

MINUTES OF A MEETING BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF SAUGHALL AND SHOTWICK PARK PARISH COUNCIL AND THE CHAIRMAN OF THE VERNON INSTITUTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE held on 17 July 2002 in the Parish Room, 2 Fiddlers Lane, Saughall

In attendance: Councillor A Bailey (in the Chair)  
Councillor Mrs JE Storrar  
Councillor Mrs J Young

Mr B Huxley (Chairman of the Vernon Institute Management Committee)

1 PURPOSE OF MEETING

The Council for a number of years had worked with the Vernon Institute Management Committee (VIMC) to bring about improvements to the Vernon Institute (VI) building (the village hall). In the past representatives of both organisations had met annually to discuss the fabric of the VI and to agree work that was needed.

Both sides acknowledged that there had been difficulties in recent times and as a consequence meetings had not taken place between the two parties. However, it was agreed that these problems were now behind them and commitment was given to working together in partnership to refurbish the VI for the good of all those who used it.

2 MAINTENANCE PLAN FOR THE VI

The Council recognised that the VI was looking old and tired and in need of a considerable amount of work to bring it up to standard had asked the VIMC to come forward with a five year maintenance plan. It recognised that some of the work required would be costly and that it would not be possible to pay for it in one year. A fund had been set up and work would have to be precepted for in instalments so that savings could accumulate until there was enough funding available to commission the work needed.

Mr Huxley presented the meeting with the Maintenance Plan for 2001-2003 as follows:

2002 Work to refurbish entrance hall, to include tiling, glazing, door refurbishment, move mat to inside the door, porch ceiling repairs, repairs to keystone. Provision of wrought iron gates to porch.  
(Costs – approximately £3,500)

2003 Exterior painting. Tender to include traffic control on Hermitage Road. (Costs – approximately £6,000)

Replace roof timbers in main building. (Costs – approximately £2,300)

Mr Huxley informed that it was difficult for the VIMC to draw up a five year plan of action at the present time because the position of Treasurer was vacant resulting in difficulties in establishing its cash flow.

However, Mr Huxley did intend to invite a resident of Saughall to take on the work of Treasurer for the VIMC very soon.

The meeting considered the work that was needed. It was acknowledged that the VI was in urgent need of exterior decoration and in view of the costs involved, the possibility of painting the two sides that fronted Hermitage Road and Church Road was discussed.

The VI's keystone, including the date, had weathered away and needed replacing and it was suggested that the old keystone be retained and provision be made for it inside the building.

Councillor Bailey **AGREED** to propose to the Council at its meeting on 5 August 2002 that it accept the Maintenance Plan.

### 3 GRANT AID OPPORTUNITIES

The meeting considered the possibility of the VIMC attracting grants to assist refurbishment. It was noted that the VIMC was a registered charity and would be able to access grants that the Parish Council could not.

Although the Parish Council had in the past provided 50% of the funding needed for refurbishment works, the magnitude of the works now required to modernise the VI meant that unless external funding could be found very little noticeable progress could be made.

### 4 CONSERVATION

As the VI was in the conservation area and a listed building it was **AGREED** that Councillor Mrs JE Storrar would put Mr Huxley in touch with Mr Howard Dickinson, Chester City Council's Conservation Officer. He would be asked to carry out a site visit with Members of the VIMC so he could see the scale of the problem. He may then be able to offer advice on funding opportunities available and it was known that he had a budget to grant aid some conservation projects himself.

### 5 EXTERNAL FUNDING – THE WAY FORWARD

The Clerk informed the meeting that she was in touch with Ms Sandra Morrison, Chester City Council's External Funding Officer, in respect of the Golden Jubilee Park initiative. She intended to invite Ms Morrison to a meeting with Members of the Council to discuss grants accessible to it and other groups in the village to bring the land on Fiddlers Lane up to an appropriate standard for recreational use including cricket and football. The Clerk suggested that if Ms Morrison was agreeable to attending a meeting it could be for dual purposes. Members of the VIMC could also attend. Therefore to ensure Ms Morrison had a complete picture, the meeting could be held at the VI so she could inspect the building at first hand and establish the facts.

The Clerk suggested that to assist the External Funding Officer it would be advisable for the VIMC to draw up a "wish list" of work for the VI. Although the VIMC had its priorities it may be that some work needed would easily attract grant aid and may therefore be able to be carried out sooner rather than later. It would provide Ms Morrison with a basis to work on and she would be able to provide a full funding brief

for the VIMC and point it in the right direction to secure grant aid. Although she would not prepare bids for funding on the VIMC's behalf she would be willing to check them over prior to submission and offer advice.

It was **AGREED** that the form of action proposed by the Clerk be progressed and Chester City Council's External Funding Officer be invited to undertake a fact finding mission as a first step to help the VIMC target grants to bring about improvements to the VI.

## 6 PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

Mr Huxley informed that the VIMC was happy to accommodate Parish Council meetings within its premises and that it might be possible to refurbish one of the upstairs rooms exclusively for the Parish Council's use. It was noted however that the room was not easily accessible being on the first floor.

It was considered that it might be possible to secure funding for a lift to make the VI fully accessible to the disabled and it was **AGREED** that advice would be sought from the External Funding Officer on this point.

## 7 NURSERY PROVISION

Mr Huxley reported that the Nursery would pay the VIMC a ground rent in respect of the land it would occupy when its new mobile was located on site. The costs of the mobile had been met by the Nursery itself.

## 8 WORK ON PREP ROOM – 2001

The Clerk had been sent copies of the invoices in respect of the work carried out to the Prep Room the previous year. However, the Council had held back its contribution to the cost of the work carried out pending this meeting.

Councillor Bailey **AGREED** that now that a very positive meeting had taken place he would propose at the Council meeting on 5 August 2002 that the Council make an appropriate contribution towards the work completed.

**(Following the meeting arrangements were made for Ms Sandra Morrison, Chester City Council's External Funding Officer, to attend a meeting at 7:30pm on Thursday, 8 August 2002 at the VI.)**