

**REPORT OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON 15th JANUARY 2008 AT OLD MILL HALL, GROVE**

Present: Cllr F D Parnell (Chairman)
Cllr W Evans (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr W R Ackers
Cllr J E Nunn-Price
Cllr J M Stock

Clerk: Mr G M Mundy

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs S K Dexter, D M Hadcroft and P L Hadcroft.

2 Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests in respect of items on the agenda for this meeting.

Cllr Nunn-Price declared a personal interest in item 5(b).

3 Sign report of committee meeting held 19th November 2007

Cllr Stock suggested and agreed that in item 9 – (line 5) the word ‘should’ should be replaced with ‘to’. It was **MOVED** the chairman and **RESOLVED** unanimously....

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

4 Matters arising from the report of the meeting held on 19th November 2007

(a) Item 5(b) – Wantage, Grove & District Twinning Association – The clerk informed the committee that he had written to the Twinning Association but not received a reply.

Cllr Nunn-Price said that although she could not be certain of the costs involved, the twinning association could ask the Parish Council to host welcome drinks & nibbles. This was agreed in principle by the committee. Cllr Nunn-Price said that she would ask the twinning association to confirm this in writing.

(b) Item 9 – Cheque & Postal arrangements – Following a short discussion it was generally agreed that the clerk record all cheques with a value £100 or greater and monitor the situation. The clerk was asked to bring this matter back after 6 – 9 months.

Clerk
Clerk

5 Reports from representatives of the following outside bodies

(a) Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils – The chairman said that he attended the Winter AGM on Monday 26th November 2007. Minutes will be circulated when received.

(b) Wantage, Grove & District Twinning Association – Cllr Nunn-Price said that although there had not been a meeting of the twinning association, planning meetings had taken place regarding the forthcoming twinning visit. She also reminded the committee that the annual twinning dinner is taking place on Wednesday 16th January.

Clerk

6 Old Mill Hall matters - (14/11/07)

The minutes of the meeting held on 14th November 2007 were noted. The chairman suggested and it was agreed that the clerk write to the Hall Committee and inform them that the Parish Council would like to reserve the right to give its free sessions to local organisations that are involved in parish led meetings/functions etc.

Clerk

7 Millbrook School car park

The chairman suggested and it was agreed that the clerk write to the school and inform them that unless the drains and drainage problems are sorted out the Parish Council may withhold its contribution for maintenance. The clerk is also to inform them that the car park had flooded on two separate occasions so far in 2008 and if there had been events on in the hall, they would have had to be cancelled. The letter is to be copied to OCC estates department.

Clerk

8 Report on the Probation Service Scheme – Unpaid work in the Community

Clerk The clerk reported that a team of supervised young offenders had been carrying out gardening work around the area of the kickabout area at the rear of the Old Mill Hall since before Christmas. He reported that they are working well in thinning out the shrubbery and cutting back the weeds where necessary. The clerk also informed the committee that once they had finished this work he is to send a report back to the Probation Service. It was suggested that once they had finished this particular work, could they be used to thin out and cut back the hedge line by the kissing gate into the area where the Rangers FC pitch is. The clerk said that he would investigate this with the Probation Service.

9 Income & Expenditure to date (11/12/07) and estimate for 2008/2009

The income and expenditure to date was noted. Following discussion..

It was **MOVED** the chairman **SECONDED** Cllr Nunn-Price and **RESOLVED** unanimously

“to recommend to Full Council that the budget for the Finance and General Purposes Committee be set at £179,918.”

10 Review of the Councils’ DRAFT Precept Statement

The chairman reminded the committee that all three committees had now recommended to Full Council their required budgets for 2008/2009. Subject to Full Council approval, this would mean an increase to the budget from last year of 2.40%. The chairman further explained that due to the method used to calculate the precept over the previous years the Parish Council have been using the reserves to offset the precept. This now needs to be corrected unfortunately doing so results in an increase of 22.36% to the precept. This is however only a net increase of about 1% on a band D total council tax bill.

It was **MOVED** the chairman **SECONDED** Cllr Stock

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

In a named vote it was **RESOLVED** 4 in favour and 1 abstention to accept the motion.

Those in favour were Cllrs Ackers, Nunn-Price, Parnell and Stock. Cllr Evans abstained.

Clerk Cllr Evans requested and it was agreed that the clerk trawl through records and obtain the figures for the lowest reserves recorded over the last 20 years.

11 Health & Safety Officer’s report

Clerk Cllr Nunn-Price said that the Health & Safety Officers’ report is very thorough and she should be congratulated on its content. Cllr Ackers suggested and it was agreed that there was a requirement for another First Aid trained employee to cover periods of absence of the Head of Outdoor staff.

Clerk The clerk was asked to find out if there was a DVD/Video of the ‘Working with Ladders’ topic.

12 Chairman’s urgent communications

The chairman informed the committee that the funeral of the late Councillor Jim Moley will take place on Tuesday 22nd January in the Parish Church, Wantage at 1pm.

Clerk The clerk was asked to send the full funeral details to all Councillors and also to send a card of condolence to Councillor Moley’s daughter.

It was **MOVED** the chairman **SECONDED** Cllr Evans and **RESOLVED** unanimously

Clerk **“to make a donation of £50 to the Wantage Silver Band in memory of Jim Moley”.**

13 General Correspondence

There were no items of general correspondence.

14 Confidential matters

It was **PROPOSED** the chairman and **RESOLVED** 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.”

- (a) Sign minutes of the confidential meeting held 19th November 2007. It was **MOVED** the chairman and **RESOLVED** unanimously **“that the minutes be signed as a true record of the meeting”**
- (b) Matters arising from the minutes – There were no matters arising from the minutes.

The meeting closed at 8.38 pm

Confirmed 26th February 2008

Chairman