

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE held on 17 November 2005 in the Parish Room, 2 Fiddlers Lane, Saughall

In attendance: Councillor B Kerr (in the Chair)
Councillor Mrs H Thorniley-Jones
Councillor R Shukla
Councillor RA Storrar
Councillor A Warrington
Councillor Mrs M Wynne-Eyton
Councillor Mrs J Young

Invited Member: Councillor Mrs JE Storrar (Part)

15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

All Members of the Committee were in attendance.

16 CODE OF CONDUCT – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were received.

17 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 24 March 2005 be confirmed as a correct record.

18 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Minute No 54/2004 – Seating

The Chairman reported that he had discussed the possibility of locating a community seat just off the path by the fence at the Thomas Wedge CE (Controlled) Junior School with the District Engineer, Mr Graham Anderton. Mr Anderton was now going to raise the matter with the School Authorities and report back on the outcome in due course.

19 STREET CLEANING AND GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

The Clerk reported that the contract would terminate at the end of May 2006 and it was now appropriate to invite tenders for this work for the next four years. Currently, the village was delittered three times a week but it would make a saving to only delitter twice a week. Members were happy with the terms of the Grounds Maintenance contract and did not want to vary it.

RESOLVED: That

(1) Chester City Council and Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council be invited to tender for the Street Cleaning contract (providing tenders to delitter the village twice a week and three times a week) and the Grounds Maintenance contract; and

(2) Mr DJ Francis and other contractors (names and addresses to be supplied by Councillor Mrs Thorniley-Jones) be invited to tender for the Grounds Maintenance contract.

20 POLICY AND PARLIAMENTARY CONSULTATION 18 OCTOBER 2005 – DRAFT GUIDANCE ON THE CLEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD AND ENVIRONMENT ACT 2005

The Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) had issued a consultation paper on proposed guidance related to the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005. The consultation document was lengthy and over 95% of the content did not affect the First-Tier. However, parts did and also lay the ground work for regulations to come which would have an impact on those Town and Parish Councils that wished to exercise the powers contained in the Act.

Members considered a briefing document and considered whether to respond to the consultation that was running until 2 January 2006. It was difficult to formulate a response without the full consultation document. The Chairman informed that DEFRA would publish further information in March 2006 “How To” a guide specifically written for parish and town councils so that they would be well placed to adopt the new powers to tackle local environmental quality set out in the Act.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the Briefing Document be noted;

(2) it be noted that the Cheshire Association of Local Councils would be formulating a response to the consultation document; and

(3) the Clerk be requested to place an item on the agenda for discussion for the Council or this Committee as soon as the expected document “How To” is received in March 2006.

21 PROPOSED CHANGES TO CHESTER CITY COUNCIL'S ALLOCATIONS POLICY

Chester City Council was currently in the process of reviewing its Housing Allocation Policy. A draft policy had been approved and Members had been issued with a copy as part of the consultation process. The closing date for responses was 2 December 2005.

It was noted that the draft Allocation Policy had been written so it was:

- ? fairer to applicants
- ? providing increased choice for applicants
- ? more transparent, making it clear how a letting was made
- ? easier to understand
- ? providing the applicant with more realistic information about housing prospects
- ? ensuring lettings of properties go to those in greatest need

RESOLVED:

That Chester City Council be informed that this Council is pleased with the emphasis being placed on local connections within the revised policy as follows:

“An applicant will have a local connection with the district if he/she:

- ? has been resident, by choice, in the district for 6 out of the last 12 months or,
- ? has been resident, by choice, in the district for 3 out of the last 5 years or,
- ? has an immediate family member (this would normally be their mother, father, brother, sister or adult child) resident in the district. Their residency must be by choice and have been so for a minimum of 5 years or,
- ? has been in permanent employment in the district for a period in excess of 6 months or,
- ? has another special reason why they need to live in the district

Applicants with no local connection as defined above will be placed in the non priority band of the allocation scheme.”

22 THE CHESHIRE COMMUNITY STRATEGY INNOVATIONS FUND

The Committee was informed that funding applications had to be submitted by 20 January 2006 in respect of the Cheshire Community Strategy Innovations Fund. Grants of up to £10,000 were available for tried and tested projects.

It was proposed that a scheme be worked up to provide a basketball court behind the Uniform Groups' Headquarters and this form the basis of a bid for funding.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Chairman be requested to contact Mr DJ Francis regarding a quotation to prepare the ground and lay a court behind the Uniform Groups Headquarters; and
- (2) the Clerk be requested to obtain costings in respect of multi-play basketball equipment currently on the market.

23 “AWARDS FOR ALL”

Grants of up to £5,000 were available for projects that enabled people to take part in art, sport, heritage and community activities as well as projects that promoted education, the environment and health in the local community.

RESOLVED:

That the scheme being worked up (Minute No 22/2005 refers) be used in a grant aid application for match funding to “Awards for All”.

24 PLAY AREA CONTRIBUTION

The Council had been successful in a grant aid application to Chester City Council for £1,000 towards the purchase of a “Goal End”. This funding should be claimed before the end of the current financial year although it was thought that on application Chester City Council Officers may agree to rolling the funding contribution over into the 2006/2007 financial year.

Members considered the need for a “Goal End” and agreed that because the site layout of the Golden Jubilee Park had altered, as football pitches were no longer required, there was really no need to purchase the “Goal End”. It would be more appropriate to use the funding promised to assist the purchase of multi-play basketball equipment.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the “Goal End” be not purchased; and
- (2) the Clerk be requested to ask Mr Phil Davies of Chester City Council if permission can be obtained to use the £1,000 grant aid allocated to buy multi-play basketball equipment instead of the “Goal End”.

25 GOLDEN JUBILEE PARK – OVERHEAD ELECTRIC CABLE

The Chairman reported that Powersystems had informed that they had revised the underground cable route across the land now owned by the Council. They had sent a plan and asked for the Council’s consent to its implementation.

The revised route was acceptable so long as markers were provided and put in place to indicate the cable route.

It was hoped and expected that the rerouting work would be carried out over the Winter so that the Council’s contractor could be on-site in the Spring 2006.

RESOLVED:

That the Chairman be requested to write to Powersystems Wayleave Officer, Mr E Davies, confirming that the Council’s consent has been given to the amended cable route and requesting that work was carried out soon in respect of the overhead cable so as to allow the Council’s contractor to be on site in the Spring 2006.

26 CHESHIRE TRAINING PARTNERSHIP

The Chairman reported that he had spoken to Mrs Jackie Weaver of the Cheshire Association of Local Councils about training for the new Council and the Clerk after the elections next year.

Mrs Weaver had agreed to provide training on the following in Saughall on two evenings, it was expected that each training event would cost £200:

- ? Basic Induction
- ? Roles and Responsibilities
- ? Law and Procedures

- ? Finance
- ? Planning
- ? Partnership Working
- ? Chairmanship

The Chairman proposed that the June and August Council meetings should be used for this purpose and that urgent business would be discussed at the Finance and General Purposes Committee meetings during these two months. Neighbouring Parish Councils could be invited to send representatives to these events.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the Clerk be requested to contact Mrs Jackie Weaver and make the necessary arrangements in respect of the proposed training events; and

(2) the Council be **RECOMMENDED** to adopt this approach to training.

27 BUDGET 2006/2007

The Committee gave consideration to the Council's budgetary requirements for 2006/2007 and drew up a draft budget for the Council's consideration at its Budget meeting scheduled for 23 January 2006 (Appendix A).

28 NEWSLETTER

RESOLVED:

That as well as the standard items, the following be included in the next Parish Council Newsletter:

- ? A5117/A540 Deeside Park Junction Improvement
- ? Arrangements now in place regarding consultation on planning applications on the Welsh border with Saughall
- ? What to do if you would like to stand for election as a Parish Councillor in May 2006

29 INSTITUTE CLOCK

The Chairman informed that some improvements had been carried out to the lighting of the Institute clock by Mr Murphy. If the Council was happy with the improvements made they could be replicated on the other two faces.

Members agreed to have a look at the Clock and comment as appropriate. A decision would then be taken on whether to commission similar work on the Clock's other faces at a price to be agreed.

Appendix A

Saughall and Shotwick Park Parish Council Draft Budget 2006/2007

Budget Head	Budget 2006/2007
Environment Matters	
Miscellaneous Minor Repairs	1,000.00
Street Cleaning	11,000.00
Trees	300.00
Litter Bins	300.00
Cheshire Railings	500.00
Grass Cutting (Playing Fields) (Weekly cut)	2,750.00
Play Equipment (rolling replacement programme)	2,000.00
Sub Total	17,850.00
Golden Jubilee Park	
Tree Husbandry	300.00
Grass & Hedge Cutting	1,000.00
Weed Control	500.00
Environmental Projects	500.00
Development Fund	4,000.00
Sub Total	6,300.00
Finance and General Purposes	
(a) Administration	
Principal Officer to the Parish Council	9,300.00
Chairman's Allowance	1,000.00
Stationary/Postage	1,000.00
Parish Councillor's Expenses	300.00
Computer (including rental)	800.00
Newsletter publication costs	1,000.00
Training/Seminars	750.00
IT Development Fund	500.00
Youth Workers	1,000.00
Sub Total	15,650.00
(b) Annual Payments	
Parish Room rental and associated costs	2,500.00
Audit Fees	400.00
Donations/Honorarium	250.00
Insurance	1,700.00
Subscriptions	750.00
VI Clock Service	230.00
Christmas Events	150.00
Community/Homewatch Support	250.00
Golden Jubilee Park Loan Repayment	3,656.00
Sub Total	9,886.00
(c) Vernon Institute - Annual Grant (up to £2,000)	2,000.00
(d) Contingency	500.00
Highways Matters	
Bus Shelter replacement	2,000.00
Bus Shelter maintenance	3,000.00
Safety Initiatives	500.00
Sub Total	5,500.00
Grand Total	57,686.00