

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF SAUGHALL AND SHOTWICK PARK PARISH COUNCIL held on 7 November 2005 at the Vernon Institute, Saughall

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

185 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from:

County Councillor D Rowlands

186 CODE OF CONDUCT – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman, Councillor B Kerr, declared a Prejudicial Interest in item 13 on the agenda – Chairman's Allowance. Although he did not leave the meeting whilst the proposal to pay the Chairman an allowance was under discussion, he did not speak or vote on the item.

187 CASUAL VACANCIES

No nominations had been received in respect of the vacancy in the Saughall Ward and no election had been called for the Shotwick Park Ward. Consequently, Chester City Council's Election Officer had advised that the Council should co-opt two parishioners to fill the current vacancies on the Council.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Mrs H Thorniley-Jones of the Greyhound Inn, Church Road, Saughall be co-opted to fill the vacant Council seat in respect of the Shotwick Park Ward; and
- (2) Mr WI Humphrey of 1 Smithy Close, Saughall be co-opted to fill the vacant Council seat in respect of the Saughall Ward.

188 ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE AND SIGNING OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

Councillors WI Humphrey and Mrs H Thorniley-Jones signed an acceptance of office form and undertaking to observe the Parish Council's Code of Conduct.

189 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 3 and 10 October 2005 be confirmed as a correct record subject to the following amendments:

Councillor Mrs M Wynne-Eyton's name being added to the list of attendees for the meeting on 3 October 2005. (She had forgotten to sign the attendance book)

Minute No 172 – Highway Issues

The Managing Director of Chesterbus was called Mr S Hyslop

Minute No 172 (e) – the sub-heading “Closure of the A540 Two Mills to Hooton” to be inserted after the two paragraphs in (d)

Minute No 178 – Christmas Festivities

The Christmas lights would be switched on on 30 November 2005

Minute No 183 – Golden Jubilee Park Development

Suggestions on the way forward – pathway material to be inserted after the word equipment, on the last line of the first paragraph on page 92

190 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(a) Meeting on 3 October 2005

Minute No 160 Committee Places

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Mrs H Thorniley-Jones fill the vacant position on the Finance and General Purposes Committee and Councillor WI Humphrey fill the vacant position on the Planning Committee.

Minute No 163 Police/Homewatch – (d) Parish Room Window

RESOLVED:

That Councillor C Moss be requested to bring a report to a future meeting of the Council on the outcome of the compensation claim.

Minute 167 Golden Jubilee Park (b) Funding (ii) Parish Council

RESOLVED: That

(1) it be noted that the Clerk had requested that the £600 grant be paid from Chester City Council's Disability Discrimination Action Playground Budget 2005/06; and

- (2) Chester City Council's Play Area contribution of £1,000 be the subject of discussion at the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee to be held on 17 November 2005.

Minute No 168 Chester City Council's Draft Tree Policy

RESOLVED:

That it be noted that the Tree Warden was taking the necessary action.

Minute No. 170 Proposal to make Telephone Call Box 01244 88201, Sea Hill Road, Saughall Cashless

Councillor R Shukla informed that there was little benefit in pursuing this issue.

191 GOLDEN JUBILEE PARK DEVELOPMENT

(a) Progress Report

The Clerk informed that she had submitted the amended WREN bid within the timescales laid down. The WREN Directors were meeting the following day and their decision would be conveyed to her in due course.

Mr DJ Francis had been paid for the work undertaken and a further quotation had been requested (Minute No 183(a)/2005 refers). He had been informed that he was the preferred contractor.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) if WREN agree to provide grant funding of £25,000 for the drainage work required, the quotation from Mr DJ Francis in the sum of £25,000 be accepted; and
- (2) if WREN do not provide £25,000 for the drainage work required a Special Meeting of the Council be arranged to decide how to proceed.

(b) Diversion of Electrical Cables

The Clerk had written another letter to Powersystems urging them to remove the overhead electrical cables and informing that the project was in jeopardy because of the inordinate delay and lack of communication on Powersystems part.

A response was still awaited.

RESOLVED:

That if Powersystems do not reply within the next two weeks to the Clerk's letter then the Clerk be requested to write again and send a copy to Ms Christine Russell MP asking her to intervene and expedite the reply.

(c) Trees

The Tree Warden informed that some Maple trees had been dug up to make way for the path. He requested permission to plant 20 more.

RESOLVED:

That 20 Maple trees be planted when the drainage work is completed provided there is sufficient funding in the budget.

(d) Annual Inspection of Playgrounds

Chester City Council's Play Development Officer had informed that the inspection had been delayed due to illness.

RESOLVED:

That the position be noted.

192 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

RESOLVED:

That Standing Orders be suspended and members of the public in attendance be allowed to take part in the discussions and deliberations in respect of the following item of business.

193 REVIEW OF THE PARISH PLAN

The following issues set out in the Parish Plan and Action List were discussed and determined upon as follows:

(a) Speeding Traffic

The Parish Council would spend a proportion of its precept on speed reducing measures. It would look at options available to it within the law.

ACTION – An appropriate Cheshire County Council Traffic Engineer be invited to attend a future meeting of the Council to discuss the options available.

(b) Reduce the Fear of Crime

A meeting with Inspector Robert Woodward from Cheshire Constabulary's Neighbourhood Policing Unit had been requested.

ACTION – This issue would be discussed.

(c) Provision of a Youth Shelter

The Clerk had obtained a copy of the questionnaire used in the Kingsway area of Chester by Cheshire County Council's Youth Service to establish where they wanted their youth shelter located.

ACTION – The questionnaire would be “Saughallised” by Councillor Mrs J Young and distributed by Members. The findings of this survey would be reported at a future meeting of the Council.

(d) Establishment of a Monthly Youth Event

ACTION – When the Finance and General Purposes Committee took an initial look at the budget at its meeting on 17 November 2005 it would try to build in a financial contribution to assist a managed event.

(e) Creation of Additional Parish Activities – Community Facilities

ACTION – A village directory/handbook be funded by the Parish Council and this matter be discussed at the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting on 17 November 2005.

(f) Clearance of Footpaths and Provision of New Footpaths

ACTION – The Footpath Warden, Mr Tony Leach, be invited to the next meeting of the Parish Council to discuss this issue.

(g) Proliferation of Dog Fouling

The Clean Neighbourhood Act gave the Parish Council power to establish By-Laws and enforce them.

ACTION – An item would be included in the next Parish Council Newsletter urging people to act responsibly.

(h) Provision of Additional Affordable Housing

The current site designated for affordable housing was on land in the ownership of Cheshire County Council, just off Lodge Lane. The Housing Association (Arena) needed a funding allocation to take the project forward.

ACTION – The Council would look for other potential sites in the village and the land on Church Road where the garages used to be was identified as a possibility. The Clerk would ask the Cheshire Housing Trust if this land was a suitable site for affordable housing.

(i) Bus Services

Encourage villagers not to use private cars and promote bus services.

ACTION – This would be done via the Parish Council’s Newsletter.

(j) Support for Local Shops

There were problems in finding appropriate car parking space to access local shops.

Two areas of land in the village were identified as possible car parking sites:

??The willow beds in the ownership of All Saints Church
??The former garage site in the ownership of Chester Housing Trust

ACTION – The potential of both sites would be explored.

194 PARISH PLAN ACTIONS

RESOLVED:

That the actions identified in the previous Minute be endorsed.

195 POLICE/HOMEWATCH

(a) Crime and Disorder

It was reported that a Police Officer on foot patrol had been seen in the village.

RESOLVED:

That the police presence be welcomed.

(b) Request for a Meeting with Inspector R Woodward

The Clerk had responded to the Divisional Commander's letter on 4 October 2005 thanking Superintendent Hopkins for his letter and accepting his offer of a meeting between Councillors and Inspector Woodward from the Neighbourhood Policing Unit. Unfortunately, it had not been possible to arrange the meeting yet but every endeavour would be made to do so as soon as possible.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

196 ACCOUNTS

(a) Payments made since the meeting of the Council held on 3 October 2005:

<u>Financial Year 2005/2006</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>Cheque No</u>
Mr DJ Francis	10,7111.60	101829
(laying perimeter fence in the Golden Jubilee Park)		
Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council	1,481.02	101830
(Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleaning)		
(extra work commissioned e.g. litter bins and repairs to safety surface in playing field)		
Cheshire County Council (Bus Shelter Scheme)	1,025.00	101831
Mrs S Hudspeth (Exp)	83.76	101832
Mrs S Hudspeth (Sal)	572.12	101833
Vernon Institute Management Committee	160.00	101834
(Financial contribution towards cost of recent litigation to evict travellers)		

(b) Receipts

Interest to 21 October 2005 (14 Day Account)	61.92
Interest to 23 October 2005 (Treasurer Account)	1.67
Parish Plan Grant	2,500.00

Councillor Mrs J Young in the Chair

197 CHAIRMAN'S ALLOWANCE

The Council considered a proposal to make the Chairman an allowance.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) an interim payment of £500 be made to Councillor B Kerr;
- (2) Councillor B Kerr be requested to keep a careful account of any expenditure incurred as a result of Council business;
- (3) a sum of £1,000 be included in the 2006/2007 Parish Council budget for the Chairman's Allowance; and
- (4) a review in respect of the Chairman's Allowance be carried out after the 2006 Parish Council elections.

Councillor B Kerr back in the Chair

198 PARISH COUNCIL SURGERIES

It was reported that no-one had attended the Parish Council Surgery held on 5 November 2005.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Mrs M Wynne-Eyton be requested to preside over the next Parish Council Surgery scheduled for Saturday, 3 December 2005 between 10:00am and 10:45am in the Parish Room, 2 Fiddlers Lane, Saughall.

199 REVISED SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

RESOLVED:

That the revised schedule of meetings be adopted. (Appendix A)

201 PLANNING ISSUES

(a) Planning Application Over the Border in Wales

A meeting had been held between representatives of the Parish Council and Councillor Griffiths who was a Flintshire County Councillor and a Sealand Community Councillor. As a result of this meeting a working relationship between the Clerk's had been agreed. The Clerk to Sealand Community Council

would inform the Clerk of planning applications on the Saughall border and the Clerk would inform him of any applications on the English side of the border with Sealand.

RESOLVED:

That the reciprocal arrangement be noted between the Parish Council and Sealand Community Council who are both statutory consultees on planning applications submitted to the Cheshire and Flintshire Planning Authorities respectively.

202 HIGHWAY ISSUES

(a) Parked Cars on Pavements

Members were aware of correspondence between a parishioner and the Chairman that had appeared in the local newspaper.

Parking continued on pavements particularly on Long Lane.

RESOLVED:

That this issue be discussed at the meeting to held with Inspector R Woodward.

(b) A5117/A540 Deeside Park Junctions Improvements

The Highway Agency had informed of alternative proposals and had invited comments. The Chairman had responded on behalf of the Council and the detail of his letter was read out.

It was noted that the A540 would be opened temporarily from 9 December 2005 to 9 January 2006.

RESOLVED:

That the situation be noted.

(c) Bus Shelters

Work on the bus shelters had now been completed and the amount held back (£1,025) could now be paid to Cheshire County Council.

Ms C Garner of Cheshire County Council's Transport Co-ordination Section had written to the Clerk to outline a proposal to pilot CCTV cameras at the Church Road/Saughall Hey bus shelter because it was subjected to constant vandalism.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the amount of £1,025 held back because the bus shelter work had not been completed be now paid to Cheshire County Council; and

- (2) the proposal to pilot CCTV cameras at the Church Road/Saughall Hey bus shelter be welcomed and the Clerk be requested to ascertain how this scheme will be monitored and if the Parish Council can be involved.

(d) Parking on Church Road

It was reported that the garage was parking its cars on Church Road. They were a traffic hazard because they effected drivers visibility as they came out of Aldersley Close. These cars caused congestion at peak times.

RESOLVED:

That this matter be brought to the attention of the District Engineer, Mr Graham Anderton.

203 CHRISTMAS FESTIVITIES

It was reported that the Christmas lights would be switched on at 7:00pm on 30 November 2005. Arrangements were well in hand for this village event and the detail was shared with the Council.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

204 ODD JOBS

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Councillor C Moss be requested to get Mr Wilkinson to mend the notice board at the Ridings Community Infant School; and
- (2) the District Engineer be asked if the Parish Council can locate a community seat just off the pathway near the side entrance to the Thomas Wedge CE (Controlled) Junior School, on Church Road.

205 VERNON INSTITUTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Clerk had received a letter from the Secretary of the Vernon Institute Management Committee requesting a financial contribution towards the costs of litigation to remove travellers from land in the Committee's ownership.

RESOLVED:

That a financial contribution of £160 be made towards the costs of the recent litigation.

206 ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

(a) Cheshire Association of Local Councils' Annual General Meeting – 13 October 2005

Councillor Mrs J Young had represented the Council at this meeting. Of particular note was the increase in the affiliation fees. They would now be based on 24p per elector.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

(b) Chester City Council's Paris Partnership Event

Councillors RA Storrar, C Moss and B Kerr had attended this well attended successful event that provided an excellent opportunity to network.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

(c) Goway North Area Committee

The Chairman had attended this event where he had received an informative presentation on the Community Safety Warden Scheme.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the report be received;

(2) the Community Safety Warden scheme be borne in mind when the Council agrees its budget for 2006/2007; and

(3) an item be included in the next Parish Council Newsletter to encourage parishioners to report incidents to Community Wardens.

207 CIRCULARS

The following circulars had been received:

Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council's Statement of Community Involvement 2004-2007

National Training Partnership – Training Events in 2005-2006

REG – Rural Enterprise Gateway

Cheshire County Council's Contact Guide Autumn 2005

The Cheshire Partnership – Investing in Success – Grants of up to £10,000 can be awarded- closing date for this round of applications is 20 January 2006

Cheshire County Council's Cheshire Matters

ReKK Youth Shelters –First with the CTM SOLAR Safety Lighting

Cheshire County Council's Your Guide to Cheshire's Provisional Local Transport Plan 2006-2011

Cheshire Community Council's Cheshire Rural View
 Chester City Council's Ethics and Standards Committee Agenda – 29 September 2005
 Cheshire Community Council's Annual Report 2004/05
 Chester City Council's Council Agenda – 12 October 2005
 Cheshire County Council's Statement of Accounts 2004-05
 Cheshire Playing Fields Association – The Playing Field Autumn 2005
 Policy and Parliamentary Consultation 18 October 2005 – Draft Guidance on the
 Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005

208 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the items of business listed below on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

Communications Received	Paragraph 12	Advice received in connection with the determination of a matter effecting the Authority
Clerk's Contract of Employment	Paragraph 1 Paragraph 11	Particular Employee Industrial Relations

PART 2 – MATTERS CONSIDERED IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

209 COMMUNICATION RECEIVED

The Chairman reported on communications received from the former Chairman, Mr A Bailey. He also reported the advice he had received from Chester City Council's Monitoring Officer and his subsequent actions on receiving it.

A letter from the Standards Board for England had been received and its contents were read out for Members information. The Standards Board had decided not to carry out any investigations.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and the Standards Board for England's decision be noted.

The Clerk left the meeting

210 CLERK'S CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT

The Vice-Chairman reported that she and Councillor Kerr had met with the Clerk on 19 September 2005, a meeting scheduled by the former Chairman prior to his resignation, to discuss how the Council could work with the Clerk to make the necessary time each week within the 20 contractual hours to enable the Clerk to attend the necessary training courses and submit the portfolio to qualify for the Certificate in Local Council Administration.

The Vice-Chairman reported that the Clerk had stated she would attend such training courses provided they fitted in with her availability, but on principle she would not prepare a portfolio. She had stated there was no requirement in her contract of employment for her to obtain a professional qualification, and she currently had appropriate qualifications to satisfy the professional requirements of her principal employer. For that reason she was unwilling to accept the new contract on offer.

In discussing her work schedule the Clerk stated that she spent some time most weekdays before commencing her principal employment; she also worked during her lunch break. She kept Saturdays free as a family day but regularly worked long hours on Parish Council business on Sundays. She attended scheduled evening meetings but was not available every evening due to contractual commitments with Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council. She confirmed that the present workload accounted for the 20 weekly average hours.

The Chairman stated that in a telephone conversation that afternoon the Clerk had reiterated the position as reported.

The Council were advised that an employment contract could only be varied with the agreement of both parties. The Council regretted that the Clerk was unwilling to accept the new contract which was based on the model contract agreed between the National Association of Local Councils and the Society of Local Council Clerks and which reflected the professional role of the Clerk.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the decision of the Clerk not to accept the new contract be regretted;
- (2) the proposed new contract be reluctantly taken off the table;
- (3) the Council reiterates the commitment to aspire to be a Quality Parish Council;
and
- (4) the Chairman be requested to seek advise through the Cheshire Association of Local Councils on the way forward.

Appendix A – Revised Meeting Schedule 2005/2006

Parish Council meetings are held in the Vernon Institute, Saughall other meetings are held in the Parish Room, 2 Fiddlers Lane, Saughall						
Date	Parish Council 7.30pm	* Planning Committee 7.00pm	Finance & GP Committee 7.30pm	Annual Meeting 7:30pm	Budget Meeting 7:30pm	Parish Assembly 7.30pm
07-Nov	X	X				
10-Nov						
17-Nov			X			
05-Dec	X	X				
09-Jan	X	X				
12-Jan						
19-Jan			X			
23-Jan					X	
06-Feb	X	X				
09-Feb						
06-Mar	X	X				
13-Mar						
23-Mar			X			
03-Apr	X	X				
13-Apr						
19-Apr						X
08-May	X	X		X		
18-May			X			
05-Jun	X	X				

*** Planning Committee meetings will take place if planning applications have been received from Chester City Council. Therefore it may be necessary to cancel scheduled meetings if no plans have been received and call other meetings at a later date if plans are received, with the agreement of the Chairman and to fit in with the Planning Authority's tight consultation timescales.**