

MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF SAUGHALL AND SHOTWICK PARK  
PARISH COUNCIL held on 10 October 2005 at the Parish Room, 2 Fiddlers Lane, Saughall

In attendance: Councillor Mrs P Humphrey  
Councillor B Kerr  
Councillor C Moss  
Councillor Mrs JE Storrar  
Councillor RA Storrar  
Councillor C Wynne-Eyton (Tree Warden)  
Councillor Mrs M Wynne-Eyton  
Councillor Mrs D Whitton

Invitees: Mr B Huxley – Saughall Cricket Club  
Mr H Dobson - Vernon Institute Management Committee

180 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from:

Councillor Mrs J Johnson  
Councillor R Shukla  
Councillor A Warrington  
Councillor Mrs J Young

181 CODE OF CONDUCT – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were received.

182 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

RESOLVED:

That Standing Orders be suspended and the invitees listed above be allowed to take part in the discussions and deliberations in respect of the following item of business (Minute No 183/2005 refers).

183 GOLDEN JUBILEE PARK DEVELOPMENT –SUGGESTIONS ON THE WAY FORWARD

The Chairman informed that he had spoken by telephone to Mr Derek Bird, the Project Co-ordinator, and to Mr Richard Smith, Project Manager at Waste Recycling Environmental Ltd (WREN). Unfortunately, despite repeated attempts, the Chairman had not been able to speak to Mr Alan Bailey. He made a presentation on what he had learnt in respect of the perimeter path and the WREN bid.

(a) Perimeter Path

Within a draft Bill of Quantities dated 25 August 2005, provided by the Project Co-ordinator, for work including drainage of land on Fiddlers Lane, was a quotation from Mr DJ Francis for the perimeter path as follows:

“To dig out approximately 700 metres by 2 metres wide of field and construct and lay a pathway of consolidate road planings - £7,250.00  
The total cost quoted was £14,250.00 including the hire of the necessary plant and equipment, clearing the field and temporary fencing.”

This work had been undertaken and was now approximately 90% completed. However, the Council had not commissioned the work or authorised payment.

The Chairman informed that Mr Bird had told him that:

“The former Chairman of the Parish Council, Councillor A Bailey, visited him at home in response to a letter he had sent him requesting permission to begin work on the field. During the visit former Councillor Bailey had not given the Project Co-ordinator permission to carry out drainage work on the field but had given permission for the perimeter path to be laid.”

Consequently, the Project Co-ordinator had instructed the contractor, Mr DJ Francis, and the work had gone ahead in accordance with the quotation supplied.

Members were disappointed and dismayed that the pathway divided the newly acquired land and that of the Fiddlers Lane Playing Field. This meant that it might be necessary to take up part of the path at a future date if it was decided to accommodate football pitches on the land because the land on the children’s playing field would be needed as well as the new land.

The decision made and the commissioning of work in respect of the perimeter path was not in accordance with proper procedures but it was noted that the actions taken had not been for personal gain.

The Clerk recommended that the Chairman should make an appointment to see Chester City Council’s Solicitor and Monitoring Officer, Mr Charles Kerry, to explain the position the Council found itself in and seek his advice on any steps to be taken.

The Chairman had met with the contractor, Mr DJ Francis, and they had undertaken a site visit. The Chairman reported that the work on the footpath was deliberately incomplete. This was because plant and equipment would need access to the centre of the field to carry out drainage work, etc. If the path had been laid across the access it would have been damaged. Consequently, Mr Francis intended to finish off the footpath once the rest of the work on the field had been completed.

The new path still needed to be rolled and sprayed to avoid weed growth.

The Chairman informed that the invoice submitted by Mr Francis was for less than his original quote because the work had taken less time to complete than expected.

The Chairman had identified other work that was required as a result of his site visit. A vehicle had damaged the pathway and shuttering and a fence was needed across the second padlocked gate to stop vehicles accessing from that direction again. Also, it would be necessary to extend the path that ran to the door of the Uniformed Headquarters to the new path to connect the two paths. Otherwise

access to the new path could only be gained by crossing the grass and this would be difficult for people pushing prams/pushchairs and for wheelchair access.

RECOMMENDED: That Council

- (1) accept retrospectively the quotation from Mr DJ Francis in the sum of £14,250.00;
- (2) agree to make an interim payment to Mr DJ Francis of £10,711.60 in respect of the work carried out so far on the perimeter path, the outstanding amount in respect of his invoice to be paid once all work on the path is complete;
- (3) requests the Clerk to inform Mr DJ Francis that he is the preferred contractor;
- (4) requests the Clerk to seek a further quotation from Mr DJ Francis to undertake the work, identified by the Chairman and detailed above, that needs to be done on the Golden Jubilee Park land; and
- (5) requests the Chairman to contact the Monitoring Officer to ascertain his advice in respect of the Members' Code of Conduct and the work commissioned without the Clerk's knowledge and the Council's agreement.

(b) The WREN Bid

Since the submission of the application in December 2004, Phase 1 of the project had been scaled down because Saughall Colts Football Club had decided not to use the recreational facilities to be provided.

The Project Co-ordinator had used the previous quotation submitted by Michael Cornes as a guide and as Mr DJ Francis' quotation in the sum of £41,365.50 had come in a lot cheaper (he was a local contractor and had offered to undertake the work at a minimum profit to help the local community) he was probably justified in not obtaining any other quotes.

Although the quotation from Mr DJ Francis had been in the sum of £41,365.00 it was noted that some of the work had already been completed and paid for at a cost of £6,740.00. The Council, if awarded £25,000 by WREN, would meet the balance of £9,625.50 from its own funds that included a grant of £1,951.25 from Chester City Council's Goway North Area Committee.

The Chairman informed that Mr Richard Smith of WREN had told him that if the project was scaled down and the cost to the Parish Council was less than the original quotation of £90,794 an amended application form must be completed and submitted to WREN by 31 October 2005. WREN Directors would meet on 8 November 2005 and would make a determination. They would either accept and confirm their offer of £25,000 or inform that it was such a substantial change that a revised bid must be submitted by the Council. If the Council had to resubmit it would then be in respect of a grant in 2006/2007. It may be appropriate, if a revised bid was required, to reconsider the level of drainage needed on the land and whether a low level of drainage work could be carried out that would mean WREN funding would not be required.

RECOMMENDED: That the Council

- (1) requests the Clerk to complete the amended application form and submit it to WREN for determination before 31 October 2005; and
- (2) in the case of the amended application being refused and WREN informing that a revised bid must be submitted, hold a Special Meeting of the Council to decide on the way forward in respect of the drainage work required and the funding for it.

RESOLVED:

That the Chairman be thanked for his research and hard work.

184 GOLDEN JUBILEE PARK – THE WAY FORWARD

In the light of the discussions held (Minute No 183/2005 above refers) the Council was requested to determine the way forward.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) with serious concerns, the quotation in the sum of £14,250.00 from Mr DJ Francis be accepted retrospectively;
- (2) a payment of £9116.25 plus VAT, totalling £10,711.60, be made to Mr DJ Francis for the work he has undertaken so far in respect of the perimeter path;
- (3) the Clerk be requested to obtain a quotation from Mr DJ Francis to:
  - ? Provide and erect fencing in front of No 2 gate
  - ? Tarmac a section of the perimeter path to permit vehicles and equipment onto the central area
  - ? Tarmac from No 1 gate to perimeter path
  - ? Extend path from the front of the Uniformed Headquarters to connect with the perimeter path
- (4) the Clerk be requested to advise Mr DJ Francis that he is the preferred contractor for the work but that the specification will depend on the funding made available to the Council;
- (5) the amended WREN funding application be approved and submitted by 31 October 2005;
- (6) if WREN confirms the £25,000 grant aid application then the quotation in the sum of £44,365.00 from Mr DJ Francis be accepted;
- (7) if WREN requires the Council to resubmit a funding application a Special meeting of the Council to be convened to consider the options available to it; and
- (8) the Chairman be authorised to seek an interview with Chester City Council's Solicitor and Monitoring Officer, Mr Charles Kerry, in order to report the facts in respect of the work on the perimeter path and to be guided by his advice.