

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SAUGHALL AND SHOTWICK PARK PARISH
PLAN STEERING GROUP held on 30 October 2002 in the Vernon Institute, Saughall

In attendance: Councillor A Bailey (in the Chair)
Councillor CW Eyton
Councillor B Kerr
Councillor C Moss
Councillor R Shukla
Councillor RA Storrar
Councillor Mrs JE Storrar
Councillor Mrs D Whitton

Mrs A Amesbury
Mr J Hallas – All Saints Parochial Church Council
Mr B Huxley - Vernon Institute Management Committee
Mr G Southey – Saughall Gardening Club
Miss R Cowan – Parishes Officer, Cheshire Community Council

8 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Mrs M Anderson, Mr K Evans, Revd M Banks, Miss S Brooks and Mrs S Silversides.

9 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Group held on 12 August 2002 were **AGREED** as a correct record.

10 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

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

11 THE COMPILATION OF A PARISH PLAN

Miss Rachel Cowan, Parishes Officer, Cheshire Community Council, had accepted an invitation to the meeting in order to brief the Steering Group on what was required when making a bid to the Countryside Agency for funding to compile a Parish Plan. Members also received a brief overview on what a Parish Plan entailed, funding available, and on steps to follow and surveys and research required in order to produce a Plan.

Following the presentation Miss Cowan answered the Steering Group's questions as appropriate.

12 INVOLVING THE VILLAGE – CONSULTATION AND OWNERSHIP OF THE PLAN

The Steering Group considered the following themes that could be included in a village plan:

- ?? Demographics
- ?? Transport

- ?? Community buildings
- ?? Services – shops, pubs, schools, etc.
- ?? Youth needs
- ?? Environment
- ?? Voluntary/Community action
- ?? Cultural activity
- ?? Employment

Appropriate questions would need to be drawn up for inclusion on a questionnaire for distribution within the village. Once the consultation period was over it would be necessary to analyse the resulting data, draw it together and present it to the community. An Action Plan would then need to be drawn up. It was suggested that a proliferation of Focus Groups may be necessary to assist the preparation of the Plan along with a series of exhibitions, workshops and drop-in days.

The Plan in its final form would set out:

- ?? actions which the community proposed to take itself
- ?? action which the parish needed to take with the help of others in order to help itself
- ?? what it cannot do!

It was noted that a management consultant could be appointed at any stage. The Cheshire Community Council recommended such an appointment as an appropriate way forward. It would be involved in appointing, training and providing a CV for a consultant and parishes were urged to make the necessary appointment in consultation with the Community Council. It was noted that such an appointment would incur a cost but the post would undertake work that Members and the Clerk were not able to carry out.

Members **AGREED** that the Parish Plan would create a lot of work, take time, effort and commitment and consequently, the Parish Council would need to assign its priorities as it currently was involved in a number of other important projects and initiatives.

It was noted that there was no legal obligation for the community to formulate a Parish Plan but that it would be desirable to have one especially as the Council hoped to apply for “Quality” Parish Council status in the near future.

It was also noted that Principal Authorities did not have any legal obligation to take account of Parish Plans as they went about their work but it was hoped that they would give them due weight, work with local councils and help them achieve their aspirations, aims and objects.

13 PREPARATION OF A BID FOR FUNDING

Miss Cowan offered the Parish Council as much help as it needed to compete a bid to the Countryside Agency for the funding needed to compile a Parish Plan.

A grant of up to £5,000 was available to meet a maximum of 75% of the costs of developing and producing the Parish Plan. The balance of 25% of the cost, of which 5% must be cash, should be met locally. This could be from the Parish Council’s own

funds; another local authority, in kind or professional services; or some other service which would normally be paid for; from special fundraising events; or from local sponsorship or donation. It was noted that if the Parish Clerk was required to work additional hours over and above those contracted they should be classed as payment in kind and costed at the volunteers hourly rate of £6.25 per hour.

14 SPECIFIC PROJECTS/ISSUES IDENTIFIED FOR INCLUSION IN THE PARISH PLAN

(a) Methodist Church

Revd Banks had been unable to attend the meeting but had submitted a brief written report on proceedings of a meeting between Mr Huxley, the Chairman of the Vernon Institute Management Committee, and representatives of the Methodist Church.

At the meeting the Methodist Church's current position had been explained. The Methodist Church was exploring ways forward for the future and looking at the possibility of building a new community style church on the existing site which would incorporate all the facilities under one roof that were offered by the present church and hall buildings, together with a reasonable sized car park.

Mr Huxley had explained that the Vernon Institute was also looking to upgrade its building to provide better facilities. They had agreed to keep each other informed and that a representative from the Vernon Institute Management Committee would be invited to attend the Methodist 'Way Forward' meetings. Also discussed was the type of facilities that each building offered and it had been noted that they seemed to be complimenting one another rather than competing for the same users. This needed to be kept under review. It was important to avoid duplication of facilities but to offer a good range to the wider community.

The Methodist Church would be exploring the possibility of grants and planning permission in the near future, once an architect's plan had been drawn up. It would keep others informed, so as not to prejudice any future applications.

The church would also seek to find out how much local opinion and interest there was in what it was hoping to do, to see whether there was enough support in the village. This had also been mentioned at the meeting with Mr Huxley.

(b) The Vernon Institute

Mr Huxley reported that the Vernon Institute Management Committee was still considering options in respect of funding. Work was currently ongoing and Chester City Council's External Funding Co-ordinator's presentation and subsequent information package had proved very useful.

(c) Golden Jubilee Park

The Chairman reported that the Council had submitted its application for change of use of the land on Fiddlers Lane from agricultural to recreational.

Contractors had been given specifications to work to and four quotations for work needed to develop the land into a Golden Jubilee Park were awaited.

(d) Provision of Affordable Housing

The Chairman reported that representatives of the Parish Council had held a second meeting with representatives of Chester City Council's Planning Department and Cheshire Community Council's Rural Housing Enabler.

It was reported that following a recent Public Inquiry where the Inspector had made comments on the provision of low cost housing within or on the edge of rural settlements a draft Policy on occupancy control for affordable housing was being prepared.

A recent Rural Housing Needs Survey undertaken by Chester City Council had identified the need to provide 14 low cost housing units in Saughall. The Parish Council considered that any housing provided should be for local people.

Mrs Amesbury reported that Lodge Lane (the preferred site for 12 units of affordable housing) was a rural exception site and the Parish Council would be able to have an input into the detail.

It was suggested that the Parish Council invite Mrs Amesbury to attend the next meeting of the Saughall Parish Rural Housing Working Group to help iron out a misunderstanding that had arisen in respect of the allocations policy.

(e) Supporting Local Shops and Businesses

Mrs Amesbury provided the meeting with information on contact officers that could help at both Cheshire County and Chester City Councils. She also informed that the County Council was administering Rural Recovery Funding. Mr Previc was responsible for this area of work and it was suggested that it may be appropriate to invite him to a future meeting of the Steering Group.

Information on Farmers Markets was also provided.

Councillor RA Storrar reported that County Councillor David Rowlands was heading up a Rural Task Force and that he could make a valuable contribution to this forum. It was **AGREED** to invite him to the next meeting of the Steering Group.

(f) Community Safety

(i) Homewatch

The Steering Group received a report on current activity and an attempt being made to invigorate the Saughall Homewatch. Members of the community were being encouraged to report suspicious incidents.

It was reported that a meeting had been held recently with Inspector Geoff Williams to air concerns over ineffective communications between the Homewatch, Parish Council and the Cheshire Constabulary and try to find a

way to bring about improvement, build relationships and of working together for the benefit of the residents of Saughall and Shotwick Park.

(ii) Chief Inspector Dave Hill

The Chief Inspector had informed that although he was pleased to have been asked, he must decline the invitation to join the Steering Group for both professional and personal reasons. He was supportive of the Plan and was quite prepared to meet and discuss issues with key Members of the Council on an occasional basis.

The Chairman **AGREED** to meet with Chief Inspector Hill on an occasional basis.

(g) The needs of Older People

Mr Southey had agreed to discuss the needs of older people in the village with them and report back to the Steering Group.

Mr Southey had consulted 130 older people and presented a detailed report on what they would like to see provided in Saughall and concerns they had as follows:

- ?? Re-routing of the No 28 bus to take in the Greyhound Park area
- ?? Toilets and seating in the Golden Jubilee Park
- ?? Police in uniform in the village
- ?? The Methodist Church to stay as it is currently
- ?? Vernon Institute modernised
- ?? Parking in the village and traffic congestion
- ?? Art classes in the village
- ?? More local shops - Concerned about the current lack of shops
- ?? Worried about the future of the Post Office
- ?? Concerns over plan to get prescriptions filled outside the village
- ?? Would like quiet community garden with seats secure from vandalism
- ?? More allotments with full facilities (water)

The Steering Group **AGREED** that Mr Southey's report had been very informative and the comments and views of older people would be taken into account and form the basis of any future Parish Plan.

(h) Youth Provision

Councillor RA Storrar reported that the Youth Club was now meeting regularly, attendance was good and it was running well. There had been no reports of any problems. Older youngsters were being encouraged to join and volunteers to help out were required.

It was **AGREED** to re-position the second goalpost in the Fiddlers Lane Playing Field so youngsters could play "proper" games of football. Councillor Moss **AGREED** to locate the goalpost thought to be in the ditch.

(i) All Saints Burial Ground

Mr Hallas reported that the preferred option was to use the land adjacent to the Church for burial purposes. If burial land was detached from the church there would be problems with maintenance and grant aid.

It was reported that Chester City Council was responsible for providing burial facilities within its administrative area. However, they did not necessarily have to be provided in Saughall. It was **AGREED** that the exact position would be ascertained, clarified and reported to the Vicar and the next meeting of this Group.

15 THE WAY FORWARD

The Council's Finance and General Purposes Committee would discuss the logistics and pros and cons of compiling a Parish Plan at its meeting scheduled for 14 November 2002 and make recommendations to the Council as appropriate.

The Council would consider the matter of the proposed Parish Plan at its meeting scheduled for 2 December 2002 and agree the way forward. This would be communicated to Steering Group members in due course along with the date and time of the next meeting of the Group if required.