

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF SAUGHALL AND SHOTWICK PARK PARISH
COUNCIL held on 4 April 2005 at the Vernon Institute, Saughall

In attendance: Councillor A Bailey (in the Chair)
Councillor Mrs P Humphrey
Councillor Mrs J Johnson
Councillor B Kerr
Councillor C Moss
Councillor R Shukla
Councillor Mrs JE Storrar
Councillor RA Storrar
Councillor A Warrington
Councillor C Wynne-Eyton (Tree Warden)
Councillor Mrs M Wynne-Eyton
Councillor Mrs D Whitton
Councillor Mrs J Young

County Councillor D Rowlands

47 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from:

Mr K Stinson, Saughall Homewatch

48 CODE OF CONDUCT – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor C Moss declared an interest in item No 7(c) Non-Domestic Rates Bill. He was the Council's landlord.

49 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME

Mrs Holt raised concerns over the revised arrangements in respect of the No 15 Bus Service. This Service now terminated at the Town Hall and this meant that bus users (many were elderly) had to carry their shopping quite a distance from the Tesco Store, Marks & Spencers, etc.

The Council had received a presentation from the Managing Director of Chester City Transport, Mr S Hyslop, at its meeting on 10 January 2005 but could not recall him telling it that he intended to cut this bus route.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to make representations to the Managing Director of Chester City Transport and request that the No 15 Bus Service be modified so that it goes as far as Frodsham Street.

50 PARISH COUNCIL SURGERIES

(a) Surgery held on 2 April 2005

Councillor Mrs P Humphrey had been on duty at the last Parish Council Surgery. She informed that concerns had been raised over the dirty state of the footpath from Church Road to Parkway, opposite the bus shelter.

(b) Next Parish Council Surgery

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Mrs J Young be requested to take the next Parish Council Surgery at 10:00am on Saturday, 7 May 2005 and bring a report to the Council on its proceedings.

51 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 7 March 2005 be confirmed as a correct record.

52 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Minute No 30 – Christmas Festivities

Councillor Mrs Whitton reported that the Christmas tree lights had been taken off the Christmas tree and were now with her for safe keeping.

53 ACCOUNTS

(a) Payments made since the meeting of the Council held on 7 March 2005:

Financial Year 2004/2005	£	Cheque No
Mr C Wynne-Eyton (Fencing for pond)	13.16	101776
Mrs S Hudspeth (Exp)	67.77	101777
Inland Revenue	768.64	101779
Financial Year 2005/2006	£	Cheque No
Mrs S Hudspeth (Sal)	555.54	101778
Mr C Moss (Parish Room Rent)	312.50	101780

(b) Receipts

Interest to 21 March 2005 (14 Day Account)	48.83
Interest to 23 March 2005 (Treasurer Account)	0.05

(c) Non-Domestic Rates – Rates Bill

The Council noted that the Non-Domestic Rates Bill for the Parish Room consisted of 1 payment of £50.50 and 9 payments of £53.00

(a) Police

PC Robin Fisher was not in attendance at the meeting and had not sent his apologies.

RESOLVED:

That the Chairman be requested to seek clarification on when the new policing regime commences.

(b) Homewatch

RESOLVED:

That as Mr K Stinson was unable to attend the meeting the Homewatch report be deferred until the next meeting of the Council scheduled for 9 May 2005.

(c) Crime and Disorder

There had been two incidents of purse thefts in the village in the last week or so. One was particularly worrying as a youth had entered the Vernon Institute whilst the Golden Link Club was in progress. He had sat down and said he was waiting for his Gran, he then rifled through two handbags and stole purses.

The second incident occurred as a resident from Long Lane was walking passed the Church one morning. A car had stopped and a youth had asked her the way to Crofters Road and then attempted to snatch her purse. She had resisted and he had jumped back into the car and made his escape.

It was reported that large numbers of young teenagers appeared to be waiting behind the Church Road bus shelter between 5pm and 7pm each Friday evening.

There were a large number of beer bottles left on the field on a regular basis.

Concerns were also raised about 3 cars being sighted on Lodge Lane at about 5:30pm on a regular basis.

Incidents of parking on pavements and grass verges were getting worse and it was suggested that notices be put on windscreens asking motorists not to do this as it was causing damage. Also, it inconvenienced wheelchair users and people with pushchairs.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the reports be received; and

(2) the Chairman be requested to bring the incidents reported to the attention of the Constabulary and request regular police patrols;

(3) the Chairman be requested to design a notice to put on the windscreens of motorists who parked on grass verges and pavements; and

(4) a campaign be launched in the next month or so in an attempt to get motorists to park appropriately and not to inconvenience others or cause damage.

(d) Annual Assembly

RESOLVED:

That the Chairman be requested to contact Inspector Robert Woodward to ascertain whether or not one of his officers would attend the Parish Assembly to answer questions on policing policy and crime and disorder issues.

54 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

(a) Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the following Committee meetings be received:

Planning held on 7 March 2005

Environment and Highways held on 14 March 2005

Golden Jubilee Park held on 14 March 2005

Finance and General Purposes held on 24 March 2005

(b) Planning Committee

(i) Need for a crossing at the Thomas Wedge CE (Controlled) Junior School

It was noted that there was a planning application submitted to move the entrance to the School. In the light of this it was considered appropriate for some kind of crossing to be sited on Church Road.

RESOLVED:

That a letter be drafted to the County Highway Engineer requesting that further consideration be given to installing a crossing, especially if the School's entrance is moved.

(c) Environment and Highways Committee

A presentation had been held the previous week on the Proposed New Deeside Park Junction Improvements by County Council Officers. The scheme was being consulted upon and the deadline for receipt of responses was 30 April 2005. The Highways Authority was holding a meeting to set out its views and it may also take Parish Councils into account in its response.

There were concerns about the flow of traffic along the A540. It was proposed to provide traffic lights to control flow onto the new road. It was also considered that Lodge Lane may become a "rat run".

Consultants had been given a brief to increase and improve traffic on the A5117 but little consideration had been given to the A540. It was reported that Puddington and District Parish Council considered that the Dunkirk Junction would be restricted and this would increase traffic on the A540.

Members welcomed the improvements this Scheme would bring about. However, they had serious concerns over Lodge Lane whilst work was ongoing. Also, once work was completed it would be possible to travel from the Saughall village end of Lodge Lane over the new A5117 and exit onto the A540 at Woodbank, near to the Yacht Inn Public House, thus avoiding the whole A540/A5117 junction.

Therefore, the Council wanted to see safeguards in place e.g. “gate” the road. It was a private road and was only to be used to service the farms along its length. If no controls were put in place it would become a well known, well used, shortcut from Saughall through to the Wirral via the A540. Members were also considered Lodge Lane to be “a disaster waiting to happen” if appropriate action was not taken ahead of the works.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Council’s comments in respect of the proposed New Deeside Park Junction Improvements Scheme by conveyed to Mr C Stredder, Traffic and Transport, Cheshire County Council;
- (2) the Minutes of the meeting of the Environment and Highways Committee held on 14 March 2005 be received; and
- (3) concerns over the Church Road bus shelter be discussed at the next meeting of the Council and in the meantime enquiries be made of bus users to find out if they would support its removal.

(d) Golden Jubilee Park

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Golden Jubilee Park Committee held on 14 March 2005 be received.

(e) Finance and General Purposes Committee

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 24 March 2005 be received; and
- (2) the Uniform Groups be made a payment of £100 for distributing the Parish Plan Snapshot Report and April 2005 Newsletter, to assist their fundraising activities.

55 GOLDEN JUBILEE PARK DEVELOPMENT

The Project Coordinator was in attendance at the meeting and brought the Council up to date on progress with the development.

The next meeting of the Golden Jubilee Park Committee was scheduled for 14 April 2005 and decisions over the site layout and revised tender specification would be made there.

It was noted that Chester City Council's Officers had changed the newsletters print settings and printed it over 8 sides of A4 instead of 6.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be received; and
- (2) the Clerk be requested to contact the Officer responsible for printing the newsletter and inform him that this Council will only pay a reduced amount because it is unhappy with the work carried out.

56 PARISH PLAN

RESOLVED:

That the next meeting of the Parish Plan Steering Group be held at 7:30pm on Monday, 25 April 2005 in the Parish Room, 2 Fiddlers Lane, Saughall.

57 QUALITY PARISH COUNCIL STATUS

Members agreed that they were a proactive Parish Council that served the community well and it was noted that residents paid the highest Council Tax in the Chester District.

In terms of the "bigger picture" it was known that all three major political parties were committed to the third tier of local government and wished to allow it to be involved as far as practically possible with service delivery and decision making.

Quality Parish Council accreditation did not mean a Council had to take on more services and any services it did takeover would only be done if the costs involved were devolved too. It was also known that certain grants would only be made available to Quality Parish Councils. It was thought that a sensible timescale should be set for the Council to meet its aspirations and become a Quality Parish Council. Otherwise it would be left behind.

The Clerk informed that she could make no commitment to this initiative because of her own carer development at this time and this may mean any timescales laid down were likely to slip.

RESOLVED:

That this Council aim to attain Quality Parish Council status by April 2006.

58 CLERK'S MODEL CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT AND JOB DESCRIPTION

RESOLVED:

That a Working Group consisting of the following Members be established to revise the Clerk's Contract in the light of the Council's stated aim to obtain Quality Parish Council status:

Councillor A Bailey
Councillor B Kerr
Councillor RA Storrar
Councillor Mrs J Young

59 MILLENNIUM COMMITTEE

Councillor Mrs Whitton informed that there was currently £900.16 in the account and there were approximately 90 mugs and 50 plates left still to sell.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

60 AFFORDABLE HOUSING

It was reported that Arena had been in discussions with the Housing Corporation to get the Saughall Scheme designated as a reserve project within its Housing Corporation Partnership Programme.

This meant that if Arena worked up the Scheme and there were under spent funds in the Housing Corporation's overall programme, the Scheme could be funded. Although a 100% guarantee could not be given on the outcome, Arena was very hopeful that either the Scheme would attract funding this year or its status would be changed to a live funded project in the next bidding round.

61 FIELDWAY – PATHWAY

At the meeting of the Council held on 7 February 2005 it had been agreed that the Clerk would write to the Chester Housing Trust to inform that the Council intended to close the path from Fieldway to the old garages by the end of the current financial year.

It was reported that although the Clerk had not received a response to her letter the Housing Trust had closed the pathway.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and Councillor C Moss be thanked for his part in the pathway's closure.

62 ODD JOBS

The Council needed to identify an appropriate person to carry out odd jobs (often joinery) around the village.

County Councillor D Rowlands informed that Elton employed a handyman on a casual basis. He had a contract and the Council paid a certain amount per hour when required.

Both Councillors Mrs J Young and Mrs P Humphrey informed that they knew someone who might be interested in this casual work. An advert had also been put in the Parish Newsletter.

RESOLVED:

That this matter be further considered at the next meeting of the council in the light of anyone coming forward and showing an interest in this work.

63 VERNON INSTITUTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

It was reported that work had commenced on the car park and consideration was being made to making a charge to users of the car park who weren't using the Vernon Institute's facilities.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and a meeting be held with the Vernon Institute Management Committee's Treasurer, Mr H Dobson, and Members of the Council to discuss the Vernon Institute's improvement programme along with costs.

64 ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

(a) Attendance at Meetings

Members provided the Council with reports on proceedings of meetings at which they had represented the Council during the last month.

(i) Chester City Council's Goway North Area Committee on 10 March 2005

The Chairman had made a presentation that had been well received to the Area Committee on the compilation of Saughall and Shotwick Park's Parish Plan. A number of parishes were considering drawing up their own plans.

It had been reported that Saughall was being policed from Blacon Police Station from April/May 2005 but would still remain part of Project Rural Matters.

Issues related to the use of Commuted Sums had also been discussed along with applications to the Committee for funding in the current financial year.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(ii) Chester Area Meeting on 30 March 2005

County Councillor D Rowlands informed that he had attended this meeting where Joyce Quinlan, Senior Housing Officer, Chester City Council, had answered questions and considerable discussion had ensued on affordable housing.

65 COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED

The following communications had been received, anyone requiring a copy would contact the Clerk.

- letter dated 21 March 2005 from the Right Honourable Alun Michael MP, Minister for Rural Affairs and Local Environment – Quality regarding rural projects and funding for them available to Quality Parish Councils
- letter dated 18 March 2005 from Chester City Council's Amenity Manager, Community Services – regarding Burial Grounds Survey 2005 – Methodist Church

66 CIRCULARS

The following circulars had been received. Any one wishing to see a copy would contact the Clerk.

- Chester City Council's The Past Uncovered – February 2005
- Chester City Council's Council Meeting Agenda 30 March 2005
- Chester CVS Voluntary Voice Spring 2005
- Transfer Application – Wheatsheaf, Park Road, Mollington
- Cheshire County Council's New Local Transport Plan – Have Your Say! – Setting out proposals
- Chester City Council's Highways and Transportation Local Joint Committee Agenda, Thursday, 24 March 2005 at 6:30pm, Council Chamber, Town Hall, Chester
- Cheshire County Council's Cheshire Matters – February and March 2005
- Standards Board for England – Town and Parish Standards – March 2005
- DEFRA – Partnership in rolling out broadband to rural communities