

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE held on 15 March 2007 in the Parish Room, 2 Fiddlers Lane, Saughall

In attendance: Councillor DF Holman
Councillor Mrs J Johnson
Councillor R Shukla
Councillor RA Storrar
Councillor Mrs H Thorniley-Jones
Councillor A Warrington
Councillor Mrs J Young (in the Chair)

Invited Members: Councillor Mrs JE Storrar

1 APOLOGIES FOR AUTHORISED ABSENCE

Apologies for authorised absence were received from Councillor B Kerr.

2 CODE OF CONDUCT – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were received.

3 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 21 December 2006 be confirmed as a correct record.

4 INSURANCE

The Council had agreed to obtain more than one quotation before renewing its insurance cover from June 2007. The Clerk requested a steer on which insurance companies to be contacted.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to contact the Cheshire Association of Local Councils to obtain advice on insurance companies who specialise in Municipal insurance.

5 YOUTH ISSUES

Councillor Mrs H Thorniley-Jones informed that local young people had requested that the Council provide them with a youth pod/shelter and an American style multipurpose basketball court.

Members gave consideration to where a pod/shelter could be sited in the village. It was thought that it might be appropriate to temporarily site such a structure to see if it worked well and if young people treated it properly and behaved whilst in it.

Before any decision was made it would be necessary to consult local people on the pod/shelter's location.

Mr Skippy Roberts, Cheshire County Council's Outreach Team's Leader, had informed that it may be possible to secure a free shelter via Mr Sam Chapman, Community Safety Officer at Chester City Council.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Clerk be requested to contact Andrea Thwaite at Chester City Council for guidance on the siting of youth pods/shelters;
- (2) the Clerk be requested to pursue the possibility of obtaining a free pod/shelter from Chester City Council and if one was available it be reserved for Saughall; and
- (3) the Council be **RECOMMENDED** to actively explore the options for siting a youth pod/shelter in Saughall and consult on them.

6 GOLDEN JUBILEE PARK DEVELOPMENT

Councillor Mrs J Young informed that the Field Committee had met on 11 March 2007 and had agreed that it would oversee the work being carried out but would not be making any decisions.

Field Committee Members were concerned over the quotations obtained for mesh and fencing and wanted to meet with the contractors before they started work. They were also concerned about the erosion of the goalmouths and recommended that preventative measures be explored.

It was noted that the ponds were in need of attention and the new one remained stagnant,

Also, concerns had been raised over the fact that the Project Co-ordinator lived abroad and was not physically able to carry out his roll any more.

The Field Committee did not consider it appropriate to co-opt anyone else onto the Committee at the present time.

Councillor RA Storrar reminded the Committee that he was still storing six bench seats that would need to be located in the Park.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Clerk be requested to make arrangements for the contractors to meet with the Field Committee before they put up the fence and put down the mesh in the Park;
- (2) Councillor DF Holman be requested to obtain advice, via the University of Chester, on how to prevent the goalmouths being eroded; and
- (3) the Clerk be requested to write to Mr Derek Bird, the Project Co-ordinator, thanking him for his hard work in respect of the development, wishing him well for the future and asking that he return any documents appertaining to the Golden Jubilee Park development to her.

7 APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

Members received a copy of a letter dated 9 February 2007 from Mr M Norman, Manager, Audit Policy and Practice at the Audit Commission, informing that the Commission proposed to extend the appointment of UHY Hacker Young, the External Auditor, to cover 2007/08. Tenders would be invited for appointment as auditors, again on a countrywide basis. The Commission had approved new fees to operate from 2006/07 and they would remain in operation for a five-year period.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the Audit Commission's letter be noted.

8 APPLICATION FOR A PAYMENT FROM GOWY NORTH AREA COMMITTEE 2007/08 BUDGET

The Council at its meeting on 5 February 2007 had suggested that a funding application for a project other than the Golden Jubilee Park development be made to Chester City Council's Gowy North Area Committee and resolved that the Finance and General Purposes Committee give it consideration (Minute No 11(d)(ii)/2007 refers). The closing date for applications was 20 April 2007.

It was considered that a scheme to replace the play equipment in the Fiddlers Lane Swing Park should be the subject of a funding bid. However, it was noted that there would not be enough time to prepare such a bid for funding to meet the current deadline.

Councillor Mrs J Young informed that the Uniform Groups' Headquarters needed a new heating system.

It was also reported that Saughall Colts wanted to carry out improvements on Vernon Institute owned land in Sealand. However, it was not known if Chester City Council would be willing to grant aid a facility in Wales that was outside of its administrative area.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Clerk be requested to obtain brochures detailing modern play equipment; and
- (2) Councillor Mrs J Young be requested to submit a funding application to the Gowy North Area Committee for a new heating system for the Uniform Groups' Headquarters.

9 AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN SAUGHALL

County Councillor David Rowlands had provided Councillor B Kerr with details on Northern Affordable Homes Ltd as he considered that they might be able to assist the Parish Council in respect of an affordable housing project to meet local needs.

There was a Green Belt site within the Parish that had been granted planning consent for an affordable housing scheme but the Housing Association – Arena had not made

any progress due to financial constraints. The land was in the ownership of Cheshire County Council.

Consequently, Councillor Kerr had approached Mr Simon Drummond at Northern Affordable Homes Ltd over the possibility of holding an exploratory meeting and Mr Drummond had contacted the Clerk to register an interest in attending such a meeting.

Mr Drummond had requested a copy of the planning consent and Councillor RA Storrar informed that he would obtain a copy from Chester City Council, the Planning Authority.

In the light of the proposed amalgamation of the two Saughall Schools and the proposal to build a new Primary School on County Council owned land, the Committee was keen to ensure that the Parish Council's long term plans in relation to affordable homes and burial land were not jeopardised.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Clerk be requested to contact Mr Simon Drummond of Northern Affordable Homes Ltd informing that the Council would like to meet with him and a representative of Cheshire County Council to explore possibilities of building affordable housing in Saughall; and
- (2) the Clerk be requested to remind the County Property Manager of the Parish Council's aims in respect of affordable housing and additional burial land in the light of the proposal to build a new all-through primary school.