Trade produce show is planned for Saturday 8th March 2008.

141 Committee Reports

- a) Report of Environmental Services Committee meeting held on 11th December 2007 – The report was presented by Cllr J E Nunn-Price.
- b) Report of Planning Committee meetings held on 18th December 2007 and 22nd January 2008 - Cllr J Stock presented the reports.
- c) Report of Leisure and Recreation Committee meeting held on 8th January 2008 - Cllr R Ackers presented the report.
- d) Report of Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 15th January 2008 - The report was presented by the chairman.

142 Accounts for payment as per Appendix

It was **MOVED** Cllr Stock **SECONDED** Cllr P Hadcroft and **RESOLVED** unanimously

“that the accounts for the sum of £37,687.08 be adopted.”

143 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.”

The meeting closed at 10.45 pm

Confirmed 11th March 2008

Chairman