

WOODCOTE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Meeting of the Parish Council held in the Committee Room, Village Hall, Woodcote 19th March 2008.

PRESENT

Chairman	Mrs. Fiona Preston
Vice Chairman	Mrs. Karen Woolley
	Mr. Colin Edwards
	Mr. John Lynch
	Mrs. Diana Hadaway
	Mr. Ken Ison
	Mrs. Marilyn Maddock
	Mr. Robin Peirce (from 8.25 pm)
	Mr. Peter Tyler
	Mr. Peter Woods

(1) **APOLOGIES** None

(2) **TO AUTHORISE** the Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 5th March 2008. **IT WAS RESOLVED** that the minutes be accepted and signed.

(3) **REVIEW OF ACTIONS**

See Appendix.

(4) **MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ADDRESS THE MEETING**

No Members of the public present.

(5) **CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS**

Mrs. Preston advised the meeting that she would attend the Design Guide Meeting on 31st March 2008. Mrs. Woolley also agreed to attend. She also pointed out that the Settlement Hierarchy had listed seven retail outlets in Woodcote. Representations should be made to the planning authorities to point out that this list contained a number of anomalies including two supermarkets that should be listed under another heading a coffee shop that was only open part time and an Antiques business that had no planning permission as a retail outlet.

(6) **PLANNING APPLICATIONS TO BE CONSIDERED**

(7) **PLANNING APPLICATIONS GRANTED, REFUSED AND OTHER**

PLANNING MATTERS

PLANNING APPLICATIONS GRANTED None

PLANNING APPLICATIONS REFUSED None

Proposals to development the Land behind The Folly

The Council raised a number of concerns about the development proposals from Jonathan Ede. The bulk of the two apartment blocks were thought to be disproportionate and doubt was expressed the ability of the proposed road through the woods to take development vehicles and equipment. However, the Council were pleased that The Folly was left with a substantial garden and care had been taken to retain a large number of trees on the site. The Clerk agreed to write to SOHA recommending they get together with Jonathan Ede and the SODC Planning department to discuss the future provision of affordable housing in conjunction with the future plans for Mowforth House.

CLERK - done

Mrs. Karen Woolley agreed to look at the possibility of including the area around The Folly as a conservation area. **KW**

Mrs. Fiona Preston reported that she had received new information from the Planning Department with regard to Planning Application **P08/E0029**, Greenmore Hill Farm. **IT WAS RESOLVED** to change the previous recommendation and to recommend Refusal: The planning application was contrary to E8, C2, H12 and H13 of the Structure Plan.

(8) FINANCE

(i) Payments in March 2008

The following Payments were agreed:

2854	Mr. Jordan	O'time Pay Mar '08	232.43
2855	Mrs. C. Bernard	Delivery of Directory	40.00
2856	Tom Cottrell	Tree Surgery	94.00
2857	OCC	Youth Support	2,812.68
2858	Mr. Fordham	O'time Pay Mar '08	186.52
2859	Mr. Giles	Mar '08 Pay	635.16
2860	HM Revenue & Customs		736.61
		Total	£4,737.40

(9) REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

(i) Village Hall Management Committee

Mr. Ken Ison reported that the Swap Shop was successful. He advised the meeting that a Cheese and Wine evening was scheduled for 6th May 2008 and the AGM was scheduled for 21st April 2008.

(ii) Parish Plan

IT WAS RESOLVED to sign the SODC Sub-Licence for the use of Ordnance Survey Data.

(iii) Village Green Committee

Mr. Ken Ison reported that the seesaw had been repaired. The siting of new benches had been agreed and old benches had been repaired. The AGM was set for 28th April 2008.

(10) CRIME REDUCTION WORKING GROUP

Mr. Robin Peirce recommended that the pavements near the Red Lion on the Goring Road should be widened and changes to the memorial cross roads should be made to improve safety.

The Clerk was asked to write to highways requesting that the Crossing Patrol at the memorial cross roads should be reinstated. **CLERK**

Mrs. Woolley reported that PCSO Lyn Richards is going to talk to the youth club about drug awareness and abuse of alcohol. She also reported that she was now the Woodcote representative on the Neighbourhood Action Group that covered Goring, Nettlebed, Sonning Common and Woodcote.

(11) BUS SHELTER No actions.

(12) LITTER PICKING

Mr. Peter Tyler agreed to prepare and post up a poster calling local residents to support the litter pick on 20th April 2008. **PT - done**

(13) RISK ASSESSMENT REPORT

IT WAS RESOLVED to accept the Risk Analysis Report appended to these minutes.

(14) ORDNANCE SURVEY MAPPING

IT WAS RESOLVED to sign the SODC contract to sub-licence the use of OS Maps.

(15) VILLAGE HALL CLEANING CONTRACT

The Clerk reported his conversation with Mr. Fordham concerning the hours worked by Mr. Giles. Mr. Giles was now able to work full time. The Council agreed that no further action needs to be taken on this matter.

(16) REVIEW OF ALLOTMENT MEETING ACTIONS

Postponed to next meeting.

(17) CAR PARK RESURFACING

Mr. Peter Tyler agreed to examine all the tenders from five contractors and report his recommendations to the next meeting. **PT**

(18) CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

The following Correspondence was noted except where specifically annotated.

A.

- Ordnance Survey Mapping
- Community Policing Awards
- Land Registry
- South Oxfordshire Design Workshop
- Langtree School Invitation to Consultation Meeting

Mrs. Fiona preston and Mrs. Karen Woolley reported on their meeting with the headteacher and the chairman of governors of Langtree with regard to the fencing proposal. They agreed to draft a written response to Mr. Rick Holroyd.

FP/KW

- Charity Commission Disposal of Land

Mrs. Fiona Preston agreed to read the Charity Rules on Land Disposal and report back to the next meeting. **FP**

- Oxfordshire Partnership Briefings

B. For Information, Not Requiring Action

- CAG Magazine Feb 2008
- CPRE Fieldwork March 2008

(15) EMERGENCY QUESTIONS TO THE CHAIRMAN

Mr. Woods reported that there was considerable verge damage along the A4074 caused

by lorries.

The meeting closed at 10. 45 pm.

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CHAIRMAN

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DATE

OUTSTANDING ACTION LIST – 19th March 2008

Reports from Committees – Page 77

Mr. Peirce agreed to complete the Strategic Objective questionnaire on behalf of the Council following any comments from the other councillors to be provided within a week. **RP**

The Clerk to request this document from SODC. **CLERK**

Request sent.

Chairmans Address – Page 122

Mrs. Preston told the meeting of the profitable meeting they had had with SOHA on the future of Mowforth House. A follow up meeting was required in about six months time.

CLERK

Reply received. Chasing letter sent.

Correspondence Received – Page 59

- Proposal from Mrs. Jill Sugar on Wayside Green

It was agreed that the trees in the centre of Wayside Green should have their lower branches removed and the other overgrowing vegetation should be cut back. Also potholes and bad paths should be reported to the OCC for repair.

CLERK

Letter written to Mrs. Sugar. Tom Cottrell contacted. No reply.
Chasing letter sent

Footpath Folly Green to Wayside – Page 75

The Clerk reported that he had requested a quotation from the Higley brothers to this work. The Clerk was asked to check if there were any problems with planning and the use of the land. **CLERK**

Letter sent to the Footpaths Department who have passed it onto the Highways Department for action.

Planning Matters – Page 81

It was reported that Castle Flooring of Church Farm was illuminating their company sign at night. Clerk to check whether planning permission is required. **CLERK**

Email sent to Paula Fox, planning. No reply.

Sale of Allotment Land – Page 95

The Clerk reported that the Valuation Office had recommended a value of £20,000 for the allotment land at 16 Gap Way (sometimes referred to as Allotment Plot 34). The Council agreed to sending the report to Mr. Craven-Todd the new resident at 16 Gap Way. Mr. Robin Peirce advised that local government practice constrained the Council from offering a different price for this piece of land. The Clerk was asked to write to the Charity Commission with regard to the proposed transaction. **CLERK**

Letter sent.

WOODCOTE PARISH COUNCIL

Risk Management – 2008/09

Introduction

This report follows the guidelines of the “Practitioners’ Guide to Governance and Accountability in Local Councils in England and Wales”. The risks are assessed for the upcoming year 2008/09.

1. Table 1 – Use of Insurance

1.1 Protection of Physical Assets owned by the Council

The Clerk keeps an up-to-date Register of Assets which is provided in the annual submission of the financial accounts for the year. Loss of these assets by damage or theft is regarded as low risk. Nevertheless, such losses would be covered by the Council’s Insurance Policy with Zurich Municipal (herewith referred to as the General Insurance Policy).

1.2 The Risk of Damage to Third Party Property or Individuals.

The Council provides play equipment in recreation grounds next to the Village Car Park and on Folly Green. New Play Equipment to replace the old equipment was installed at the Reading Road and Folly Green play areas in November 2006. This equipment is regularly checked by the Village Green Committee each week and an annual safety report is provided. The latest report was provided by Active Risk Management Services Ltd. Risk of injury is regarded as low. Nevertheless, the Council is covered for such injury under a public liability clause in its General Insurance Policy.

1.3 Risk of consequential loss of income or the need to provide essential services following critical damage by a third party.

The Council subcontracts work from time to time for grass cutting, hedge cutting, clearance and tree work. Consequential loss due to non-performance of such contractors is regarded as low because the Council states that the contractors must provide their own insurance cover.

1.4 Loss of Cash through theft or dishonesty.

The maximum amount of cash held by the Council at any one time is £150. This cash is kept in a locked cash box in a locked office. The contents of the cash box are checked at random by an internal audit function set up by the Council, usually performed by the Vice Chairman. Loss of Cash by theft or dishonesty is regarded as low risk. Nevertheless, the Council has a Fidelity Guarantee in the General Insurance Policy.

1.5 Legal Liability as a consequence of asset ownership.

See 1.1 above.

2. Internal Controls

2.1 The Vice Chairman or a nominated Councillor is responsible for providing an internal audit function. The following items are checked on a random basis.

- (a) Money in the Cash Box
- (b) Bank Balances and Bank Reconciliations
- (c) Time Sheets and Mileage Claims

2.2 All payments are agreed by resolution of the Council and all cheques are signed by three members of the Council.

2.3 The Clerk keeps an up-to-date Register of Assets and a record of all investments. These are provided in the year end financial statement.

2.4 The Insurance company, Zurich Municipal is regarded as a reputable Insurer and therefore low risk.

3. Internal Audit Assurance

In addition to the internal auditing function of the Vice Chairman, the year-end accounts and associated documentation are audited, under contract, to an independent auditor who is a chartered accountant. His report is presented to the Council by the Responsible Financial Officer who is the Clerk.

Table 2 – Areas where there may be scope to work with others to help manage risk.

1. Risk Identification

The Council employ a Facilities Manager, who reports to the Clerk and who oversees the village facilities such as the Community Centre, the Youth Centre, the Village Hall and the Recreation Ground facilities. The Community Centre, Youth Centre and Village Hall are run by groups independent of the Council although council members are involved with them all, either as trustees or as committee members. Risk of mismanagement is regarded as low.

Banking (NatWest, Lloyds TSB and National Savings Bank), Insurance (Zurich Municipal), and Legal (Blandy and Blandy) matters are handled by reputable companies. Risk of mismanagement is regarded as low.

2. Internal Controls

The Council insists that all significant expenditure with subcontractors is preceded by a quotation and presented to the Council for agreement. In the case of expenditure of more than £1000 the council's standing orders require a tendering process.

As already mentioned, Bank reconciliations are independently reviewed by an internal auditing process.

3. Internal Audit Assurance

The internal audit process has already been covered earlier.

The Clerk is responsible for ensuring that all matters requiring resolution of the Council are properly processed and recorded in the minutes. The minutes are signed as a true record by the chairman by agreement of the Council. The minutes are audited by the appointed auditor as indicated in Table 1, Section 3.

Because of these safeguards, risk of loss due to fraud or corruption is regarded as negligible.

Table – 3 Areas where there may be a need to self-manage risk

1. Risk Identification

The Clerk is the Responsible Financial Officer and he keeps all the financial records necessary to control the "business". These records are largely based on the published CIPFA guidelines. They include:

- (a) Payments and Receipt Files.
- (b) Bank Reconciliations
- (c) Bank Statements
- (d) VAT claims
- (e) Year-end P&L and Balance Sheet.
- (f) Petty Cash Records

All this information is kept in hard copy and computer records. The computer records are backed up each week and the backups are stored off site.

All "business" activities are within legal powers applicable to local councils.

The Council had in excess of £120,000 in reserve and other funds at the beginning of the financial year 2007/08 and therefore has no borrowing requirement.

The Council employs three personnel with legally binding contracts which accord with employment law. All tax and national insurance deductions and other payments are made according to Inland Revenue Regulations.

All VAT records and claims are made in accordance with Customs and Excise

Regulations.

Budgets for the year 2008/09 were agreed by resolution of the Council on 16th January 2008. The required precept is calculated in accordance with Oxfordshire Local Government Association (OALC) guidelines. Expenditure against budget is reviewed quarterly.

Expenditure made under specific powers and section 137 powers are properly agreed by the Council and administered by the Responsible Financial Officer.

All decisions made by the Council are properly recorded in the minutes. These minutes are signed as a true record at the next meeting and made available to the public from the Council office, the Library or the Council Website for public inspection.

All consultation documents are presented to the Council under “Correspondence”.

All planning applications and their progress through the planning process are filed and archived in the Council office and recorded on the computer.

The Council has instituted a procedure for releasing and returning documents held in the Council office.

A Register of Members interest is stored in the Council office and is available for public inspection.

2. Internal Controls

Monthly financial reports showing payments and receipts against budget are provided to the Council and all expenditure is approved by resolution of the Council. Receipts for each month are reported as are the bank balances. All money transfers are also agreed by resolution of the Council.

Minutes are always properly numbered and paginated with master copies kept in the Council office as well as on the computer. The auditing process checks the conformance of these minutes to the statutory requirements.

Enquiries from the public are either dealt with directly by the Clerk if part of the every day administration of the village or otherwise presented to the Council for a decision on the response.

Documents received other than advertising and “junk mail” are recorded in a number of ways according to their nature.

- (a) Plans are recorded in plan number sequence on the computer under “Planning Applications” and in hard copy.
- (b) Invoices received are recorded on the computer and filed in “Bills for Payment”.
- (c) Other Correspondence is filed under “Correspondence” and a correspondence list

is provided to all councillors who may request a copy of any document.

Procedures are in place for recording and monitoring members' interests and gifts and hospitality received. Each member has been issued with a copy of "The good councillor's guide" published by the Countryside Agency.

All members have signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and have published their Register of Interests. These documents have been signed by a representative of the "Standards Committee".