

**GROVE PARISH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD  
ON 31<sup>st</sup> JULY 2007 AT OLD MILL HALL, GROVE**

**Present:** Cllr F D Parnell (Chairman)  
Cllr W Evans (Vice-Chairman)  
Cllr W R Ackers  
Cllr I Caldicott  
Cllr S Dexter  
Cllr D M Hadcroft  
Cllr P L Hadcroft  
Cllr J Nunn-Price  
Cllr C Philips  
Cllr J M Stock  
Cllr H Webb  
Cllr I Woodbridge

**In attendance:** 10 members of public

**Clerk:** Mr G M Mundy

**35 Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from parish councillors K Jones and M Mellersh. County councillors Patrick and Moley and district councillor Marchant.

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

There were no declarations of interest. The chairman suggested that any declarations may be given as the meeting proceeds.

**37 Sign minutes of the annual council meeting held 19<sup>th</sup> June 2007**

The clerk informed the council that Cllr Webb had attended the previous meeting, but her attendance was not recorded.

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

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

**38 Matters arising from the minutes of the meeting**

There were no matters arising.

**39 Questions from the public**

There were no questions from the public.

Standing orders were suspended to allow a member of the public to speak. Mr Chown spoke on the recent referendum.

Mr Chown raised the following points:

- The main intention of the referendum was to obtain an independent view of local opinion.
- It is hoped this has given the Parish Council a broader view.

- It does not necessarily mean opposition to **all** future developments.
- But it does demonstrate the desire for far more openness in planning for the community.
- Past experience of District Council planning has led people to realise the developers' dominate role in planning.
- There is deep suspicion that secrecy (over, for example, the so-called base line studies) enables the developer to set his own agenda through the deliberate exclusion of local knowledge and experience.
- This result is a loud call for the council to cease the custom behind-closed-doors dealings with developers, and for proposals put in the public domain at an early stage.
- It is appreciated that no Parish Council has the expertise available to large corporations but within a community the size of Grove there is a wealth of knowledge and experience that is being ignored.
- It would be in everyone's interests for the Parish Council to seek advice from the community over those matters that lie outside its competence.
- To do so would increase respect for the council and encourage a greater sense of community involvement to replace the widespread feeling of remoteness.

Mr Chown also passed on the following comments collected at the referendum from electors:

- Kingfishers Resident – Victim of flood - Why no visit from Councillors? Parish or District. Some sympathy would have helped. No statement heard on Radio Oxford when other Parish officials were making comments.
- Some comment regarding opening times for Parish offices – Residents who work full time – Possible late evening or Councillor surgery.
- Several Voters. Why were pavements in village in such a poor condition?
- Would there be any Council Tax reduction for householders affected by flooding. One local resident took the trouble to research this question.
- Why have VWHDC selected one developer for the site. SODC invited competition from several developers when Ladygrove was built.

Non availability of proxy/postal vote (This was explained to organisers by VWHDC at outset).

Standing Orders were reinstated.

The chairman thanked Mr Chown for the points raised and informed the meeting that this matter will be discussed further at a future meeting.

Cllr Caldicott suggested that this meeting should be an open Full Council meeting to which all members and members of the public attended. Cllr Dexter suggested and it was generally agreed that the meeting be a special council meeting, probably in the autumn once further advice has been received. Cllr Nunn-Price said that the council should invite a specialist to the meeting i.e. Neil Boddington to advise the parish council.

The chairman further stated that the Outline Planning Application would cover all of the 2500 houses proposed.

#### **40 County and district councillors' reports**

The chairman read out a report from county councillor Patrick. A written copy is attached as an appendix.

*Clerks note: Please note that the full 10 page document is available in the office and will be copied to Councillors upon request.*

Clerk

The clerk was asked to obtain a copy of the feedback from residents regarding the flooding. No other reports had been received.

**41 Local Plan**

- a) Current issues – The chairman informed the meeting that a meeting was held on 24<sup>th</sup> July with representatives from the county council, district council and the developers. The chairman and vice-chairman attended with committee chairmen. A briefing note relating to the meeting was distributed to all councillors.

The chairman said that the meeting was very useful in getting the parish councils viewpoint across.

A discussion took place regarding the attendance at the meeting and some councillors were annoyed that they could not attend. The chairman said that he made the decision in good faith and to avoid an imbalance of participants. Cllr P Hadcroft then said that at the annual council meeting Cllr Parnell was elected chairman and made a chairman's decision. The chairman noted the feeling of the meeting and promised to take this into account at any future meetings.

Cllr Dexter said that the council needs to publicise more and be more proactive in its business.

Clerk The clerk was asked to contact Jeff Bishop and request that a focus group meeting to discuss the community park/sports and leisure is held again because of the new favoured southern access road route.

The chairman then further stated that he had asked Steven Sencecal of Kemp & Kemp and Geraldine LeCointe of the Vale to facilitate a further exhibition to be held on Grove as soon as the Outline Planning Application was available.

Cllr Dexter further stated that an exhibition needed to be more widely publicised. Cllr Nunn-Price suggested that the chairman and the clerk prepare a press release from points in the briefing note, the chairman said that he would look at this. He also said that the briefing note would be distributed to the county and district councillors.

Clerk Clerk The chairman further stated that the county council and the developers will conduct their own traffic surveys, but would use the same traffic simulation models. The clerk was asked to add this paragraph to the briefing note. The clerk was also asked to e-mail the SCOTS document to those councillors who did not attend the meeting.

Clerk The vice-chairman stated that the parish council would seek to ask the district council and BDOR if the Grove Resident Association can attend further forum meeting with two representatives.

- b) Planning Consultant – The chairman said that the Planning Consultant, Mr Neil Boddington was taken on to give council advice on the Southern Access Road and possible sale of part or all of the recreation ground. Cllr P Hadcroft said that because we now know that the route of the Southern Access Road would not cross the recreation ground is there a need for the Planning Consultant.

Clerk The chairman replied and said that the Planning Consultant will still be used and advice sought from him on the Outline Planning Application and also to assist the council in ensuring ownership within the new development is transferred to the parish council. The chairman also said that this matter should be referred to the Finance and General Purposes Committee for further discussion. The clerk was asked to provide members with Neil Boddington's CV and terms and conditions of his employment.

**42 Council Chairman's Communications**

- a) Request from Grove Scout Group for a meeting – The clerk was asked to reply to Grove Scouts and inform them that the chairman, vice-chairman and Cllr Ackers will meet them

Clerk on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2007. The clerk was also asked to ascertain what they want covered in the meeting.

Clerk b) Invitation from OCC to attend a Town and Parish liaison event on 27<sup>th</sup> September – The chairman agreed to attend this event. The clerk is to inform OCC accordingly.

Clerk c) Invitation to attend a “Millennium of Oxfordshire” Celebration on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2007 – The chairman agreed to attend this event. The clerk is to inform the Lord Lieutenants office accordingly.

Clerk/  
H&S  
Officer d) Employment Law and Health & Safety update – It was generally agreed that the clerk and Health & Safety officer attend this update.

#### 43 **Request from Grove Rangers FC to adopt an under 15/16’s youth team**

Councillors Caldicott, Phillips, Webb and Woodbridge declared and interest in this item.

Cllr Ackers gave a brief outline regarding this request, and further informed the council that he had received new information regarding this team and where they would be playing their games. He said that the Rangers 1<sup>st</sup> team would continue to play on the main pitch behind the clubhouse, the Reserves team would hopefully be sharing a pitch with Challengers and if the need arose would also play on the main pitch behind the clubhouse. The Rangers “A” team will play at KA’s West Site. The new under 16’s will play either on a Grove pitch or at KA’s West Site. Cllr Ackers further said that the team originated from Childery. The chairman asked if the Challengers catered for this age group, and the response was that they did. It was therefore generally agreed that this request be rejected.

*Clerks note: Cllr Ackers has written to the secretary of Rangers informing them of the decision.*

#### 44 **Internally audited accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007**

Clerk a) Balance Sheet as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007 – Cllr Dexter asked why the balance sheet did not show the council’s fixed assets and borrowings. The clerk said that he would clarify this with the internal auditor.

Clerk b) Annual return for External Audit – It was **MOVED** Cllr Nunn-Price **SECONDED** Cllr Dexter and **RESOLVED** 11 for and 1 abstention

Clerk **“that the Annual Return and Statement of Assurance be signed.”**

The Annual Return and Statement of Assurance were both signed by the chairman and clerk.

Clerk c) Statement of Small Accounts – The statement of small accounts was noted.

The clerk was asked to place on the agenda for the next Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting an item for discussion relating to the Millennium Building Fund and the Cricket Club Fund. It was also agreed that the clerk obtains a re-evaluation of the Share Price from the Charity Fund.

#### 45 **Financial Risk Assessment for 2007/08**

The financial risk assessment was approved and signed by the chairman.

#### 46 **Weekend Litter Warden**

Clerk It was generally agreed to re-advertise this vacancy on a wider distribution.

*Clerks note: The application deadline has been set as 28<sup>th</sup> September 2007 because the next issue of the Parish Newsletter is not published until the beginning of September.*

**47 Vale & Downland Museum Grant for 2007/08**

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

S137  
refers

**“to award the grant of £580 to the Vale and Downland Museum Trust for 2007/08.”**

**48 Replacement Tree Planting Policy**

Cllr Ackers informed the council that the Amenity Tree Planting Scheme (VWHDC) is no longer in existence and therefore should the council consider formulating its own policy.

Cllr Nunn-Price suggested and it was agreed that a joint working group be formed from members of the Environmental Services and Leisure and Recreation Committees.

Clerk

The clerk was asked to place this item in the next agendas for these committees.

**49 Attendance at “Effective Response to Planning Application” course**

The above course is to be held on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2007 at Didcot Civic Hall. It was generally agreed that councillors inform the clerk by 24<sup>th</sup> August of they wish to attend.

All

**50 Council Reserve Policy**

Cllr Dexter read out a draft outline of the suggested policy. It was generally agreed that the clerk ascertain the auditors view on this and place an item on the next Finance and General Purposes Committee agenda.

Clerk

**51 Recent Flooding**

All councillors received a briefing note regarding the recent flooding in Grove on 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> July. Discussion took place in which councillors Ackers, Dexter and Hadcroft suggested that an emergency plan was needed in case of future emergencies. Cllr Nunn-Price suggested and it was agreed that the chairman take this issues up with the Vale at the liaison meeting.

It was **MOVED** Cllr Dexter **SECONDED** Cllr Stock and **RESOLVED** unanimously

**“to issue the briefing note to the county councillors, district councillors and also place on the notice boards and in the parish newsletter”.**

Clerk

The clerk was also asked to enquire with the Vale what had happened to the portable flood defence system that was demonstrated some time ago in Grove. The chairman informed the council that he had received a letter from Mr Murfin of Vale Avenue who had also been flooded and was asking questions. The letter is to be distributed to all parish councillors.

Clerk

Clerk

The chairman said that on behalf of the council, he expressed his sympathy to all those that were/are affected by the floods in Grove.

Cllr Caldicott stated that part of his job was to evaluate and formulate disaster plans and would be happy to look at the issue

Caldicott

**52 Reports from the following**

a) Joint Environmental Trust for Grove – The chairman said that district councillor Marchant was now chairman and Cllr Harker was elected vice-chairman. The minutes of the last meeting are to be distributed to all parish councillors once received

Clerk

b) Wantage Joint Economics Forum – The next meeting is to be held on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> August.

c) Fair Trade Village update – Cllr Nunn-Price spoke regarding further meeting with local

traders to try and persuade them to stock and sell Fairtrade products.

**53 Committee reports:**

- a) Report of Environmental Services Committee meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2007 – The report was presented by Cllr D Hadcroft.
- b) Report of Planning Committee meetings held on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> July 2007 - The reports were presented by Cllr J Stock.
- c) Report of Leisure and Recreation Committee meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2007 - The report was presented by Cllr R Ackers.
- d) Report of Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2007 - The report was presented by the vice-chairman.

**54 Accounts for payment as per Appendix**

It was **MOVED** Cllr Stock **SECONDED** Cllr Ackers and **RESOLVED** unanimously

**“that the accounts for the sum of £18,926.52 be adopted.”**

**55 Confidential items**

There were no confidential items for discussion.

The meeting closed at 9.34 pm

Confirmed 11<sup>th</sup> September 2007

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Chairman