

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE held on 16 January 2003 in the Parish Room, Fiddlers Lane, Saughall

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

Invited Members: Councillor Mrs JE Storrar  
Councillor RA Storrar

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2 CODE OF CONDUCT – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor B Kerr declared an interest in item 6 on the agenda – Parish Plan. He was the Chairman of the Cheshire Community Council who would be undertaking work for the Parish Council if its bid for funding to the Countryside Agency was successful (Minute No 7/2003 refers).

3 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 14 November 2002 be confirmed as a correct record.

4 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

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

5 MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

RESOLVED:

That Councillor RA Storrar be co-opted on to the Committee for the rest of the Municipal Year.

6 PARISH COUNCIL CHARTER FOR SAUGHALL AND SHOTWICK PARK

The Chairman suggested that the Parish Council may wish to draw up a Charter setting out how it proposed to interact and communicate with its electorate.

It was noted that the Cheshire Association of Town and Parish Councils was working with Cheshire County Council and the 6 Cheshire District Councils on a Parish Charter. Also Chester City Council was establishing Area Committees and their proposed operations were still being consulted upon. It was suggested that the Parish

Council's Charter could be drawn up adopting the best practice illustrated in these documents.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the compilation of a Parish Charter between the Council and parishioners be agreed in principle; and
- (2) consideration be given to the detail of the Charter once the documents referred to over are finalised so that they can be used as a basis on which to draw up the Parish Charter..

7 CHESHIRE ASSOCIATION OF TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS  
- PARISH COUNCIL CHARTER

Councillor Kerr provided the Committee with a progress report on the draft Parish Charter which had been drawn up by the Cheshire Association of Town and Parish Councils. It set out proposals on working arrangements between Parish Councils in Cheshire, Cheshire County Council and the 6 District Councils in Cheshire. It was hoped that eventually all seven Principal Authorities would sign up to this Charter. However at this stage it was not known if a collective agreement could be reached.

The draft Charter had been the subject of a consultation exercise with Parish Councils and the consultation period had now ended. The Cheshire Association of Town and Parish Councils had received 60 responses but no great changes had been suggested. The draft had been circulated to the Chief Executives of the 7 Principal Authorities, they were discussing it and there would eventually be dialogue with the Cheshire Association of Town and Parish Councils.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and the Committee be kept up to date on progress made.

8 QUALITY PARISH COUNCILS

Councillor Kerr informed that a provisional date had been set for the launch of Quality Parish Councils. If all went to plan the initiative would be launched in London on 18 March 2003. It was the Government's intention to have the initiative in place by the end of March 2003.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

9 CLERK'S CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT AND SALARY

The Committee gave consideration to the Clerk's present terms and conditions of employment, the Clerk's Model Contract of Employment supplied by the Cheshire Association of Town and Parish Councils and the 2002/3 National Salary Award for Local Council Clerks.

Members noted in particular that the Clerk was currently not entitled to any holidays or contractual sick pay, although Statutory Sick Pay would be payable. She informed that her work load had significantly increased since she was appointed on 1 June 1997.

It was agreed that the Clerk's Contract of Employment was out of date and in need of review and revision.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Clerk be requested to provide information on her average weekly hours;
- (2) the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Councillor Mrs M Anderson be requested to review the Clerk's Contract, draft a new one and consult the Clerk and the Committee on it before making recommendations to the Council; and
- (3) the 2002/3 National Salary Award for Local Council Clerks be implemented and the Clerk be paid salary arrears back to 1 April 2002.

#### 10 BANKING ARRANGEMENTS

The Committee considered the Council's current banking arrangements and agreed that they could be improved.

RESOLVED:

That the Chairman be requested to investigate whether the Council's needs can be better met by another bank.

#### 11 EARLY DAY MOTION 265: PROMOTING BROADBAND ACCESS

The Committee noted the Early Day Motion 265: Promoting Broadband Access being put forward by Jim Knight MP which had cross party support.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to write to Christine Russell MP asking her to support the Early Day Motion: Promoting Broadband Access

#### 12 ELECTED REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES

The Committee considered a paper published in December 2002 by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. A soundings exercise was being undertaken on the level of interest in each English region in holding a referendum about establishing an elected regional assembly. A pro-forma for responses was also available.

It was agreed that it was difficult for the Parish Council to complete the form as it did not know the wishes of the people of Saughall and Shotwick Park. It was reported that the Chester Area Meeting might put a collective view forward. In the meantime, if Members so wished they could make individual submissions to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

**RESOLVED:**

That no further action be taken in respect of the soundings exercise on the Regional Assemblies (Preparations) Bill by the Council.