

**REPORT OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON 26th AUGUST 2008 AT OLD MILL HALL, GROVE**

Present: Cllr F D Parnell (Chairman) Cllr M Mellersh
 Cllr W R Ackers Cllr J E Nunn-Price
 Cllr S K Dexter Cllr J M Stock
 Cllr P L Hadcroft

Clerk: Mr G M Mundy

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr W Evans.

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

Cllr Nunn-Price declared an interest in item 10 and Cllr Dexter declared an interest in item 12.

3 Sign report of committee meeting held 3rd June 2008

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

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

4 Matters arising from the report of previous meeting

(a) Item 9(b)(i) – Office equipment replacement. The Clerk informed the committee that he had ordered the new PC for his office. The cost of the purchase was £363 (ex VAT), which is significantly under budget. The Chairman also informed the committee that he would obtain quotations for an external hard drive to enable both offices to back up the data on a daily basis.

All other matters arising were accepted as detailed in the previously distributed appendix.

5 Reports from representatives of the following outside bodies

(a) Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils – The Chairman informed the committee that the next meeting is scheduled for November.

(b) Wantage, Grove & District Twinning Association (16/07/08) – The minutes were noted. Cllr Nunn-Price informed the committee that the next meeting will be held mid September. She also informed the committee that the Twinning Association will be hosting an exhibition of the paintings by the late Rene Cornand and to mark this occasion is holding a reception at the start of the exhibition on Monday 15th September in the Vale & Downland Museum starting at 7.30pm to which the Council is invited.

Cllr Nunn-Price also informed the committee that the Association will be holding a ‘Wine & Cheese’ tasting evening in October and ‘quiz night’ will be held in November.

(c) Roberts Stiles Almshouses – Cllr Dexter informed the committee that the next meeting will be held on Saturday 8th November.

6 Old Mill Hall matters

(a) Minutes of the meetings held on 23rd July 2008 – The minutes of the AGM and the minutes of the OMH Committee meeting were both noted. Cllr Mellersh agreed to forward the items for Old Mill Hall to be included in the Council website to the Clerk.

Mellersh

- (b) Old Mill Hall rates rebate – Cllr Mellersh informed the committee that following a letter she wrote to the vale and discussions with our district councillors the District Council have agreed to reinstate the rates rebate back dated to start of the financial year.

7 Millbrook School car park

There was nothing to report.

8 Council Reserves

The Clerk was previously asked to prepare a report in to the procedure and policy for the Councils' reserves, this had been completed prior to the meeting and distributed to all Parish Councillors. The Clerk recommends that the general and specific reserves are subsumed in to one reserve which would be administered by the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Cllr Nunn-Price said that the budget raising committees would still wish to 'label' specific reserves for the purchase of large items such as repairing the memorial wall in the cemetery and was not in favour of the Clerks recommendation.

Cllr Ackers said that he could not see anything wrong with the current practices. The number of reserve headings had been reduced and could possibly be reduced further. The Clerks proposal would not provide an incentive for the committee to underspend their budgets.

Cllr Dexter informed the committee that he had commented on the paper before the Clerk had distributed it to Councillors and said that because the reserves are under various headings they could be seen as not being transparent. Cllr Dexter also said that as well as making it easier to administer, having only one reserve would make it easier to raise the reserves.

Cllr Hadcroft expressed his concerns that the committees would not have the same incentive to raise the reserves if the specific committee did not have control over it. Cllr Hadcroft also said that there was already a system in place where by one committee could ask another committee for a sum of money to meet an item of expenditure if it did not have enough of its own funds.

A discussion ensued where it was agreed, that after serious consideration, to reject the Clerks recommendation and remain with the current reserves policy.

9 SLCC sponsored 'Continuity Management' course

Clerk/
Harker

Following a short discussion it was agreed that the Clerk need not attend this course. It was also agreed that the Clerk ask Cllr Harker to include continuity management of the Council as part of the Council's emergency plans.

10 Application for the annual grant from the Wantage, Grove and District Twinning Association

The application was considered. Cllr Dexter asked why the association needed the grant when they appeared to have £6000 in the bank.

Clerk

The Clerk was asked to respond to the Association and request a full set of accounts so the committee can make an informed decision.

11 Invitation from the IAC to their AGM (Thursday 11th September 2008)

All

The Chairman asked that if members are going to attend that they inform the Clerk accordingly.

12 Report from the Working Group regarding the Recreation Ground car park

The Chairman informed the committee that both he and Cllr Evans had looked at the car park and thought that the previously patched areas were still in good condition and that the areas around the patches were in a state of disrepair

Cllr Ackers said that he would not be happy with patching the car park again but added that if the car park were to get worse it may have to close until such time as the money could be found.

Cllr Dexter said that there were 3 options available:

- Do nothing – closing it could cause problems elsewhere in the vicinity
- Patching – obvious problems associated with this
- Completely resurface – the money spent could be recouped in the budget cycle

Cllr Dexter added that the Rugby Club have considered this issue and would contribute if their section of the car park is resurfaced as well.

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

Clerk **“to recommend to Full Council to re-surface the area of the car park in most need of attention”**

Clerk The Clerk was asked to obtain updated quotes for resurfacing the car park and also updated quotes for patching the potholes.

13 Plaque in honour of Mrs Sheila Cotton

It had been suggested by the Village Hall Management Committee that the Parish Council might want to consider the purchase of a plaque in recognition of the work carried out by former Parish Councillor Mrs Sheila Cotton.

Cllr Stock said that the Planning Committee had already sought the approval from the District Council to name the new development at Willowdene ‘Cotton Close’ in recognition of the work carried out by Mrs Cotton.

Clerk It was agreed that the Council would not purchase a plaque at this time. The Clerk was asked to inform the Village Hall management Committee

14 Quotation for the purchase of a Chairmans Honour Board

Clerk It was suggested and agreed that the Council defer the purchase of the Chairmans Honour Board until such time as there are sufficient funds available. This item is to be brought forward in time for the budget cycle.

15 Health & Safety Officers’ report

The Health & Safety Officer is currently on holiday. A report will be available for the next meeting.

16 Chairman’s Urgent Communications

- (a) Dog Working Group – The Chairman informed the committee that the Dog Working Group met on Wednesday 20th August and this would be fully reported at the next Leisure and Recreation committee meeting, however as they wanted to start things in September these items would need to be discussed tonight.

Cllr Ackers said that the Dog Walkers want to embark on a leaflet campaign and target dog owners informing them of the hazards and consequences of not cleaning up after their pets. The leaflet campaign will coincide with a radio and press articles.

Clerk
Parnell

The environmental wardens have also said that they will spend more time in Grove. The meeting discussed the possibility of displaying posters highlighting the issues and hazards regarding dog fouling. Following a discussion the committee agreed to display the posters on the Parish Council Notice Boards. The Chairman said that he would speak to Emily Allen from the Herald newspaper.

- (b) The Big Tidy Up campaign – It was agreed to display the Big Tidy up campaign posters on the Parish Notice Boards.

17 General Correspondence

There were no items of general correspondence.

The meeting closed at 8.48 pm

Confirmed 7th October 2008

Chairman