

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL  
OF OGBOURNE ST GEORGE HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL  
ON THURSDAY 15 JANUARY 2009 AT 7:30pm

Those Present: Mr M Grove (Chairman)  
Mrs C Mudge  
Mrs C Manos  
Mr R Smith  
Mr K Wallace  
Mr P Willis  
Mr C Freeman (Clerk)  
Mr C Humphries (WCC)

Apologies were received from Mr P Rouse & Mr D Hunter (Kennet)  
6 residents were present

Minutes: The minutes of the previous meeting, having been circulated, were approved and signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising: **Chairman's Statement:** The Clerk requested that the Council return to the minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> November. Despite the other Councillors wishing to put the matter behind them the former Chairman Cllr Wallace had submitted an amendment to the minutes containing a falsehood to which the Clerk objected. Cllr Wallace had also included the same allegation in his resignation letter as a justification for his resignation. The Clerk had previously written to Cllr Wallace requesting retraction of these untruths, together with appropriate apologies, but Cllr Wallace had complained to the Chairman that he was being harassed. Some discussion took place during which Cllr Wallace sought to justify his statements by saying they were true as stated by his solicitor's letter. The Clerk rejected these justifications reminding Cllr Wallace that the other Councillors had told him the statements were untrue and invited Cllr Wallace, on three occasions, to retract the offending statements, acknowledge they are untrue and apologise. As Cllr Wallace failed to do so the Clerk served Cllr Wallace with a Letter of Claim to comply with the Pre-Action Protocol for Defamation.

**Blocked Bridleway:** The Chairman Cllr Grove had visited Mr Illiffe to discuss the status of the blocked bridleway close to Meadow Cottage but Mr Illiffe said that as the matter was in the hands of solicitors discussion could only be through them.

**Street Lighting:** The Clerk was still waiting for further quotes for the equipment but expected to be able to make the grant application soon.

**Village Gateways:** The Clerk had not yet had the opportunity to arrange these but would do shortly.

Finance: **Bank Mandate:** It was resolved to add the vice chairman, Cllr Rouse, as a signatory on the Bank Mandate and remove the previous Chairman, Cllr Wallace. The Chairman and Clerk, as Responsible Financial Officer, signed the Mandate.

**Payments:** A current statement of the financial position of the Parish Council was distributed by the Clerk. The following payments were made:

Southern Electric power	£178.55
Southern Electric Contracting	£63.12
Salisbury Diocese – Village Hall rent	£52.00
Clerk salary	£255.16
Printing of Dragon – 2 months	£27.50

**Planning:**

**Procedures:** As there was concern that the Parish Council needed to hold planning committee meetings in public the Clerk advised that as there is not a planning committee nor sub-committee the current procedure appeared satisfactory. However it was agreed to research the issue further to ensure a proper procedure could be put in place by way of a Standing Order. It was noted that a meeting of the Development Control Service of the new Wiltshire Council was being held in Marlborough on Tuesday February 3<sup>rd</sup> at 7:30pm. Cllrs **Grove and Wallace agreed to attend.**

**Applications:** An application for extensions at Whitefield Cottage had been returned to Kennet with no objection. It was recorded that an appeal against refusal to grant permission at the site adjacent to Mill House had been lodged.

**Standing Orders:**

The Clerk had distributed the Council's Standing Orders for comment and suggested amendment. It was agreed that Councillors would put forward amendments by the end of February so that they could be discussed at the next meeting.

**Role of Clerk:**

The Clerk had distributed the NALC document defining the Role of the Clerk. In order to properly evaluate the Clerk's role it was agreed to obtain a copy of the model job description which the Clerk will circulate for consideration. The matter was deferred to the next meeting for discussion.

**Freedom of Information Act:** The Clerk advised that the Parish Council needed to adopt the new Freedom of Information Act Model Publication Scheme. Cllr Manos proposed, Cllr Smith seconded and it was resolved to adopt it unanimously. Cllr Rouse had agreed to assist the Clerk in completing 'The Guide to Proactively Published Information'.

**Complaints from School:**

The Headteacher, Mrs Hicks, had complained to the Chairman regarding an inappropriate comment the Clerk had made as a result of his unsuccessful attempt to arrange an informal planning meeting in the school. The Clerk had immediately sincerely apologised, in writing, to all people he had offended which had been accepted. He now considered the matter closed. It was agreed that in future all the Council's dealing would be done with civility. Cllr Manos stated that the Clerk had made the request to meet in the school on his own without the authority or request of the Council and, as she knew nothing about it, wished to be dissociated from it. The Clerk pointed out that Cllr Willis had suggested meeting in the school and other Councillors had agreed. In the Headteacher's second letter where she accepted the Clerk's apology she also made some allegations regarding the Council which some Councillors considered were unjustified and could be offensive. A particular allegation against Cllr Willis appeared to be hearsay and the Chairman had visited Mrs Hicks to discuss the matter. Mrs Hicks stated that she did not wish to continue with the complaint and had written a letter to Cllr Willis in that vein but the Chairman of the Governors would not allow the letter to be issued. As further comment sought to bring the matter up again Cllr Willis said that if the issue had gone away then it should be treated as that otherwise an inquiry to find the

truth should be instigated. Cllr Wallace had heard the information second or third hand and it may have become magnified. Cllr Mudge asked why, as it was apparently a pre-school issue, was the headteacher bringing it up anyway? Cllr Willis again challenged the discussion and it was proposed to drop the matter by Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr Manos, and agreed unanimously.

Eucalyptus Tree in  
Village Hall playground:

The Clerk had received a request to prune a tree in the area adjacent to the Village Hall. **It was agreed that Cllrs Manos, Mudge and Grove would look at it and make suggestions.**

Pharmacy at Marlborough  
Medical Practice:

The Parish Council had received details of an application to the Wiltshire PCT for the authority to open a pharmacy at the practice in George Lane. The Council considered that it failed to see the need for change and that any change may adversely affect the current satisfactory status quo. **The Clerk would respond accordingly.**

Winter Well-Being leaflet:

A booklet distributed by WCC would be distributed to appropriate places by Cllr Mudge. Cllr Willis was concerned at the cost of such publications and whether they were justified in the current economic crisis.

Email:

The Clerk reported that during December he had received more than 150 PC related emails. The Chairman was keen to restrict emails to dissemination of information alone and ensure that discussion took place in the forum of the Council meeting.

Website:

The Clerk would ensure the minutes of the recent meetings were submitted to the website for publication.

Slip road potholes:

Cllr Smith advised that the potholes in the slip road had been reported to Clarence.

Village Hall payment:

It was agreed to discuss making a payment for use of the Village Hall for PC meetings at the next meeting

Parish Steward:

It was requested that the Parish Steward deal with the large quantity of rotting leaves on the roads and investigate the drain outside March House as it seems always blocked.

Russet Cottage:

The Clerk was requested to advise Mrs Carwithen regarding the layby at the entrance to Russet Cottage.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9:16pm. The next meeting would be held on Thursday March 12th 2009 at 7:30pm.