

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF SAUGHALL AND SHOTWICK PARK PARISH  
COUNCIL held on 6 January 2003 at the Vernon Institute, Saughall

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

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from:

Councillor Mrs D Whitton  
Mr B Jones (Acting Homewatch Co-ordinator)  
PC G Cooper

2 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME

Mr M Kennedy of Kingston Court had written to the Clerk regarding the proposed Golden Jubilee Park and was in attendance at the meeting to find out at first hand the Council's intentions with regard to the operations and management of the project.

The Chairman reported that as yet no detailed plans had been submitted but an application had been made to Chester City Council for a change of use for the land from agricultural to recreational. There were suggestions that the Park would contain football and cricket pitches but no layout was available as the project was in its early stages.

At a later stage in the planning process and when details were agreed and a plan drawn up showing what facilities would be available on the Fiddlers Lane land, Chester City Council would consult the neighbours before determining the application for planning permission.

Mr Kennedy's main concerns related to security, parking and danger to children crossing the road.

3 CODE OF CONDUCT – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

#### 4 MINUTES

##### RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 2 December 2002 be confirmed as a correct record.

#### 5 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Minute Nos 213 Suspension of Standing Orders and 214 Golden Jubilee Park – Further consideration of Quotations

Councillor RA Storrar raised concerns over the Council's action in suspending Standing Orders at its last meeting (Minute No 213/2002 refers). The Council had agreed to do this so that it could revisit a previous decision in the light of information being presented by a Councillor who had not been in attendance at the Special Meeting on 26 November 2002. Once in receipt of this information, the Council took a different course of action.

Councillor RA Storrar informed the Council that he had taken legal advice and had been told that the Council should not have rescinded its decision for the reason given and that Standing Orders were made to be adhered to.

The Chairman reminded Members that the action taken had been done with the best of intentions and was the result of democratic decisions by the Council.

#### 6 ACCOUNTS

(a) Payments made since the meeting of the Council held on 2 December 2002:

Financial Year 2002/2003	£	Cheque No
Standard Newspapers (Distribution of Newsletter)	22.21	101561
Mrs D Whitton (Mileage to Crewe – 60 miles)	29.46	101562
Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council (Street Cleaning & Grounds Maintenance)	919.01	101563
Mr C Moss (Parish Room rent)	437.50	101564
K2 Network Services Ltd (Toner Cartridges)	158.63	101565
Mrs S Hudspeth (Salary)	414.61	101566
Inland Revenue	473.33	101567
Mrs S Hudspeth (Expenses)	60.38	101568
Saughall Guides (Distribution of Newsletter)	10.00	101569

(b) Receipts

Interest to 23 December 2002 (Treasurer Account)	0.06
Interest to 21 December 2002 (14 day Interest Account)	58.42
Cheque for £5 from Mr P Bond in respect of footpath booklets sold in the Woodvale Stores.	

## 7 POLICE/HOMEWATCH

### (a) Police

The Chairman reported that he was receiving regular updates from PC Gareth Cooper. He also informed that any Member who was on e-mail could receive a weekly report on crimes, etc. from PC Phil Topliss if they supplied him with their e-mail address.

There had been two recent break-ins in Crofters Way and the Police were linking them. However, there had been a significant decrease in crimes, burglaries, thefts and nuisance activities in the village and it had been quiet over Christmas.

The Scout Hut had been broken into the previous Saturday and the Police had attended with tracker dogs.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

### (b) Homewatch

The Homewatch meeting would be held the following evening. There had been a handful of criminal thefts in the Ridings, Darlington Crescent and Sea Hill Road. They had been reported to the Police but no-one had attended.

It was reported that a lot of villagers did not report crimes to the Police because of their negative and unhelpful response when they eventually got through. The Homewatch had had no contact from the Police over the last month.

The Chairman informed the Council that he hoped that it could assist in improving relationships between the Police and Homewatch over the next few months.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

## 8 ELECTED REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES

RESOLVED:

That this item be referred to the Finance and General Purposes Committee for decision at its meeting scheduled for 16 January 2003.

## 9 HIGHWAYS MATTERS

### (a) No 28 Bus Service

Councillor RA Storrar informed that he had received conflicting reports in respect of the No 28 Bus Service. Users of the service had said not many people were

picked up on the route. The Manager of Chester City Transport, Mr Stuart Hyslop, had said that the service was becoming more popular and he was not inclined to re-route it. Unless it could be proved that people from Saughall were being disadvantaged Mr Hyslop would not take any action.

It was noted that the numbers using the service varied throughout the day.

RESOLVED:

That this item be removed from future Council agendas and Councillor RA Storrar be requested to bring any problems identified in respect of this bus service to the Clerk's attention.

(b) Proposed Pelican Crossing – Thomas Wedge CE (Controlled) Junior School

Miss K Hallas, Senior Technician, Traffic and Transportation, Cheshire County Council, reported that the criteria for a zebra crossing was the same as that for a pelican crossing and therefore she would be unable to consider this as an alternative. She informed that if a location met the requirements for a formal crossing a decision as to which type of facility (Pelican, Puffin, Toocan or Zebra) would be most suitable would be taken.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted.
- (2) Miss Hallas be requested to set out the criteria for a 20 mph speed restriction; and
- (3) the Chairman be requested to liaise with the Traffic Police and request that they put out a golden rod to measure speed on Church Road.

(c) Overgrown Hedges – Hermitage Road to Blacon Boundary

The landowners had taken no action to cut back their hedges despite a request to do so by Parish Council representatives.

RESOLVED:

That the District Engineer be informed who is responsible for the land and it be requested that he take appropriate action in the interests of road safety.

(d) Beeches Lane

There had been no response from MANWEB to the Clerk's letter.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to send a follow up letter reminding MANWEB of the dangers of branches overhanging a transformer.

(e) Potholes

RESOLVED: That

(1) the District Engineer be requested to fill in potholes at the junctions of Meadows Lane/Hermitage Road and Worsley Avenue/Hermitage Road; and

(2) the District Engineer be requested to make his annual inspection of the village with Councillor B Kerr at a date to suit them both.

(f) Fiddlers Lane – Flooding

It was reported that a drain was blocked and as a consequence water was running off the playing field onto the road.

RESOLVED:

That the District Engineer be requested to unblock the drain.

(g) Parkgate Road – Road Resurfacing

It was reported that there was to be some resurfacing between Fiddlers Lane and Overwood Lane. The Parish Council had not been informed. Anyone with local knowledge would come through Saughall.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to find out why the Council had not been told that this work would be carried out.

(h) Drainage Issues

It was noted that drainage problems were again being experienced by the Peg Cottages and at the Red House on Hermitage Road.

RESOLVED:

That the District Engineer be notified.

10 ENVIRONMENT MATTERS

(a) Play Area Inspection - Fiddlers Lane Playing Field

It was noted that Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council had informed that the play equipment remained in good order.

The goalposts were still in the ditch but it was hoped they would be relocated before the next meeting of the Parish Council.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted; and
- (2) a progress report on the goalposts be brought to the next meeting of the Council.

(b) Golden Jubilee Park

(i) Awarding of the Contract

Councillors B Kerr and C Moss had met on site with Mr Ray Easby, Cheshire Playing Fields Association's Technical Advisor. He had confirmed that the action to get contractors to quote on a design and build basis had been appropriate. There would be variations but the Council wanted them to use flair and design an innovative scheme.

Mr Easby had been able to offer an opinion on the Council's two preferred contractors (one a specialist and one not) and had seen the quotations and the prices. He felt that both contractors were competent but was unable to tell from the quotes themselves whether the drainage work was satisfactory. Mr Easby did advise however, not to allow any scheme that did not involve sand slitting drainage.

The next step was for the Councillors to meet with each of the two contractors to go through the specifications. One meeting was arranged for later this week and the other one would be held during the following week. Once these meetings had taken place the Council would be able to decide which of the two contractors to place the work with. It may be necessary to invite Mr Easby to attend the Council meeting where the decision would be made.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

(ii) Planning Application – Change of use including the removal of the hedge and piping of the ditch

Chester City Council – the Planning Authority – had not informed that permission for change of use from agricultural to recreational had been granted. It should have done so by 26 December 2002 to fit in with the fixed timescales for determination of the application. The Council registered its disappointment over the lack of communication from Chester City Council.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to write to Mr Mark Dickens, the designated Planning Officer, to register concerns over his lack of communication and ask for an urgent progress report on the determination.

(iii) Scheme of Plans

It would be necessary to draw up plans to show where the sports pitches and other facilities proposed would be located on the land. A local person had quoted for the work but it was considered too high.

RESOLVED:

That no action be taken to obtain drawings until Chester City Council's Planning Officer, Mr Dickens, has responded to the Clerk's letter of enquiry.

(iv) Local Panel Grant

The grant attracted could only be claimed if the work was carried out and paid for by the middle of March 2003.

It was agreed to provide a gate, fencing and hedging to divide the Parish Council's land from its neighbours and to get a local contractor to clean out the pond.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the Chairman be requested to make appropriate arrangements with Ringwood Fencing to carry out the work necessary; and

(2) a local contractor be commissioned to carry out the necessary work on the pond.

(v) Golden Jubilee Park Panel Meeting

RESOLVED:

That the next meeting of the Golden Jubilee Park Panel be rescheduled and held at 7:30pm on 22 January 2003 at the Parish Room, 2 Fiddlers Lane, Saughall.

(Later amended with the agreement of the Chairman to Thursday, 13 February 2003)

(c) Best Kept Village/Civic Pride Competition

The meeting signifying the launch of the 2003 competition had been rescheduled and would be held at Northwich Memorial Hall at 7:30pm on Wednesday, 5 February 2003.

RESOLVED:

That the Chairman and Councillor Mrs J Young be requested to represent the Council at the meeting.

(d) Parish Footpaths Warden

The Chairman reported that Mr Tony Leach of Darlington Crescent was willing to act as the Parish Footpaths Warden. He walked all the paths in and around the village with his dog and would report any problems to the Clerk.

RESOLVED:

That Mr Tony Leach be appointed as the Parish Footpaths Warden for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

(e) Grassed Amenity Area – Greenway

Councillor B Kerr informed that the signs on the green were in the name of Chester City Council. Councillor RA Storrar informed that Duncan Henderson/Phil Davies of Chester City Council were dealing with the issues raised.

(f) Passageway – Lodge Lane

There had been no response to the Clerk's letters to the Housing Trust dated 15 October and 19 December 2002.

Councillor C Moss informed that he had spoken to a Ms J Lawson at the Trust who had agreed to send out letters of consultation to residents.

Councillor Kerr reported that someone was causing a nuisance by riding a motorbike up the passageway. Also there was doubt over whether some residents had paid for and obtained access rights. If this was the case it may be necessary to provide a gate.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the report be received; and

(2) the response to the Clerk's letters from the Housing Trust be awaited.

## 11 REVIEW OF PARISH CONSTITUTION

(a) Seats on the Council

In view of the numbers of electors on the Electoral Register in Saughall and in Shotwick Park, concerns were raised over the fairness of there being 12 seats on the Council for Saughall but 2 for Shotwick Park. There had been no change to the electoral arrangements since the 1960s even though the population of Saughall had increased significantly. It was considered a good time to look at the number of Parish Councillors per head of population.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to consult with Mrs Brenda Hunt, Chester City Council's Elections Officer, to find out if a review can take place.

(b) Councillors Mrs M Anderson and CW Eyton

It was reported that the two Councillors had now moved away from the village. Although they could remain on the Council as they were still on the Electoral Register for Saughall, they would be taken off once they registered with their new local authority. A Councillor was only allowed to remain as such as long as he/she continued to be a local elector for the area of the authority. A new Electoral Register would be published in October 2003.

RESOLVED:

That the position be noted.

12 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the following meetings be received:

Planning Committee held on 2 December 2002; and  
Saughall Parish Rural Housing Working Group held on 9 December 2002

13 PROPOSED AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN LODGE LANE

RESOLVED: That

- (1) as County Councillor David Rowlands was not in attendance at the meeting this item be deferred; and
- (2) the Clerk be requested to obtain dates from County Councillor David Rowlands that are convenient for him to attend.

14 PARISH COUNCIL SURGERIES

RESOLVED:

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

Date	Member
11 January 2003	Councillor Mrs P Humphrey
18 January 2003	Councillor Mrs M Anderson/CW Eyton
25 January 2003	Councillor B Kerr
1 February 2003	Councillor A Bailey

- 15 THE STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND  
- TALKBACK, LOOK FORWARD ROADSHOW, 16 JANUARY 2003, TOWN HALL, LANCASTER

Councillor Mrs JE Storrar informed that she was attending this event in her capacity as a Chester City Councillor and she would report back on proceedings.

- 16 CHESTER CITY COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES FOR NEXT YEAR

Views were requested on the City Council's spending priorities for the next year.

RESOLVED:

That Mr Paul Durham, Chief Executive of Chester City Council, be informed that the Council's views on his Council's spending priorities for next year are as follows and his subsequent comments be requested:

It is important that Chester City Council Officers are instructed to respond to letters and e-mails within a reasonable timescale. Communicating efficiently and effectively must be the City Council's first priority, investment is needed in this area as there is most certainly a need for improvement.

It is also important that Chester City Council recognises Parish Councils as the first tier of Local Government. There are concerns that the City Council is giving more credence to Area Committees than to Parish Councils.

- 17 COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED

The following communications had been received:

- letter dated 13 December 2002 from Mr J Taylor, Chief Executive, Cheshire County Council, informing that his Council has been rated as excellent (one of only 22 authorities in the Country to receive this accolade) following the Comprehensive Performance Assessment undertaken recently by the Audit Commission.

NOTED

- 18 CIRCULARS RECEIVED

The following circulars had been received anyone who wanted a copy would contact the Clerk:

Cheshire County Council's Chester Matters December 2002  
Cheshire County Council's Trading Standards Newsletter – Issue No 1  
ROSPA – Children's Playgrounds Annual Inspection 2003  
Chester Volunteer Bureau's Volunteer Voice – Autumn 2002 & Winter 2002

19 LOCAL PANEL MEETINGS

- (a) Chester Rural North Local Panel Meeting at 7pm on Thursday, 6 February 2003 at Mollington, Backford & District Village Hall

RESOLVED:

That Councillors RA Storrar, B Kerr, A Bailey, Mrs JE Storrar and A Marsden be requested to attend and bring a report on proceedings to a future meeting of the Council.

- (b) Gowey Local Panel Meeting at 7pm on Thursday, 29 January 2003 at Christleton High School.

RESOLVED:

That Councillors RA Storrar, B Kerr, A Bailey, Mrs JE Storrar and A Marsden be requested to attend and bring a report on proceedings to the next meeting of the Council.

20 COUNCIL REPRESENTATION AT RECENT EVENTS

- (a) Cheshire County Council's Annual Parish Conference held on 29 October 2002

Those who attended informed that the proceedings had been satisfactory.

- (b) Cheshire Association of Town and Parish Councils' Annual Meeting held on 29 October 2002

Councillor B Kerr reported that the Parish Council's three motions had been passed. The motion about business rates had generated great debate. The County Association would now take the motions forward.

- (c) Chester City Council's Partnerships Reception – 27 November 2002

There had been a lot of Parish Council's representatives in attendance at the reception and it had been an impressive occasion.

- (d) Chester Rural North Local Plan held on 21 November 2002

It was reported that Councillors Mrs M Anderson and Mrs JE Storrar had been presented with their first aid certificates at the event, having completed a 4 day course.

- (e) Seminar on Affordable Housing in Rural Areas held on 28 November 2002

Councillor C Moss informed that the seminar had been very interesting. There had been 65 affordable housing units built in Chester over the last 5 years.

21 VERNON INSTITUTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Councillor RA Storrar reported that the Vernon Institute Management Committee at its meeting on 10 December 2002 had discussed the refurbishment and upgrade of the Vernon Institute building in the light of the Methodist Church's scheme.

It was noted that the Chairman of the Vernon Institute Management Committee had not responded to the Council's query over the roof. It was noted that a survey had been carried out seven years ago.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Clerk be requested to remind Mr Huxley that the Council is awaiting a response following concerns over the roof; and
- (2) consideration on support and help to bring about improvement to the Village Hall be deferred until the next meeting of the Council.