

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF SAUGHALL AND SHOTWICK PARK PARISH  
COUNCIL held on 5 August 2002 at the Vernon Institute, Saughall

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

Mr B Jones (Acting Homewatch Co-ordinator)  
PC G Cooper  
County Councillor D Rowlands  
Mr H Dobson (Independent Internal Auditor)

143 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from:

Councillor A Bailey  
Councillor C Moss  
Councillor A Warrington  
Mr C McIlwrick (Homewatch Co-ordinator).

145 MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT

Councillor Mrs J Johnson declared an interest in respect of item 20 on the agenda – Land at Fiddlers Lane – as some of it was in her ownership. 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.

145 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 1 July 2002 be confirmed as a correct record subject to Inspector Steve Marks being substituted for Inspector Anderson.

146 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

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

147 ACCOUNTS

(a) Payments made since the meeting of the Council held on 1 July 2002:

Financial Year 2002/2003	£	Cheque No
Mr A Bailey (Conference expenses)	45.50	101525
Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council (Street Cleaning, relocating Goalposts & new litter bin)	1,716.80	101526
Warrington Borough Council	15.28	101527
Mrs S Hudspeth (Salary)	414.61	101528
Mrs S Hudspeth (Expenses)	71.43	101529
Vernon Institute Management Committee (Contribution to refurbishment of the Prep Room)	853.00	101530
Chester City Council (Rates for Parish Room)	105.00	DD

(b) Receipts

Interest to 24 July 2002 (Treasurer Account)	0.08
Interest to 21 July 2002 (14 day Interest Account)	82.12

(c) Statement of Assurance – Accounts 2001/2002

The Council contented itself that the Statement of Assurance was satisfactory and it was duly signed by the Vice-Chairman, in the absence of the Chairman, and by the Clerk.

(d) Independent Internal Auditor's Duties

The Independent Internal Auditor was presented with the publication "A Practitioner's Guide" so that he could acquaint himself with his new duties. He also received the 2001/2002 Accounts along with the Council's Statement of Assurance.

RESOLVED:

That the Independent Internal Auditor be requested to present a report to the meeting of the Council scheduled for 2 September 2002.

(e) Request for Funding

A request had been received via a Member of the Council for financial assistance for the Day Centre's float which had taken part in the Lord Mayor's Parade.

It was noted that the Parish Council had provided £50 to assist the preparation of the float the previous year.

RESOLVED:

That a contribution of £50 be agreed retrospectively and Councillor Mrs P Humphrey be requested ascertain to whom the cheque should be made payable.

(a) Police

PC Cooper provided the Council with a report of incidents which had occurred in the village over the last two months. He informed that on the whole it had been quiet in terms of crime. There had been some sheds and garages broken into and a vehicle in Aspen Grove. PC Cooper called for villagers to improve their security.

Members were concerned about an area behind Church Road as vehicles were meeting there in the early hours of the morning. PC Cooper asked that the police be contacted when the vehicles were there and they would investigate.

It was noted that the Project Rural Matters' vehicle had visited the village on Sunday, 28 July 2002. Residents had been pleased to see a police presence in the village and there had been some positive feedback as a result.

There had been problems with suspected underage drivers in the village. PC Cooper reported that if underage drivers were caught on the road they would be dealt with accordingly.

Councillor Mrs D Whitton reported that she had received complaints about a car which regularly parked on the grass verge but the driver was not fined, while other drivers had been fined for similar parking.

PC Cooper informed that it was not an offence to park partially on the road or the verge but it was an offence to cause an obstruction. 'If people want to park outside their house and they were not causing an obstruction, it is up to them.'

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the police report be received; and
- (2) the Clerk be requested to write to Cheshire County Council's District Engineer to ascertain whether or not grass verges form part of the highway.

(b) Homewatch

Mr Jones reported that the main purpose of a Homewatch Organisation was that of gathering information to be passed to the police and to act, where possible in safety, to deter a criminal act. In return the logging and actioning of this information by the police was vital otherwise the system would fall down.

It was considered by the Homewatch that working relationships between the police and themselves were not as good as they could be. There had been a breakdown and therefore the Homewatch in Saughall needed to come up with some radical ideas and an action plan with which to move forward. Times were changing and Homewatch needed to move very quickly with them or the criminal and yobbo elements would feel safe in their activities. Certain barriers needed to be removed to allow the naming and shaming of the guilty and anti-social orders to be out into force.

Homewatch activists needed to feel safe and secure in their activities without fear of retribution. That of course brought its own problems which could only be overcome with full village support and backing for the cause. Homewatch believed that anything less and people would rightly be fearful and not come forward.

Saughall was currently a village with attitude..... an apathetic attitude. Unless that could be changed Mr Jones feared that police action, such as it was, had no chance of success in controlling and dramatically reducing crime and vandalism and the Homewatch was wasting its time.

Mr Jones informed that radical changes were needed. How to put them into action needed a determination by the majority not the minority as current. He felt that this was possibly the only way forward. To carry on as they were would achieve very little only serving to frustrate all those who had the future well-being of the village at heart.

Mr Jones was concerned over the relationship and poor communications between the Saughall and Shotwick Park Homewatch and the Cheshire Constabulary and told the Council that closer liaising between the police and local people was a necessity. PC Cooper was in favour of a meeting between representatives of the Homewatch and the police, suggesting that Phil Topless be invited to attend such a meeting as Mr Topless had expressed his willingness to assist the Homewatch modernise, move forward and remedy any communication problems.

Mr Jones disputed PC Cooper's report that the village was reasonably quiet in terms of crime. He informed that he had recently returned from two weeks holiday to find no fewer than ten phone calls on his answering machine complaining of criminal activities, including several serious accusations.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the Homewatch report be received; and

(2) a meeting between representatives of the Saughall and Shotwick Park Homewatch and the Cheshire Constabulary be encouraged to build an effective communications network between the two organisations for the good of the residents of the local community.

(c) Police Response/Nuisance Youth Activity

The Clerk had written to Inspector Steve Anderson inviting him to attend the meeting to answer questions on a range of policing issues concerning the residents of the village and in particular police response times and nuisance youth activity. Inspector Anderson had responded informing that on 4 August 2002 his posting as Rural Inspector for the Chester District came to an end and he would be replaced by Inspector Geoffrey Williams.

Inspector Anderson had agreed to pass the Clerk's correspondence to Inspector Williams and request that he contact her with a view to attending the September 2002 meeting of the Council.

PC Cooper reported that there had been a reduction in the number of anti-social incidents recorded in Saughall over the last three years. He provided figures as follows which illustrated a downward trend:

2000	131 incidents reported in Saughall
2001	61
2002	29 so far this year.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Inspector Williams be formally invited by the Clerk to the Council meeting scheduled for 2 September 2002 at the Vernon Institute, Saughall; and
- (2) the content of PC Cooper's report on anti-social behaviour be noted.

#### 149 CHESHIRE ASSOCIATION OF TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS

##### (a) Representation

It was reported that the Annual Meeting 2002 would be held at 3:30pm on Tuesday, 29 October 2002 at Northwich Memorial Hall. Cheshire County Council's Annual Parish Conference would be held after the Annual Meeting commencing at 7:00pm.

RESOLVED:

That Councillors A Bailey, Mrs JE Storrar and RA Storrar be nominated to attend the Cheshire Association of Town and Parish Councils' Annual Meeting and Cheshire County Council's Annual Parish Conference on 29 October 2002.

##### (b) Notices of Motion

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the following three Notices of Motion be passed to the County Secretary Jackie Weaver for inclusion on the agenda for the Annual Meeting for discussion and to canvas support:
  - (i) The decision by some District Councils to establish Area Committees with delegated financial powers could lead to a conflict of interests with Local Councils, particularly in view of Government proposals for Quality Parish Councils.

In view of the enhanced role and added responsibility Quality Parish Council status will bring this Council calls on the Cheshire Association of Town and Parish Councils to enter into dialogue and make appropriate representations in an attempt to ensure co-operation between Principal and Local Councils rather than competition and duplication. Furthermore the aim should be that both Principal and Local Councils work together more closely for the benefit of the communities they serve and to help Local Councils realise their potential.

- (ii) This Council calls on the Cheshire Association of Town and Parish Councils to lobby support and make appropriate representations with a view to bringing about change to Rating legislation so that Local Council's premises are no longer subject to Business Rates.
- (iii) This Council calls on the Cheshire Association of Town and Parish Councils to open discussion with the Cheshire Constabulary with a view to agreeing a joint statement which sets out a series of principles to characterise effective working relationships between Local Councils and the Constabulary. (Along the lines of the Cheshire Local Council's Charter agreed between Cheshire County Council and the Cheshire Association of Town and Parish Councils.)

and

- (2) a decision on proposers and seconders in respect of the three Notices of Motion at (1) above be agreed at the next meeting of the Council scheduled for 2 September 2002.

#### 150 PROPOSED BYELAW – NO BALL GAMES

Councillor Mrs JE Storrar reported that a public notice in respect of the new No Ball Games byelaw had appeared in the local press.

It was now almost certain that ball games would be banned on the grassed amenity areas in Saughall.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

#### 151 PARISH PLAN

The Council gave consideration to the agenda for the inaugural meeting of the Parish Plan Steering Group to be held at 7:30pm on Monday, 12 August 2002.

RESOLVED:

That the Parish Plan Action List form the basis of the agenda for the Parish Plan Steering Group's inaugural meeting.

#### 152 HIGHWAY MATTERS

- (a) Church Road – Temporary Prohibition of Traffic

Work was ongoing and would be finished as soon as possible.

(b) Fiddlers Lane/Church Road Junction

RESOLVED:

That the Council continue to monitor the road surface at the junction of Fiddlers Lane and Church Road.

(c) Hermitage Road Junction with Meadows Lane

It was reported that there was a large pothole at the junction.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to alert the District Engineer to the pothole and ask that he take appropriate action.

(d) No 28 Bus Service

RESOLVED:

That a report on the No 28 bus service be brought to the next meeting of the Council by Councillor RA Storrar.

(e) Deeside Park Junctions Study

The Highways Agency was planning a £26million improvement programme which would reduce congestion at the junction of the A5117/A540 and improve road safety. However, short-term plans to improve the junction had been ruled out. Christine Russell MP had intervened at the Council's request and had been told that interim measures would prove uneconomical as the major scheme had been fast tracked and delivery was expected in 2007. The average time for delivery of schemes of this scale was between 7 and 12 years.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) it be agreed that interim measures to relieve congestion at a cost of £1million does not constitute value for money if their useful life will only be 3 to 4 years; and
- (2) the Clerk be requested to write again to Christine Russell MP as follows:
  - (i) thanking her for her help in obtaining a satisfactory response to the Parish Council's query regarding interim measures;
  - (ii) asking her to monitor the situation, checking up periodically to see if the scheme is still on target and that no slippage has occurred; and
  - (iii) if she is agreeable to (ii) above, asking her to keep the Parish Council informed of her findings.

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

A request had been made for the proposed pelican crossing to be considered by the Highways and Transportation Local Joint Committee for Chester. The request had been refused as only 13% of county requirements had been met.

The County Council's Highways Department analysed the relationship between traffic and pedestrians flows and normally required 60% of the criteria to be met before action was considered, although if 20% was met further investigation would be carried out.

County Councillor Rowlands informed that the Council had been told what could not be done to slow traffic down outside the School the time was now right to ask what could be done to avert the danger.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor RA Storrar and County Councillor D Rowlands be requested to open discussions and explore other avenues in an attempt to solve the problem at the Thomas Wedge CE (Controlled) Junior School.

(g) A540/Chester High Road/Parkgate Road

The Clerk had written to Cheshire County Council's Principal Engineer, John Gamlen, concerning the County Council's speed limit proposals. She had informed that the Parish Council objected to the proposals and wished the matter to be discussed at a Committee meeting so that County Councillors could give the matter due consideration. The Clerk had also conveyed that the Parish Council was concerned over the lack of consultation with those who would be effected by the decision and had reminded Mr Gamlen that there had been a number of fatal road/traffic accidents on the A540 in recent times and some of these had been on the stretch of road from the roundabout at the junction with the A5117 to the junction with Badgers Rake Lane.

Mr Gamlen had responded to the Clerk's letter and, judging by the tone and the content of his reply, had overreacted somewhat.

Subsequently, the Highways and Transportation Local Joint Committee for Chester had considered the speed limit proposals at its meeting on 18 July 2002 and a decision had been deferred until the County Council considered its speed policy in general.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(h) Highways and Transportation Local Joint Committee for Chester – Thursday, 18 July 2002 at 6:30pm, Town Hall, Chester

RESOLVED:

That the content of the agenda be noted.

(a) Play Area Inspection - Fiddlers Lane Playing Field

(i) The Spring Rocker

The Spring Rocker had been replaced and an invoice from Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council was awaited.

(ii) Drainage Problems

The field's drainage was working well.

(b) Golden Jubilee Park

The Council noted progress made by the Golden Jubilee Park Panel.

At the Golden Jubilee Park Panel meeting on 24 July 2002 consideration had been given to providing a temporary track for BMX bikes during the school holidays. However, it had been agreed not to proceed because of the risks associated with such a scheme.

Councillor RA Storrar suggested that the Council's Insurance Company should be contacted with a view to increasing the public liability insurance cover so the land could be used by youngsters in the short term until work began to create the Park. The cover was currently for £5million.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the progress made to date with the Golden Jubilee Park initiative be noted;
- (2) the Clerk be requested to check out the insurance position with Cornhill Insurance; and
- (3) a report be made to the next meeting of the Council.

(c) Supporting Local Shops

At long last the Countryside Agency had replied to the Clerk's letter of 29 April 2002 and reminder of 14 June 2002. It informed that it had written to all parish Councils last September providing details of the Community Services Grant. This had been done to promote the programme to Parish Councils whilst gauging initial interest. The Countryside Agency's retail consultant had gathered this information however this had been to inform interest rather than to form any application for grant.

An application form for the Community Services Grant had been enclosed. If the applicant wished to submit an application but required some advice first the Clerk was advised to contact Ms Anne Jackson, Countryside Officer.

RESOLVED:

That the response from the Countryside Agency be noted and supporting local shops be picked up under the Parish Plan initiative.

154 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES AND PANELS

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the following be received:

Planning Committee held on 17 July 2002  
Golden Jubilee Park Panel held on 27 July 2002

155 VERNON INSTITUTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Council received the Minutes of the meeting of the Vernon Institute Management Committee held on 11 June 2002 and noted their contents.

A meeting had been held between representatives of the Parish Council and the Vernon Institute Management Committee on 17 July 2002 to consider the fabric of the Vernon Institute and to agree a maintenance plan. The Council wished to contribute to the upkeep of the Vernon Institute as it was a focal point in the village, a valuable community asset and available for the community's use and for the meetings and activities of individuals and the various groups in Saughall including the Parish Council itself. The meeting had considered the work which had been completed and that still to be done noting the difficulties the Vernon Institute Management Committee had in securing the funding necessary to revamp the Vernon Institute to a standard compatible with modern times. It was known that funding opportunities did exist that a registered charity such as the Vernon Institute could tap into to bring about much needed improvements.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Minutes of the meeting of the Vernon Institute Management Committee held on 11 June 2002 be received;
- (2) the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2002 between representatives of the Parish Council and the Chairman of the Vernon Institute Management Committee be received;
- (3) a contribution of £853 (50% of the cost of refurbishing the Prep Room) be made to the Vernon Institute Management Committee; and
- (4) the Clerk be requested to put arrangements in hand with Cheshire County Council's External Funding Officer, Sandra Morrison, to hold a meeting between the Parish Council and representatives of the Vernon Institute Management Committee to provide an overview of external funding opportunities available to each organisation.

138 SAUGHALL YOUTH CLUB

Councillor RA Storrar informed the Council that he had visited youth activities in Malpass and was very impressed with what he had seen. He felt that Saughall Youth Club could learn a lesson from Malpass who were working with a number of organisations from whom they gained financial advantage.

It was also reported that the Youth Club Management Committee intended to approach Cheshire County Council's Youth Service to ascertain whether or not funds from outside sources could be released.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

157 PARISH COUNCIL SURGERIES

RESOLVED:

That the Parish Council's Surgeries rota for the next four weeks be as follows:

Date	Member
10 August 2002	Councillor Mrs P Humphrey
17 August 200	Councillor Mrs JE Storrar
24 August 2002	Councillor RA Storrar
31 August 2002	Councillor Mrs J Young

158 COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED

The following communications had been received:

- letters to all Members of the Parish Council from Mr Paul Durham, Chief Executive, Chester City Council, dated 10 July 2002 outlining the outcome of the debate on the development of Area Committees.

Noted.

- letter from Mr M Jones, Client Manager County Farms, Cheshire County Council, dated 15 July 2002 regarding the Best Value Review of the Service, asking "Are we doing the right things" – questionnaire to be returned by 16 August 2002.

Completed and returned.

- letter from Mr Alan Thornley, County Planning Officer, dated 28 June 2002 regarding "Are we doing the right things".  
The Planning Committee had considered this and decided that individual Members would complete the questionnaires.

- letter from Gurbux Singh, Chair, Commission for Racial Equality, dated 12 June 2002 regarding the new statutory duty public authorities have to promote racial equality.

A copy of the Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Race Equality was on deposit in the Parish Room.

- letter from Councillor Brian Crowe, Lord Mayor of Chester, dated July 2002 informing that he wanted to visit as many parishes as possible. Is there any event happening in the village that the Lord Mayor could take part in?

Noted.

May invite the Lord Mayor to the Golden Jubilee Park sod cutting ceremony in due course.

- letter from Mr Alan Mottram, Development Officer Village Links, Age Concern, informing that he would like to open an information point in the village and asking if there is a suitable venue and if the Council knows of any suitable volunteers.

Clerk to respond accordingly with a copy to Mr B Huxley, Chairman of the Vernon Institute Management Committee.

- letter from Lord Mayor of Chester dated July 2002 informing of forthcoming events.

Noted.

- letter from Mr K Starkie dated 8 July 2002 acknowledging receipt of the Clerk's letter re. Church Road closure.

Noted.

## 159 CIRCULARS

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

Chester City Council's Ethics & Standards Committee Agenda Friday, 26 July 2002 at 4:30pm, Town Hall, Chester

Chester Police Forum Agenda, Monday, 8 July 2002 at 7:00pm at St Theresa's Parish Centre, Blacon

Cheshire County Council's Chester Matters July/August 2002

160 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

161 LAND AT FIDDLERS LANE

The Council was brought up to date on issues associated with the Golden Jubilee Park.

RESOLVED:

That the current situation be noted.