

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE held on 17 January 2002 in the Parish Room, Fiddlers Lane, Saughall

In attendance: Councillor Mrs M Anderson
Councillor A Bailey
Councillor H Dobson
Councillor B Kerr (in the Chair)
Councillor RA Storrar

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor A Warrington.

2 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 1 November 2001 be confirmed as a correct record.

3 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Minute No 58: Best Kept Village/Civic Pride Competition 2001

The Chairman informed that he had contacted Oak Tree Nurseries and had received prices for hanging baskets which could be supplied in June 2002 as follows:

14 inches	£17.50 each
16 inches	£20.00 each

The Chairman also informed that Mr Colin Moss had agreed to water any hanging baskets located at the Parish Room.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Members be requested to ask various shopkeepers and the Vernon Institute Management Committee if they would be willing to display and look after hanging baskets.
- (2) Sponsorship be sought to assist with the project; and
- (3) Appropriate financial provision be included in the Council's budget 2002/2003 to assist the project.

4 PARISH COUNCIL BUDGET 2002/2003

Members gave initial consideration to the Parish Council's budget for 2002/2003. Members assigned priorities and made recommendations to the Council who would make the final decision and determine the Budget at its meeting scheduled for Monday, 21 January 2002. (Appendix 1)

The Committee specifically considered the costs and benefits of the Parish Room and reviewed its usage in order to establish whether or not occupancy of the premises on Fiddlers Lane represented value for money. Members noted that the premises was subject to Universal Business Rates currently £103.00 per month.

RESOLVED: That

- (a) the draft Parish Council Budget drawn up by the Committee be presented to the Budget Council meeting for approval; and
- (b) Councillor RA Storrar be requested to pursue with Chester City Council Rating Officers the reasoning behind the current rating arrangements with a view to obtaining rate relief.

5 MILLENNIUM PARK LAND

The Chairman reported that he and other representative Members had met with the County Property Manager, Ian Gould, and the External Funding Officer, Stephen Wright, on Monday, 14 January 2002.

The County Council had been requested to commission and pay for a survey on the land to be used for cricket and football pitches. The Chairman had provided a briefing note to assist the process the County Council would now go through.

The County Property Manager had agreed to put the request to County Council Members for decision.

County Councillor David Rowlands had previously agreed to arrange a meeting with WREN and Parish Councillors in order to move the initiative forward and Mr Wright agreed to attend.

Mr Gould had indicated that the County Council was amenable to the Parish Council having a long term lease on the Shotwick Park land at a rent to be no less than current receipts received from farmers using it for agricultural purposes.

Members had also explored with Mr Gould other accessible land in Saughall currently in the ownership of the County Council which could be used for the purpose of a Millennium Park.

The Committee also considered its options if the County Council refused to pay for the initial survey.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be received; and
- (2) County Councillor David Rowlands be briefed on recent developments.

6 A NATIONAL TRAINING STRATEGY FOR PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS

The Committee considered the document produced jointly by the National Association of Local Councils and the Countryside Agency on the National Training Strategy for Clerks, specifically with regard to the professional qualifications the Clerk had taken (Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators – Public Stream).

The Clerk informed that she had relevant local government qualifications and experience, was an Associate of the Institute and was recognised as being “fully qualified” by all Principal Authorities in England and Wales. Therefore she could see no reason why she could not be regarded as fully qualified to carry out the role of Parish Clerk. She also considered that she should be fully exempt and believed that her qualifications should be treated as being at least equivalent to the final qualification obtained by Clerk’s using the Cheltenham and Gloucester College.

RESOLVED:

That the Chairman be requested to feed the comments made by the Clerk into the National Training Strategy Steering Group for consideration.

7 PARISH PLAN ACTION LIST

The Committee revised the Parish Plan Action List in the light of slippage that had occurred. (Appendix 2)

Appendix 1

Proposed Budget 2002/2003

Budget Head	Actual 2001/2002	Priority	Proposed 2002/2003	Priority
Environment Matters				
Best Kept Village Competition	30.00	1	430.00	1
Noticeboards	150.00	1	150.00	1
Street Cleaning	8,000.00	1	9,000.00	1
Trees	500.00	2	500.00	2
Litter Bins	250.00	2	250.00	2
Grass Cutting (Playing Fields) (Weekly cut)	1,150.00	1	2,400.00	1
Playing Field Maintenance/Repairs	500.00	1	1,500.00	1
Playing Field Drainage	3,000.00	1		
Play Equipment (rolling replacement programme)	1,000.00	1	1,000.00	1
Playing Field Improvements			2,000.00	1
WDA Public Inquiry	1,000.00	1		
Millennium Park Land	5,000.00	1	2,000.00	1
Sub Total	20,580.00		19,230.00	
Finance and General Purposes				
(a) Administration				
Clerk's salary and NI	6,600.00	1	6,900.00	1
Administration Expenses	600.00	1	600.00	1
Parish Councillor's Expenses	100.00	1	100.00	1
Computer	300.00	1	500.00	1
Parish Plan			500.00	1
Newsletter publication costs	1,000.00	1	500.00	1
Training			1,000.00	1
Sub Total	8,600.00		10,100.00	
(b) Annual Payments				
Parish Room rental and associated costs	2,500.00	1	3,500.00	1
Audit Fees	400.00	1	400.00	1
Youth Forum	100.00	1	100.00	2
Donations/Honorarium	150.00	2	250.00	2
Insurance	800.00	1	850.00	1
Subscriptions (APC £500, PFA £20, Com CI £30)	550.00	1	600.00	1
VI Clock Service	175.00	1	175.00	1
Homewatch Support			150.00	1
Sub Total	4,675.00		6,025.00	
(c) Millennium Fund	1,000.00	2		
(c) Queen's Golden Jubilee			1,000.00	2
(d) Vernon Institute - Annual Grant	400.00	2	1,400.00	1
(e) Contingency				
(f) Crime and Disorder	500.00	1	500.00	1
Highways Matters				
Street Lighting	500.00	2		
Bus Shelter replacement			1,000.00	1
Bus Shelter maintenance	250.00	1	250.00	1
Traffic Calming				
Sub Total	750.00		1,250.00	
Grand Total	36,505.00		39,505.00	

PARISH PLAN – ACTION LIST

Action	Timescales
Register intention to compile a Village Plan with the Countryside Agency.	July 2001
Members to draw up list of consultees.	August 2001
Initial Consultation process begins. Local groups, businesses and individuals are encouraged to have their say on what they would like to see provided in the village in the short and longer term.	August 2001 - Letter out September 2001 - Newsletter out
Initial Consultation Process ends.	30 November 2001
Public Meeting held to inform what the Consultation has thrown up. (in the form of a social evening – tea and cakes.) Volunteers to be invited to serve on the Parish Plan Working Party.	Early March 2002
Working Party established to take the initiative forward. Will meet regularly.	March 2002 Council meeting
Professional support – decision to be taken on whether or not to commission Cheshire Community Council or another agency to carry out a survey into all aspects of village life in Saughall or whether or not the Parish Council will undertake such a survey itself. Alternatively, it may decide that the consultation already carried out will suffice.	End March 2002
Grant aid be sought from the Countryside Agency in respect of costs involved in the compilation of the Plan. – Apply	By March 2002
Further data collection and analysis if appropriate.	Mid May 2002
Feedback to community. Mapping exercise underway.	End of May 2002
Production of first draft of Parish Plan.	End of May 2002
Initial soundings taken, comments and feedback.	End of June 2002
Incorporated into final version of Plan.	End of July 2002
Launch and distribution.	September 2002
Projects prioritised and pursued.	October 2002 onwards
Annual review of Plan and revision as necessary.	Nov/Dec 2002