

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES
COMMITTEE held on 23 May 2002 in the Parish Room, Fiddlers Lane, Saughall

In attendance: Councillor Mrs M Anderson
Councillor A Bailey (in the Chair)
Councillor CW Eyton
Councillor B Kerr
Councillor R Shukla
Councillor A Warrington

Invited Members: Councillor C Moss
Councillor Mrs JE Storrar

34 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

All Members of the Committee were in attendance.

35 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 28 March 2002 be confirmed as a correct record.

36 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

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

37 TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT FOR CLERKS

A letter dated 7 March 2002 from the Society of Local Council Clerks suggested that all Town and Parish and Community Councils in England and Wales should review the Terms and Conditions of Employment of their Clerks.

Consequently, the Committee undertook a review and the Clerk's Contract of Employment and the Local Councils current pay scales were provided to assist.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Clerk receive a salary commensurate with Spinal Column Point 21 on Scale LC1 (population under 5,000) - £7.974 per hour, backdated to 1 April 2002;
- (2) the amount paid to the Clerk for the use of her computer be increased by £5 to £30 per month from 1 April 2002; and
- (3) the Clerk be requested to make a note of the hours she works throughout the month of June 2002 and bring a report to the July meeting of the Committee.

The Committee considered what could be done in the short term to bring the newly acquired land on Fiddlers Lane (Golden Jubilee Park) up to an appropriate standard for recreational use in the light of grant aid opportunities currently available. Quotations in respect of work required had been provided.

The Committee also considered the Council's budget and revised it to accommodate the Golden Jubilee Park.

A local landowner had offered land (1.2 acres) adjacent to the Park land to the Council for sale and Members considered the merits and demerits of making an offer and acquiring the land.

Members also gave further consideration to the Uniform Groups' request for additional car parking provision in the Fiddlers Lane Playing Field.

The deeds in respect of the Playing Field had been retrieved from the Bank and Members considered the possibility of using part of this site for affordable housing to meet local need. The deeds stated that the land had to be kept as an open space for recreational use. It might be possible to get the covenant lifted following court proceedings which could be long, protracted and expensive, or by approaching a surviving relative of the Vernon family (the previous owners of the land) to ask if there was any objections in the light of the 5.51 acres of land recently acquired for recreational use.

If there was no objection this land might present opportunities that could generate an income which could be used to offset works required on the Golden Jubilee Park.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the estimate from Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council be used to apply to Chester City Council for Community Facilities grants and Rural Children's Playgrounds Grants to apply herbicide, cut down, cultivate, grade, harrow, apply seed and roll and to grub out the boundary hedge and provide pipe drain and access;
- (2) the Golden Jubilee Park Panel be requested to consider what work should be undertaken on the field in the short term;
- (3) the land offered to the Council for sale be declined at the present time;
- (4) the Council's budget be revised as follows:

the budget head Millennium Park Land be substituted for Golden Jubilee Park loan replacement to include the difference between the loan and the total cost of the land including legal fees and an administrative charge (£372.38) (Appendix 1);

- (5) the Uniform Groups be informed that they can extend the car parking on the Playing Field in accordance with the sketch submitted on the understanding that if the Council needs the land in future it is reinstated to its current condition by the Uniform Groups at no cost to the Council.
- (6) Councillor CW Eyton be requested to try to establish where surviving relatives of the Vernon family reside and the future of the Fiddlers Lane Playing Field be discussed at the Council meeting scheduled for 10 June 2002; and
- (7) consideration of the village Community Safety Award be referred to the Golden Jubilee Park Panel.

39 MILLENNIUM PARK LAND

The Committee was informed that the survey report on the Millennium Park Land indicated that much infill was required to ensure a surface appropriate for recreational activity.

As the Council had been successful in acquiring land on Fiddlers Lane the Committee considered whether the Council still wanted to negotiate for the land known as "The Meadows", currently in the ownership of Cheshire County Council. Members also revisited the possibility of siting an affordable housing scheme on Cheshire County Council owned land off Lodge Lane and the need to raise revenue to develop land on Fiddlers Lane. They were also aware that the Church would require burial land in the not too distant future.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the County Property Manager, Mr Ian Gould, be informed that the Council is no longer interested in purchasing the larger piece of land behind Church Road known as The Meadows;
- (2) residents of Church Road and Shotwick House be also informed (Minute (1) refers); and
- (3) an interest in respect of land off Lodge Lane be registered with the County Property Manager.

40 RISK MANAGEMENT

The Committee reviewed the Council's insurance cover for the year running 1 June 2002-31 May 2003. All in all Members agreed that the Policy was appropriate for the Council's needs.

RESOLVED:

That no changes be made in respect of the Council's insurance at the present time and further reviews be carried out annually or more regularly if it is considered appropriate.

The Committee considered the issues raised by parishioners at the Annual Parish Assembly and considered if any action was required in respect of each one as follows:

?? Traffic Calming - Difficulties are being experienced by residents who live on Hermitage Road and on Church Lane (opposite the school). Speeding traffic is a hazard not only to pedestrians but also to other motorists. Although it was accepted that parked cars do slow the traffic down there are not many of these in some parts of the village. Some villagers experienced difficulties trying to get off their drives.

It was suggested that the Council review traffic calming in the village. Traffic Calming schemes in Blacon and Upton were cited as good practice.

Action - to be considered at the next Council Budget meeting.

?? No Parking - It was suggested that the Council consider whether or not yellow lines should be put down on the road outside the Doctors' Surgery.

No Action.

?? Long Lane Junction – It was suggested that the safety aspect could be improved if the view to the right was improved. The hedge and electricity pylon obstructed the view.

Action – advice had been sought from the District Engineer.

?? Litter – It was suggested that the Council should be more proactive and work with the Schools in an attempt to find ways to help educate school children not to drop litter.

Action – Governor Representatives to float at next meetings of School Governing Bodies.

?? Street Cleaning - It was suggested that the Council ought to find out if pavements were still being swept twice in the year (Spring and Autumn) by the Principal Authority.

To Note – regular gutter cleansing is carried out. Pavements are not swept.

?? Community Centre - Representations were made over the need for a new purpose built building for community use. This will be considered under the Parish Plan.

Action – To be discussed at Golden Jubilee Park Panel and Parish Plan Steering Group when it is established.

?? Vernon Institute - Concerns were raised over the current state of the Vernon Institute building. It was considered that it looked old, tired and in need of refurbishment.

Action – meeting with Vernon Institute Management Committee representatives has to be requested again.

?? Terminus Bus Stop - Some villagers wished to see a bus shelter at the bus terminus whilst villagers who lived in its immediate vicinity did not. It was suggested that the Council's recent land acquisition might mean that youths would congregate elsewhere in the future and that it might be possible to revisit this issue at a later date

No Action – at the present time.

42 BUS SHELTER SCHEMES

Councillor Kerr reported that the Countryside Agency had written on 16 May 2002 to inform him that it had awarded a grant to the Council not exceeding £3,800 or 95% of actual expenditure whichever was the lesser for the construction of 4 bus shelters and associated infrastructure alterations, legal fees and land investigations. Total eligible expenditure was £40,000 and the bus shelter scheme was being carried out in partnership with Cheshire County Council who were paying the difference between the grant aid received and actual cost.

RESOLVED:

That the position be noted.

43 PARISH PLAN

The Committee revisited representations made by electors at its Annual Parish Assembly and considered establishing a forum to steer the Parish Plan to completion.

The Clerk reported that Mrs Vivien Ellis, Principal Officer, Cheshire Community Council, had offered advice on how to make an application for funding for work needed to compile the Plan in the light of another Parish Council's experience with the Countryside Agency.

Substantial deliberation followed on whether or not to take the advice offered and Members considered various implications associated with it.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Clerk be requested to write to key people in the village, including those who attended the Annual Parish Assembly and the Vernon Institute's Affiliated Groups to invite nominations of interested persons to sit on a forum to move the Parish Plan along;
- (2) the Clerk be requested to work with Mrs Vivien Ellis and Councillor Mrs JE Storrar with a view to submitting an acceptable bid for funding to the Countryside Agency;
- (3) the Parish Plan Action List be revised at the next meeting of the Council on 10 June 2002; and

- (4) representations made by electors in respect of the Parish Plan be considered by the forum to be established to steer the Parish Plan.

44 BEST KEPT VILLAGE

(a) Vernon Institute Clock

A Conservation Area Enhancement Grant of £855 had been received from Chester City Council in respect of refurbishment works carried out in the last financial year. The Council at its meeting on 8 April 2002 agreed to consider how this funding could be used to effectively illuminate the Clock face.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to find out if JB Joyce of Whitchurch had offered any advice on illuminating the Clock previously and bring a report to the next meeting.

(b) Hanging Baskets/Maintenance Contract

The Committee considered a quotation provided by Oak Tree Nurseries to supply and maintain 15 No 16in hanging baskets for 4 months at a total cost of £600.00. Members considered where to place baskets and who would be responsible for hanging them.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Oak Tree Nurseries be informed that the Council wishes to purchase and have maintained 10 No 16in baskets at a total cost of £400.00 and that they be hung around 2 Fiddlers Lane (the Parish Office); and
- (2) Councillor C Moss be requested to obtain and fix the brackets required.

(c) Sponsorship

Councillor Mrs JE Storrar reported that she had been unsuccessful in obtaining sponsorship to enhance the village.

(d) Long Lane Verges

The District Engineer had informed that he was not happy about the state in which his contractors had left the grassed verges on Long Lane and that he was making arrangements to rectify the situation.

45 HOMEWATCH FINANCIAL SUPPORT

RESOLVED:

That the annual financial support for the Homewatch be in the sum of £150 for 2002/2003.

APPENDIX 1

Saughall and Shotwick Park Parish Council - Revised Budget 2002/2003

Budget Head	Proposed 2002/2003	Priority
Environment Matters		
Best Kept Village Competition	430.00	1
Noticeboards	150.00	1
Street Cleaning	9,000.00	1
Trees	500.00	2
Litter Bins	250.00	2
Grass Cutting (Playing Fields) (Weekly cut)	2,400.00	1
Playing Field Maintenance/Repairs	1,500.00	1
Play Equipment (rolling replacement programme)	1,000.00	1
Playing Field Improvements	2,000.00	1
Golden Jubilee Park Loan Repayment	2,373.00	1
Sub Total	19,603.00	
Finance and General Purposes		
(a) Administration		
Clerk's salary and NI	6,900.00	1
Administration Expenses	600.00	1
Parish Councillor's Expenses	100.00	1
Computer	500.00	1
Parish Plan	500.00	1
Newsletter publication costs	500.00	1
Training Fund	1,000.00	1
Sub Total	10,100.00	
(b) Annual Payments		
Parish Room rental and associated costs	3,500.00	1
Audit Fees	400.00	1
Youth Forum	100.00	2
Donations/Honorarium	250.00	2
Insurance	850.00	1
Subscriptions (APC £500, PFA £20, Com CI £30)	600.00	1
VI Clock Service	175.00	1
Website Hosting	100.00	1
Homewatch Support	150.00	1
Sub Total	6,125.00	
(c) Queen's Golden Jubilee	1,000.00	2
(d) Vernon Institute - Annual Grant	1,400.00	1
(e) Contingency		
(f) Crime and Disorder	500.00	1
Highways Matters		
Street Lighting		
Bus Shelter replacement	1,000.00	1
Bus Shelter maintenance	250.00	1
Traffic Calming		
Sub Total	1,250.00	
Grand Total	39,978.00	

Revised 23 May 2002