

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF SAUGHALL AND SHOTWICK PARK PARISH
COUNCIL held on 1 July 2002 at the Vernon Institute, Saughall

In attendance: Councillor Mrs M Anderson
Councillor A Bailey (in the Chair)
Councillor CW Eyton (Tree Warden)
Councillor Mrs P Humphrey
Councillor Mrs J Johnson
Councillor B Kerr
Councillor JA Marsden
Councillor C Moss
Councillor R Shukla
Councillor RA Storrar
Councillor Mrs JE Storrar
Councillor A Warrington
Councillor Mrs J Young

Mr B Jones (Acting Homewatch Co-ordinator)

124 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from:

Councillor Mrs D Whitton
Mr C McIlwrick (Homewatch Co-ordinator).

125 MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT

Councillor Mrs J Johnson declared an interest in respect of item 20 on the agenda – Land at Fiddlers Lane. It was a Part 2 item (to be discussed in the absence of the press and public) and the last item on the agenda. Councillor Mrs J Johnson informed that she would leave the meeting prior to the item being discussed.

126 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 10 June 2002 be confirmed as a correct record; and
- (2) the Council's Meeting Schedule (Appendix 1 to the Minutes) be amended to reflect the name change of the Crime and Disorder Committee to the Community Safety Committee.

127 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising from the Minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

128 PARISH COUNCIL WEBSITE – www.saughall.gov.uk

Councillor Kerr reported that the Parish Council's website had been entered in the Local Council Review's Web Site of the Year 2002 Competition. Although it had not won the competition it had been commended by the Judges who had commented as follows:

“A worthy website; visually interesting with good content, it promotes the Parish Council and the community well. Easy navigation, and the use of PDF documents adds to its functionality.”

RESOLVED: That

(1) the report be received; and

(2) the Clerk be commended on the work that has gone into making the Council's website one of the best Parish Council websites in the country.

129 NALC NATIONAL CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION, PRESTON GUILDHALL, 14-16 JUNE 2002

The Chairman and Councillor Mrs J Young had attended the NALC Conference. It was the first one they had attended on behalf of the Parish Council. They reported that they had received a warm reception on arrival and had been made welcome.

The first speaker on the first day of the Conference was the President, the Earl of Lynton, who was followed by Don Foster MP (Lib Dem) spokesman on Local Government. There were also similar addresses from the Minister for Local Government and the Regions, Christopher Lesley MP (Labour), and from Eric Pickles MP (Conservative). Speeches were expertly delivered and the Liberal Democrat spokesman informed that his party promised to 'parish' the whole country if elected to office. All three speakers also referred to the inequality of "double rating".

Presentations were also received from Tony Holland, Chairman of the Standards Board for England, on the Code of Conduct, and from the Audit Commission on the "lighter Touch" audit system.

The delegates had attended various satellite sessions on subjects including:

- ?? Rural Issues
- ?? Fundraising
- ?? Working in Partnership
- ?? Project Funding
- ?? Planning

Both Members informed that their attendance had been very worthwhile as it had served to increase their knowledge and had allowed them to network.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

130 ACCOUNTS

(a) Payments made since the meeting of the Council held on 10 June 2002:

Financial Year 2002/2003	£	Cheque No
Mr C Moss (Parish Room Rental)	437.50	101518
NALC (Part payment in respect of the Conference)	41.12	101519
Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council (Street Cleaning & Playing Field maintenance)	1,549.88	101520
Inland Revenue	475.07	101521
Mrs S Hudspeth (Salary)	414.61	101522
Mrs S Hudspeth (Expenses)	45.38	101523
Oak Tree Nursery (Hanging Baskets)	180.00	101524
Chester City Council (Rates)	105.00	DD

(b) Receipts

Interest to 24 June 2002 (Treasurer Account)	0.08
Interest to 21 June 2002 (14 day Interest Account)	87.74

(c) Independent Internal Auditor

Mr H Dobson had agreed to take up the position of the Council's Independent Internal Auditor. He wanted to know how many hours were required and in which months audits were to be undertaken.

The Clerk had ordered the publication – "A Practitioners Guide" – about the new lighter touch audit from the Secretary of the Cheshire Association of Town and Parish Councils, Mrs Jackie Weaver, but had not received it yet.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to chase up the delivery of – "A Practitioners Guide" – with Mrs Weaver so that advice can be offered to the Independent Internal Auditor.

(d) Notice of Alteration to an Existing 2000 Rating List Entry

The Clerk had received notification that the Parish Room would now be entered as Meeting Rooms on the rating list instead of Shop. There was however no change as far as the rateable value was concerned.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(e) Parish Council Accounts 2001/2002

The Council's Accounts in respect of the 2001/2002 financial year had been prepared for the annual audit and were signed by the Chairman and the Clerk.

131 POLICE/HOMEWATCH

(a) Police

In the absence of PC Cooper, Members reported a distraction burglary which had been carried out recently in Meadows Lane where a handbag had been stolen. The Council received information on an alleged drug situation in Little Saughall. Councillor Bailey agreed to follow the matter up with the appropriate authorities.

(b) Homewatch

Mr Jones reported that the Saughall Homewatch was in need of a new Action Plan. There had been a lack of contact in recent times between the Constabulary and the Homewatch Co-ordinators. It was imperative that the Homewatch maintained a link with the police.

Members were informed of a nuisance youth problem in the village which had recently come to a head. Parents had been informed and a letter of apology received.

Members discussed the recent criticism in the press about Police Control Centres and received examples of problems encountered by different individuals which illustrated the difficulties in making contact with the Constabulary. Concerns over communicating with the police had also been discussed at a recent Police Forum meeting.

It was reported that there had been some anti-social behaviour and some vandalism in Saughall recently. Members considered the possibility of funding a warden/police presence in the village and agreed to consider this matter further and decide whether to make financial provision when it set its 2003/2004 budget.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the reports be received; and

(2) Inspector Steve Anderson be invited to the next meeting of the Council to discuss the concerns raised over contacting the police, police presence, issues associated with Project Rural Matters and anti-social behaviour and vandalism in Saughall.

132 PROPOSED BYELAW – NO BALL GAMES

Councillor Mrs JE Storrar reported on the steady progress the byelaw was making. Chester City Council was going through its processes to establish the byelaw and it had been agreed by its Cabinet without amendment.

It was not known when the byelaw would be implemented but Councillor Mrs Storrar would keep pressing for as early an implementation as possible.

A report would need to be submitted to the City Council on enforcement after the byelaw had been in force for two years.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the progress report be received; and
- (2) Councillor Mrs JE Storrar be thanked for her hard work.

133 PARISH PLAN

The Council noted that some of those contacted had expressed an interest in sitting on a Parish Plan Steering Group. The bid for funding to compile a Plan was a complicated matter and had not yet been submitted to the Countryside Agency.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the inaugural meeting of the Parish Plan Steering Group (whose core membership is the Golden Jubilee Park Panel) be held at 7:30pm on Monday, 12 August 2002 in the Parish Room, 2 Fiddlers Lane, Saughall; and
- (2) the Clerk be requested to make the bid ensuring that the Countryside Agency is aware that the necessary infrastructure is in place after the meeting.

134 HIGHWAY MATTERS

(a) Replacement Bus Shelter Scheme

The work on the new bus shelters which had been ongoing for sometime was now complete and the grant from the Countryside Agency would be received via a BACS transfer.

(b) District Engineer's Annual Site Inspection with Members - Monday, 24 June 2002

Councillor C Moss reported on the Annual Highway Inspection which had taken place with himself, Councillor B Kerr and Mr Graham Anderton.

Areas of the village inspected were as follows:

?? Fiddlers Lane

The edges of the road were collapsing in places and maintenance work was required. The road was on the County Council's priority list but no funding was available. Mr Anderton had informed that in real terms funding for highways was only 32% of what it was 20 years ago.

?? Church Road

Transco would be laying a new gas main from the Greyhound to Saughall Hey. There would be road closures whilst the work was ongoing. Local access would be available as it was when the road had been resurfaced.

?? Fiddlers Lane Junction with Long Lane

Patching would be carried out until funds were available to resurface.

?? Lodge Lane junction with Long Lane

Mr Anderton agreed that the junction would be resurfaced. This work would be done when Transco's work commenced as there would be less traffic on the road.

?? Hermitage Road

Mr Anderton agreed that work on this road was a high priority and would be done as soon as funds were released for the purpose.

?? Other Work Required

?? Grid in Saughall Hey in grass verge between Nos 7 and 9 was in a dangerous condition.

?? Grid in the footpath at the corner of Newcroft and Church Road was loose.

?? Junction of Newcroft and Church Road, road surface needed patching.

?? Work on the Saughall Hey and Church Road junction would be carried out at the same time as Transco was working on the road.

(c) Temporary Prohibition of Traffic – Church Road

The Council noted the content of a public note sent to it by a concerned resident. An Order was being made to temporarily prohibit traffic on Church Road to its junction with Lodge Lane.

It was recognised that the gas main must be laid but Members were concerned that local businesses in the village would suffer if the work took the six weeks detailed in the Notice. As a through route would not always be available, passing trade would be affected.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the Clerk be requested to write to the County Solicitor, Mr Gerry Budd to:

(a) inform him of the concerns raised and ask if he could impress upon the contractors the need to expediate the work; and

(b) ask if appropriate signage can be used to show that "Saughall is open for business as usual"

and

(2) copies of the Clerk's letter be sent to Dr Farrell at the Church Road Medical Centre and to the resident who had brought the Notice to the Council's attention.

(d) No 28 Bus Service

Councillor RA Storrar reported that he had again spoken to Mr Stuart Hislop of Chester City Transport. Mr Hislop informed that he was in negotiation with Dial-a-Ride. He had also spoken to the new Warden at Wain House and arranged a meeting with residents to discuss Dial-a-Ride and the No 28 Bus Service. It was expected to take place in August 2002.

RESOLVED:

That the progress report be received.

(e) Deeside Park Junctions Study

Members considered the various correspondence between the Clerk, the Highways Agency and Christine Russell MP supplied with the agenda.

Christine Russell was now pursuing the issues raised with the Divisional Director at the Highways Agency and she would be in touch with the Clerk as soon as she had received his reply.

RESOLVED:

That the reply from Christine Russell MP be awaited.

(f) Speed Limit De-Restriction Order - A540

Councillor Kerr informed that neighbouring parishes were opposed to any increase in the speed limit on the A540 and Members considered the number of accidents which had occurred on this road in recent times, some of them resulting in fatalities.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to write to Mr John Gamlen, Principal Engineer in Cheshire County Council's Traffic Transportation Division:

(i) reminding him that there had been a number of fatal accidents on the A540 in recent times and some have occurred on the stretch of road from the roundabout at the junction of the A5117 to the junction with Badgers Rake Lane;

(ii) informing him that this Council objects to the proposal to de-restrict the speed limit and to the lack of consultation and would like the matter fully debated at the Highways and Transportation Local Joint Committee.

(g) Proposed Pelican Crossing - Thomas Wedge CE (Controlled) Junior School

A request had been made for this issue to be considered by the Highways and Transportation Local Joint Committee for Chester.

Miss Kay Hallas had responded on behalf of the Highway Authority informing that she would arrange for the Council's request to be considered by the Chairman of the Local Joint Committee and Group Spokesmen at the agenda setting meeting. If they considered that the issue should be debated at the next Committee meeting, despite the fact that a crossing outside the school did not meet the agreed criteria, it would be included on the agenda.

However, the Parish Council was aware that if a County of City Councillor asked that an item be included on the Local Joint Committee's agenda then the request would be granted.

RESOLVED:

That Councillors Mrs JE and RA Storrar liaise with County Councillor D Rowlands and between them make a request for an item on the proposed pelican crossing to be included on the agenda for a future meeting of the Local Joint Committee.

135 ENVIRONMENT MATTERS

(a) Play Area Inspection - Fiddlers Lane Playing Field

(i) The Spring Rocker

The Spring Rocker was broken. It was to be repaired at a cost of £105 and would take the form of a fish. One of the swings had cracks in the rubber of the seat. However, it was not a cause for concern and would continue to be monitored.

(ii) Drainage Problems

The field's drainage was working well.

(iii) The Future of the Fiddlers Lane Playing Field

RESOLVED:

That the field be not considered as a possible site for affordable housing at this time.

(b) Golden Jubilee Park

The Council noted the progress that had been made in respect of the Golden Jubilee Park initiative (Golden Jubilee Park Panel Minutes 27 June 2002 refers) and considered how it would consult with the various groups in the village on the facilities to be provided.

The Clerk reported that she had received a letter from Mr Bubb who objected to land behind Church Road being earmarked for recreation in the Chester District Local Plan. He was pleased land on Fiddlers Lane had now been acquired for the purpose and asked for formal assurances before he withdrew his objection.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the progress made to date with the Golden Jubilee Park initiative be noted;
- (2) Members be requested to attend meetings of the various groups in the village in order to consult on provision included in the Golden Jubilee Park at the appropriate time; and
- (3) Mr Bubb be informed that his objection to the Chester District Local Plan is a matter concerning him and Chester City Council and that the Inquiry is complete and the Inspector's findings are about to be published.

(c) Street Cleaning and Litter Bins

The new litter bin at the bus terminus had been vandalised already.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the current situation be noted;
- (2) Councillor Mrs JE Storrar be requested to seek help from Chester City Council's Blacksmith to reshape the lining of the litter bin at the bus terminus;
- (3) the Council give consideration to making provision for a warden/police presence in the village when it sets its 2003/2004 budget; and
- (4) nuisance youth activity be discussed with Inspector Steve Marks at the next meeting of the Council.

(d) Notice Boards

The notice boards appeared to be in good order.

RESOLVED:

That this item no longer be a standing item on the Council agenda.

(e) Supporting Local Shops

The Countryside Agency had still not replied to the Clerk's letter.

RESOLVED:

That as it was becoming very unlikely that the Countryside Agency would respond to the Clerk's query, the item be removed from the Council's agenda.

- (f) Best Kept Village – Awards Presentation – Thursday, 26 September 2002,
7:00pm, Macclesfield Leisure Centre

RESOLVED:

That Councillors A Bailey and Mrs J Young be requested to attend the Best Kept Village Awards Presentation.

136 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES AND PANELS

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the following be received:

Planning Committee held on 10 June 2002
Saughall Parish Rural Housing Working Group held on 24 June 2002
Golden Jubilee Park Panel held on 27 June 2002

137 VERNON INSTITUTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Councillor A Warrington had represented the Council at the Vernon Institute Management Committee. He provided a brief resume of its proceedings.

No date had been offered for a joint meeting between representatives of the Council and the Vernon Institute Management Committee.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report of proceedings at the last meeting of the Vernon Institute Management Committee held on 11 June 2002 be noted; and
- (2) Councillor RA Storrar be requested to approach the Vernon Institute Management Committee for a date on which to hold a joint meeting to discuss a maintenance plan for the Vernon Institute.

138 SAUGHALL YOUTH CLUB

Councillor RA Storrar presented a report on progress made with the Youth Club.

It was noted that the Youth Club had been successful in attracting Community Safety funding from Chester City Council's Local Panel Budget. Councillor Mrs M Anderson had made an excellent presentation to the Panel and as a result had secured the funding. Discussions were ongoing on how this grant aid would be used.

Councillor RA Storrar was also in discussion with the Club's previous Treasurer regarding residue funds and would report back to the Council on the outcome.

It was noted that the Club did not have enough volunteers to open on a second evening and was requesting more support from the community.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

139 PARISH COUNCIL SURGERIES

RESOLVED: That

(1) the Parish Council's Surgeries rota for the next four weeks be as follows:

Date	Member
13 July 2002	Councillor Mrs M Anderson or Councillor CW Eyton
20 July 2002	Councillor B Kerr
27 July 2002	Councillor C Moss
3 August 2002	Councillor Mrs P Humphrey

and

(2) a register be provided for Councillors to record details of issues raised at Parish Council Surgeries.

140 COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED

The following communications had been received:

- Consultation Paper on the forthcoming Local Government Bill (Local Government Act 2003)
Comments were requested to be submitted to the National Association of Local Councils by 16 August 2002 so a response could be prepared before the consultation deadline of 23 August 2002.

Councillors Bailey and Kerr to liaise and respond as appropriate.

- letter dated 24 June 2002 from Cheshire County Council's Transport Co-ordinator asking if Members would be willing to distribute Travelcard leaflets.

Clerk to inform that the Council is willing to assist.

- letter dated 14 June 2002 from Chester City Council's Development Control Manager, Mr David Cotteril, re. Determination of Planning Applications – changes to delegation agreement.

Noted.

- letter dated June 2002 from Chester City Council's Head of Democratic Services, Mr Charles Kerry, re. Dispensations allowing Members with prejudicial interest to participate in meetings.

To Finance and General Purposes Committee.

141 CIRCULARS

The following circulars had been received. Anyone wishing to see a copy would contact the Clerk.

Chester Volunteer Bureau – Volunteer Voice – Summer 2002
Chester Volunteer Bureau – Voluntary Voice – Summer 2002
Chester Volunteer Bureau – Women’s Safe Transport
Cheshire Food Liaison Group – Catering for home safety
Cheshire County Council’s Chester Matters
Cheshire County Council’s CQC
Chester City Council’s Council Meeting – 19 June 2002

142 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting for the items of business listed below on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

Item	Paragraph
Land at Fiddlers Lane	(8) Contract Estimates

Councillor Mrs J Johnson left the meeting.

PART 2 – ITEMS OF A CONFIDENTIAL NATURE DISCUSSED IN THE ABSENCE OF
THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

143 LAND AT FIDDLERS LANE

The Council considered its land requirements in respect of the proposed Golden Jubilee Park along with associated issues.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to take a number of actions and report back to the next meeting of the Council.