

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF SAUGHALL AND SHOTWICK PARK PARISH
COUNCIL held on 6 November 2006 at the Vernon Institute, Saughall

In attendance: Councillor DF Holman
Councillor Mrs P Humphrey
Councillor WI Humphrey (Homewatch Co-ordinator)
Councillor Mrs J Johnson
Councillor JG Johnson
Councillor B Kerr (in the Chair)
Councillor C Moss
Councillor RK Shukla
Councillor Mrs JE Storrar
Councillor RA Storrar
Councillor HL Thorniley-Jones
Councillor A Warrington
Councillor Mrs D Whitton
Councillor Mrs JM Young

Sergeant M Houghton, Cheshire Constabulary
PC M Hughes, Cheshire Constabulary
Mr B Huxley, Saughall Cricket Club

169 CODE OF CONDUCT – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were received.

170 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That subject to the following amendments the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 2 October 2006 be confirmed as a correct record:

Minute No 151 – add AUTHORISED after FOR in the heading

Minute No 156(a) – substitute garage door for wall (last word in second paragraph)

Minute No 165(a)(i) – substitute Mrs J Young for Mrs JE Storrar

171 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Planning Committee held on 2 October 2006 be received.

172 POLICE/HOMEWATCH

(a) Police

The Chairman welcomed the two Police Officers to the meeting. Sergeant Houghton introduced himself and informed that he was new to the Division and was based at Blacon Police Station and he intended to do his best whilst he was there. He told the Council that he was concerned about speeding traffic on

Hermitage Road. Members also had real concerns over this. It was difficult to remedy the problem and the Police and Council agreed to work together on it.

Councillor Holman informed that speeding traffic on Hermitage Road had been raised at the Parish Surgery, over which he had presided the previous Saturday, by a concerned parishioner who lived on the actual road. There had been a number of occasions when vehicles had left the road and ploughed into resident's gardens and only recently one vehicle had actually hit a house causing structural damage to it.

Councillor RA Storrar informed that he had visited the scene of the accident (on the double bend) when the house was damaged, the following day and had spoken to Cheshire County Council's Area Engineer, Mr Charles Lloyd, who was based at Backford Hall and the appropriate County Council Portfolio Holder. Both had promised to take action to deter speeding on Hermitage Road.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the reports be received;
- (2) the Clerk be "required" to write to Cheshire County Council's Area Engineer regarding the concerns expressed over speeding traffic on Hermitage Road, particularly on the double bend; and
- (3) the Clerk be "required" to also write to County Councillor David Rowlands requesting that he take this matter up on the Parish Council's behalf.

(b) Homewatch

Councillor WI Humphrey, in his capacity as Homewatch Co-ordinator, made a report on the Homewatch's current activity and on its Winter initiative.

There were still serious concerns over the consumption of alcohol on the Fiddlers Lane Playing Field/Golden Jubilee Park and on land by the Ridings Infants School. The Police Officers present informed that they continued to make random checks but had not caught anyone consuming alcohol in those areas of the village. Unfortunately, a high hedge was obscuring the view of the CCTV camera that was trained on the Fiddlers Lane Playing Field.

Councillor Mrs JE Storrar informed that there would be a meeting of the Crime Prevention Panel at 7pm on 13 November 2006 at Blacon Police Station. She invited Councillor WI Humphrey to attend and he accepted the invitation.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be received;
- (2) Sergeant Houghton and PC Hughes be thanked for their attendance; and
- (3) the Clerk be requested to write to the owners of the hedge that is obscuring the CCTV camera and ask that they cut the hedge in the interests of community safety.

173 DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
- THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER
- STRONG AND PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES

The Council received a summary of the White Paper recently published by the Department of Communities and Local Government along with an oral report by the Chairman.

It was noted that the White Paper was in the form of two volumes that were extensive and covered the whole of local government. It set out a new settlement between central government, local government and citizens. It answered the call that many had been making for some time, for a stronger role for local government and a greater influence over local decisions and public services for local people and communities.

A good portion of the White Paper related to Parish Councils and it proposed to give Quality Parish Councils the power of 'well-being'. This meant that those Parish Councils that were accredited with Quality Parish Council status would have the same power as Principal Authorities and be able to spend money for the benefit of their local communities, providing any appropriate services, etc.

Consequently, the Chairman informed that once the Bill was published Quality Parish Council accreditation would be a matter that the Council would need to address.

One Member informed the Council that "the problem of the Clerk" would need to be resolved and another enquired what the position would be regarding the Council's intention to achieve Quality Parish Council status.

The Chairman reminded the Council (Minute No 150/2006 refers) that Dr Graham Gardner, a research associate at the University of Aberystwyth, had been commissioned by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to review the Quality Parish Council Scheme. At the National Association of Local Councils' (NALC) Conference: Empowering Local Councils held at the Adelphi: Britannia Hotel, Liverpool on 22-24 September 2006 it had been reported that one of his recommendations was that a new test relating to the Clerk's Contract of Employment be introduced. This would mean that Clerks would receive the new model contract of employment drawn up by NALC. The Chairman further informed that this would be helpful to the Council in resolving the position. The Council would be able to demonstrate that it had done all in its power to meet the requirements of the Quality Parish Council Scheme.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

174 ACCOUNTS

(a) Payments made since the meeting of the Council held on 2 October 2006:

RESOLVED:

That the following payments be approved:

<u>Financial Year 2006/2007</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>Cheque No</u>
All Cheshire Garden Services (4 grass cuts)	480.00	101934
Chester City Council (Newsletter Printing)	383.44	101935
North Wales Newspapers Ltd (Newsletter distribution)	27.08	101936
United Utilities (Water rates – Parish Room)	85.63	101937
Cheshire Association of Local Councils (Refreshments – Annual Meeting)	20.00	101938
All Cheshire Garden Services (Cutting Playing Field hedge)	160.00	101939
Mrs S Hudspeth (Expenses)	61.15	101940
Mrs S Hudspeth (Salary)	589.04	101941
Mr R Hipkiss (Street Cleaning)	910.23	101942

(b) Receipts

RESOLVED:

That the following receipts be noted:

Interest to 21 October 2006 (14 Day Account)	123.13
Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council (Invoiced in error)	1,049.67
Chester City Council (Street Cleaning Grant – 1 September 2006 – 31 March 2007)	2,412.80

(c) Cash to Bank Reconciliation

RESOLVED:

That the content of the cash to Bank Reconciliation be noted.

175 MID YEAR BUDGETARY REVIEW

The Council reviewed its budget for 2006/2007, the funding it would need in respect of the Golden Jubilee Park initiative and agreed virements where it was considered appropriate.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the mid year budgetary position be noted; and

(2) the budget be amended as agreed and appended to the Minutes. (Appendix A)

176 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

RESOLVED:

That Standing Orders be suspended and the representative of the Saughall Cricket Club be allowed to take part in the discussions in respect of Minute No 177(a)-(c)

177 GOLDEN JUBILEE PARK DEVELOPMENT

(a) Development Work

The Chairman reported that he had spoken to the contractor, Mr Des Francis, who remained committed to doing his best for the Council. There had been slippage because of the contractor's other commitments and bad weather at the wrong time.

The field had been levelled but it was now too late to seed it. Depending on the weather, it was expected that this work would now take place in April 2007. Over the next few months the land would be raked to remove as much stone as possible, spraying would be carried out to remove weeds and other so far uncompleted work would be completed, including the perimeter path. Revised planning consent would be obtained before the works on the car park could be commenced.

Mr Huxley informed that the Cricket Club was frustrated over the slippage but understood the reasons why it had occurred. He was confident that eventually Saughall would have a cricket field that would serve the village for generations to come. In the meantime, the Cricket Club had made contingency arrangements for next year.

It was noted that some windows in the Uniformed Groups' Headquarters had been broken with fence posts that had been left on the land.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the current position regarding the Golden Jubilee Park's development be noted; and
- (2) the Chairman be requested to ask Mr Francis to take away the fence posts and anything else not needed that had been left on the land.

(b) Quotations

The Chairman informed that himself and Councillor C Moss had met on site with Mr John Young of Tenax UK Limited to discuss the possibility of putting down a special type of mesh on land reserved for car parking provision (33 spaces), that the grass would grow through and the fencing necessary to separate the car park from the rest of the Park, in accordance with the planning consent.

Consequently, the Clerk had received three quotations as follows:

Tenax UK Ltd	£5,194 excluding VAT for 14 rolls of mesh and fittings
N&NJ Enterprises Ltd	£1,155 + VAT for the installation of the mesh

N&NJ Enterprises Ltd £6,063.80 + VAT for the supply and installation of 51.5m of metal (powder coated) railings 1m high

Members considered, in accordance with Financial Regulations, whether or not to obtain further quotations for surfacing materials for the car park. They had already received indicative quotes from Mr Francis for tarmac and for stone chipping surfaces. However, it was noted that the mesh was a specialised product and it was very reasonably priced. Mr Young had also offered to provide 200 parking markers free of charge,.

Members were keen to ensure that the work and mesh carried an appropriate guarantee in case of poor workmanship or it being a faulty product.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Chairman's report be noted;
 - (2) the Clerk be requested to write to Mr Young to establish the terms and conditions of the guarantees;
 - (2) the quotations for the mesh and its installation be accepted subject to satisfactory answers being provided in respect of (2) above; and
 - (4) further quotations be sought in respect of the fencing required (various heights and various materials) and these be reported to the Council in due course.
- (c) Revised Terms of Agreement with the Cricket Club and Greyhound Football Team

RESOLVED:

That it be noted that the Agreement has now been signed by all three parties.

STANDING ORDERS BACK IN FORCE

(d) Planning Issues – Revised Planning Application

Councillor RA Storrar had picked up the documentation required to resubmit the revised planning application from Chester City Council. He passed it to the Clerk who would be responsible for the resubmission that was at no extra cost to the Council.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be received; and
- (2) Councillors B Kerr and RA Storrar be requested to obtain revised measurements in respect of the car park/basketball provision to assist the Clerk in resubmitting the application.

(e) Fiddlers Lane Playing Field

Members noted that the equipment in the playing field was in good condition.

Mr Davies of Chester City Council had been approached for advice in respect of playing field inspections. Unfortunately, he had not answered the Clerk's actual questions and she was approaching him again in respect of this.

As the growing season had continued longer than expected this year, because of the mild weather, the Clerk had been approached by the Chairman and had authorised up to two additional grass cuts.

The mole problem was still in evidence in the field. The Clerk had asked the contractor who had tackled the problem previously to do so again. Unfortunately, he had declined the work offered.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the reports be received;
- (2) the Clerk's decision to allow two additional grass cuts be endorsed; and
- (3) Councillor C Moss be requested to try to find someone capable of tackling the mole problem on the Fiddlers Lane Playing Field.

178 ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

RESOLVED:

That the Annual be held at 7:30pm on Monday, 23 April 2007 in the Vernon Institute, Saughall.

179 YOUTH ISSUES

(a) Cheshire County Council's Youth Outreach Team

The Chairman reported that Cheshire County Council's Youth Outreach Team had been visiting the village and meeting youngsters on the streets. The Team Leader, Skippy Roberts, had informed that they now had a good rapport with approximately twenty young people. These youngsters were very sensible and accepted that any provision/facility for them would have to be located away from residents houses and where there was adequate lighting.

The Youth Outreach Team would continue to work with these young people and the aim was to arrange for some of them to meet with representatives of the Council to set out their needs and aspirations, etc. This was expected to take place by the end of November 2006 in a venue of the youngsters choosing.

RESOLVED:

That Councillors Mrs H Thorniley-Jones, Mrs D Whitton and Mrs J Young be requested to represent the Council at the meeting with young people.

(b) Saughall Youth Club

Councillor Mrs H Thorniley-Jones reported on problems that had arisen in respect of the Youth Club. It seemed that the best way forward now was for the old Management Committee to be formally dissolved and for a new Management Committee to be set up and take over the stewardship of monies, etc. Councillor Mrs Thorniley-Jones and the Vicar had already agreed to sit on the new Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

180 REVIEW OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PROVISION IN SAUGHALL

Pursuant to Minute No 159(b)/2006 – Proposal to acquire burial land from Cheshire County Council – the Chairman informed that Ms Margaret Sumner, Cheshire County Council's Strategic Property Adviser, had telephoned him to update him in respect of the review of primary school provision that was being undertaken by her Council. Apparently, the Local Education Authority's policy was to combine Infant and Junior Schools where possible. The review was taking place and Headteachers were being consulted on the findings. The Chairman would be invited to an event on 30 November 2006 at the Ramada Hotel, Chester when the proposed options would be announced.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the report be received; and

(2) the Chairman be requested to represent the Council at the public consultation event scheduled for 30 November 2006 and report on the proceedings at the next Council meeting.

181 REVIEW OF LITTER BIN PROVISION

Pursuant to Minute No 160/2006 Members considered litter bin provision in the village along with its corresponding budget.

RESOLVED:

That the litter bin by the Greyhound Public House on Sea Hill Road be replaced and a priority list for future litter bin replacements be drawn up.

182 HIGHWAY ISSUES

(a) Parked Cars on Pavements

RESOLVED:

That the situation continue to be monitored.

(b) Proposed A5117 Major Roadworks for Highway Agency

The Clerk had asked the District Engineer, Mr Graham Anderton, what could be done to alleviate the traffic problems and congestion that meant Saughall people had great difficulty in getting into and out of the village at certain times. The District Engineer had not responded.

The Chairman informed that he had agreed to represent the Council at the turf cutting ceremony arranged by the Highways Agency on Wednesday, 8 November 2006 at Oakview Farm Compound and at the Mollington Banastre Hotel. He would take the opportunity to ask for temporary traffic lights at the roundabout

RESOLVED: That

(1) the report be received; and

(2) the Chairman be requested to represent the Council at the Improvement's turf cutting ceremony scheduled for 8 November 2006 and use the opportunity to explore the possibility of temporary traffic lights being erected at the junction.

183 PARISH COUNCIL SURGERIES

(a) Surgery held on Saturday, 4 November 2006

Councillor DF Holman informed that two parishioners had attended the Parish Council Surgery held on Saturday, 4 November 2006 over which he had presided. He detailed the conversations that had taken place for Members information. (Minute No 172(a)/2006 also refers)

(b) Surgery to be held on Saturday, 2 December 2006

RESOLVED:

That Councillor C Moss be requested to preside over the next Parish Council Surgery scheduled for Saturday, 2 December 2006 between 10:00am and 10:45am in the Parish Room on Fiddlers Lane, Saughall and bring a report on proceedings to the Council meeting on 5 February 2007.

184 VERNON INSTITUTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

There was currently nothing to report of interest to the Council.

185 ODD JOBS

RESOLVED:

That Mr H Wilkinson be asked to attend to the Parish Council's notice board and remove the graffiti at the Edgerton Arms Public House as soon as possible and locate the new litter bin by the Greyhound Public House in due course.

186 ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

(a) Representation at meetings of Outside Bodies

RESOLVED:

That there be no Council representation at:

- (i) Cheshire County Council's Open Space and Biodiversity Audit – Consultation Workshop
Tuesday, 28 November 2006 at the Blacon High School
- (ii) Cheshire Association of Local Councils' Community Engagement Workshop
At Blue Bache Barne, Whitchurch, Shropshire

(b) Reports of those who attended meetings of Outside Bodies:

- (i) Cheshire Association of Local Councils Annual Meeting 2006
Thursday, 12 October 2006, 7:00-9:30pm at the Middlewich Civic Hall

Councillor A Warrington reported on proceedings. Both of the Council's Motions had been carried as follows:

- "This Association is disturbed at the growth of weeds in roadside gutters and on pavements and requests the County Council to review, as a matter of urgency, its current policy on highways weed control.
- The demand for affordable housing is an acute problem generally but particularly so in rural communities. This Association calls upon the District Councils to review the allocations policy for rural lets to give greater priority to families with strong local connections."

(Minute No 140/2006 refers)

- (ii) Chester City Council's Parish Partnership Reception
Wednesday, 1 November 2006, 7:30pm at the Town Hall Chester

The Chairman reported on proceedings at this networking event.

RESOLVED:

That the reports of proceedings of these events be received.

187 CIRCULARS

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

Cheshire County Council – Works
Cheshire County Council – Cheshire Matters – October 2006
Royal Liverpool Children's NHS Trust – Your Alder Hey – Have Your Say
Cheshire Police Authority – Forum Newsletter – Chester – October 2006
Cheshire Community Council's Annual Report 31 March 2006

188 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act. The public interest test had been applied and favoured exclusion of the information from the press and public

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

189 WORKING ARRANGEMENTS OF THE CLERK

The Chairman reported that he had placed this item on the agenda as a result of thoughts he had had since the Council meeting on 4 September 2006. He had a number of proposals in respect of the Clerk's day to day working arrangements and practises that he considered made good business sense.

The Chairman listed the proposals and sought the Clerk's comments. The Clerk advised that the National Association of Local Councils had issued guidance for Council's when they considered staffing issues. She informed that it was good practice to deal with staffing matters in a small committee set up for the purpose, in private, as the Council had previously done. (Minute No 210/2005 refers)

The Chairman declined the Clerk's advice and informed that the Council meeting was an appropriate forum to consider his proposals and set out his reasons why they should be adopted. He then requested the Clerk's comments again.

The Clerk informed that she wished to leave the meeting. The Chairman told the Clerk that she could not go.

Consequently, the Clerk informed the Council that she was not prepared to comment further until she had had the opportunity to take appropriate advice.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the proposals put forward by the Chairman be agreed; and
- (2) the Clerk be disciplined if she refuses to comply with the decisions made.

Appendix A

Saughall and Shotwick Park Parish Council Budget 2006/2007 Revised 3 November 2006

Budget Head	Revised Budget 2006/2007
Environment Matters	
Miscellaneous Minor Repairs	1,000.00
Street Cleaning	10,500.00
Trees	
Litter Bins	300.00
Cheshire Railings	200.00
Grass Cutting (Playing Fields) (Weekly cut)	3,500.00
Play Equipment (rolling replacement programme)	2,000.00
Play Surface Repair	
Sub Total	17,500.00
Golden Jubilee Park	
Tree Husbandry	300.00
Grass & Hedge Cutting	1,000.00
Weed Control	200.00
Environmental Projects	200.00
Development Fund	9,347.00
Contingency to cover VAT	500.00
Sub Total	11,547.00
Finance and General Purposes	
(a) Administration	
Principal Officer to the Parish Council	10,700.00
Chairman's Allowance	1,000.00
Stationary/Postage/Computer Consumables	700.00
Parish Councillor's Expenses	300.00
Computer (including rental)	360.00
Newsletter publication costs	1,000.00
Training/Seminars	750.00
IT Development Fund	
Youth Workers	
Sub Total	14,810.00
(b) Annual Payments	
Parish Room rental and associated costs	2,000.00
Audit Fees	350.00
Donations/Honorarium	250.00
Insurance	1,228.00
Subscriptions	750.00
VI Clock Service	230.00
Christmas Events	100.00
Community/Homewatch Support	250.00
Golden Jubilee Park Loan Repayment	3,656.00
Sub Total	8,814.00
(c) Vernon Institute - (Annual Grant to designated fund)	2,000.00
(d) Contingency	500.00
Highways Matters	
Bus Shelter replacement	
Bus Shelter maintenance	2,525.00
Safety Initiatives	
Sub Total	2,525.00
Grand Total	57,696.00