

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF SAUGHALL AND SHOTWICK PARK PARISH  
COUNCIL held on 3 December 2007 at the Vernon Institute, Saughall

In attendance: Councillor DF Holman  
Councillor Mrs P Humphrey  
Councillor WI Humphrey (Homewatch Co-ordinator)  
Councillor B Kerr  
Councillor Mrs J Knox  
Councillor Mrs H Thorniley-Jones  
Councillor A Warrington  
Councillor Mrs D Whitton  
Councillor Mrs JM Young (in the Chair)

Mr T Summers – Co-ordinator, Saughall Neighbourhood Management  
Team

#### PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Council received representations from Rev Brian Harris on Cheshire County Council's decision to build a new Primary School in Saughall. His concerns related to the future use of the Thomas Wedge CE (Controlled) Junior School's existing buildings.

Rev Harris informed that it had been made clear at the consultation meeting with Cheshire County Council's Project Team held at the School on Monday, 29 October 2007 that the Team was not going to engage with members of the community on the future use of the School as this was not its responsibility and there was no budget for it. Also, the County Council's preferred option for the existing School was demolition.

Members were aware that there was strong feeling in the village that the School should be retained for community use.

There were two trust deeds relating to the old part and the new part of the School and these included restrictions on the building's use. The 1921 deed had some flexibility and included provision of a Parish Room under the control of the Vicar and Church Wardens.

If the School was to be retained for future community use it was considered that the Parish Council should act quickly and initiate a meeting of interested parties to determine what, if anything, could be done.

#### 209 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

##### RESOLVED:

That Standing Orders be suspended so that members of the public can take part in the discussions and deliberations in respect of the next item of business (Minute No 210.2007 refers) before the Council makes any decision.

210 THE NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL AND THE FUTURE OF THE THOMAS WEDGE CE (CONTROLLED) JUNIOR SCHOOL BUILDING

In accordance with Minute No 205/2007 of the last meeting of the Council held on 5 November 2007, the Clerk had written to the Chester Church of England Diocesan Director of Education, Mr Jeff Turnbull, and to Cheshire County Council's Director of Children's Services, Mrs Joan Feenan, on 8 November 2007 informing of the Council's views in respect of the Thomas Wedge CE (Controlled) Junior School's building and suggesting that a further meeting be held as soon as possible to establish what could be achieved in this regard.

The Chairman reported that the Clerk had now received two replies as follows:

(a) Diocesan Director of Education

Mr Jeff Turnbull in an email dated 16 November 2007 advised that there were serious constraints on what was possible. The School, like most Church Schools, was governed by trust deeds and was a registered charity. As such the conditions of the trust deeds and charity law were binding. There were two different trust deeds in respect of the School building, one controlled the original building and dated from 1851/2 and the other governed the addition made in 1921.

The early deed only allowed the premises to be used for the purpose of a Church of England School (and that meant a school in its common understanding – not a nursery, or for other uses). If it was used for any other purpose, the trustees would be responsible for selling the property at the full market value (to satisfy charity law), paying all costs and capital gains tax and then paying the remaining money to the heirs of the original grantor of the School.

Consequently, in order for the premises to be put to any other use – including community use – it would need to be sold at full market value. This would bring no benefit to the School, community or Church, but sadly was what must be done. Mr Turnbull informed that he knew from previous experience it was not easy for communities to raise the necessary funding.

(b) Director of Children's Services

Mrs Joan Feenan, in her letter of 20 November 2007, referred to the Parish Council's aim to facilitate the building of a low cost housing scheme on land at Lodge Lane and its stated intention to acquire much needed burial land near to the Church. This matter had been raised and noted at the Community Consultation Event and assurances were given at that time that the land adjoining Lodge Lane, which was owned by County Farms, was sufficiently large enough to accommodate the requirements of the new Primary School without impacting on the Parish Council's proposals. Any potential development outside the new School boundary would come under the auspices of Chester City Council as the Local Planning Authority.

Mrs Feenan appreciated that the Parish Council was very much in favour of retaining the present School buildings for possible pre-school provision and community use and informed that the County Council would wish to be as supportive as possible regarding the retention of part or all of the building.

However, there was no budget within Children's Services to support this proposal financially and ultimately discussions would need to be made with the Trustees of the land for them to consider.

The Project Team was working towards submitting a full planning application for the new school in February 2008 with a view to building works starting on site in April 2008. If the Parish Council felt that a further meeting for interested parties to discuss the future of the Thomas Wedge CE (Controlled) Junior School building was necessary Mrs Feenan would arrange for a representative to attend.

The issues raised were discussed in detail. It was noted that new Trustees would need to be appointed and Rev Harris informed that Diocesan Officials were in discussion with the Charity Commission to make the Diocesan Board of Education a trustee of part of the building and probably the Diocesan Board of Finance a trustee of the other part. Members considered it appropriate for local people who lived in the Saughall community to be appointed as trustees.

## **STANDING ORDERS BACK IN FORCE**

### **RESOLVED:**

That the Clerk be requested to arrange an urgent meeting of interested parties, including the Diocesan Director of Education, the Director of Children's Services representative, Rev B Harris, the local County Councillor and Children's Services Lead Member, County Councillor D Rowlands, a representative of the Vernon Institute Management Committee and Parish Councillors to talk through all of the issues associated with retaining the Thomas Wedge CE (Controlled) Junior School building for community use.

### **211 APOLOGIES FOR AUTHORISED ABSENCE**

Apologies for authorised absence were received from Councillors Councillor Mrs J and JG Johnson, Mrs JE and RA Storrar and Councillor RK Shukla.

Apologies for absence were also received from PCSO Mike Butler.

### **212 URGENT BUSINESS – CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTS SWITCH ON**

The Chairman informed that she intended to take an urgent item of business about the Christmas Tree lights switch on later on in the meeting. The reason why it was urgent was that the next Council meeting would not be until after Christmas.

### **213 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT**

Councillor Mrs J Knox declared a personal interest in the New Primary School and the future of the Thomas Wedge CE (Controlled) Junior School building as she was currently a Governor at the School (Minute No 210/2007 refers).

Councillor Mrs H Thorniley-Jones informed that she had a prejudicial interest in the Urgent Item of Business on the Christmas Tree Lights Switch On as the tree was at the greyhound Inn and she had a business interest in the Inn.

214 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 5 November 2007 be confirmed as a correct record and it be noted that Councillor Mrs J Knox would like to be referred to as such in future.

215 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of meetings of the Planning Committee held on 5 November 2007 be received.

216 POLICE/HOMEWATCH

(a) Police

As PCSO Mike Butler had been unable to attend the meeting but he had agreed to submit his monthly written report direct to the Clerk.

(b) Homewatch

Councillor WI Humphrey, in his capacity as Homewatch Coordinator, detailed activity that had taken place over the last month. It was noted that on the whole the village had been very quiet.

RESOLVED:

That the Homewatch Coordinator's report be received.

(c) Rural, Social and Community Programme (RSCP) Community Safety Challenge – Saughall Neighbourhood Management Team Initiative

At the invitation of the Council the Saughall Neighbourhood Management Team's Co-ordinator, Mr Tony Summers, was in attendance at the meeting to report on progress made since the Team had been set up in July 2007.

Mr Summers reported that achievements included the following:

- Collation of the village wide survey
- Completion of speed surveys of the residents of Long Lane and Hermitage Road – a further survey had been requested for Seahill Road
- Establishing contact with both village schools
- Road sign at the junction of Parkgate Road and Long Lane relocated and cleared of obstructions
- Surveys completed on a proposed zebra crossing at the Thomas Wedge CE (Controlled) Junior School improved lighting still ongoing
- Bank account set up and running (Co-operative Bank)
- Lights repaired in Chapel Close

- Footpaths along Hermitage Road have had hedges cut and street lights had overgrown trees trimmed at the request of residents
- Safety Quiz to be held in December at both schools, prizes purchased and a reflective item for each of the pupils in process of being obtained
- Keep Safe in Winter Project (Sloppy Slipper) completed
- Assisted in Fire Risk Assessment of Uniform Groups Hut (ongoing)
- Bus stop at junction of Aspen Grove/Hermitage Road cleared of undergrowth. This request has been passed to the Parish Council by the Co-ordinator from an Aspen Grove resident, the same resident has since requested a bus stop sign to be placed there, this has been passed to the Chairman
- Liaised with Dog Warden regarding fouling on Darlington Crescent
- Co-ordinator's CRB check completed
- Attended the A5117 liaison meeting at the request of the Parish Council Chairman
- Regular contact made with the PCSO
- Attended PCSO local surgery
- Co-ordinator has checked on various issues raised by the Chairman if the Council e.g. Tree in Church Road, poor visibility at the Long Lane/Parkgate Road junction, park seat bolts, etc

Members discussed the initiative and its progress in detail. The flooding problem outside 100 Hermitage Road was raised along with the resulting deep potholes. It was agreed that the Clerk would bring the problem to the attention of the District Engineer, Mr Graham Anderton, and Mr Summers would meet with him on-site as soon as possible.

Dog fouling was identified as a problem in the Golden Jubilee Park even though dogs were not allowed on the Park and arrangements were in hand with Chester City Council to include this prohibition in a bylaw. In the meantime, it was agreed that two dog fouling notices would be posted in the Park.

It was reported that the former St Theresa's School in Blacon had been retained for community use assisted by grant aid and that it was now self financing. Mr Summers agreed to seek further information on this initiative and share it with the Council.

Mr Summers informed that future plans would be determined at the next meeting of the Team in January 2008.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and the Saughall Neighbourhood Management Team be congratulated on its achievements so far.

## 217 CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTS

The Chairman informed that she had been contacted by numerous parishioners raising concerns that arrangements had not been made to facilitate the switching on of the Christmas Tree lights. People were very disappointed and felt let down by this inaction.

Councillor Mrs D Whitton informed that this village event had not been an initiative of the Parish Council but that it had provided some funding to assist it. Currently, there was £58 left in the fund and this had been passed to Councillor Mrs H Thorniley-Jones.

Councillor Mrs H Thorniley-Jones informed that this year there would be no official switch on of the Christmas Tree lights and there would be no firework display as in previous years and she presented the £58 left in the fund to the Clerk for safe keeping.

The Chairman surmised that this year's event would not go ahead because there appeared to have been a lack of communication regarding it. The Council was keen to see the Christmas Tree Switch On event reinstated in future years and asked the Clerk to ensure that the £58 was put into a specially designated fund for this purpose.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the current position be noted;
- (2) the Clerk be requested to deposit the £58 referred to above into the Council's bank account and set up a designated Christmas Event fund;
- (3) financial provision be made in respect of next year's event when the Council determines its budget for 2008/09; and
- (4) the Clerk be requested to include an item on the agenda about the Christmas Tree Lights Switch On for the Council's meeting next Summer.

## 218 YOUTH ISSUES

Councillor Mrs H Thorniley-Jones informed that a training session had been held recently for the Youth Club Management Committee. The older group had a dedicated leader but no-one was willing to help with the younger group so it could not meet.

A visit to the bowling alley was arranged for 18 December 2007. The Parish Council had previously agreed to make a financial contribution towards the cost of this outing. The total cost would be reported at the next meeting of the Council.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

## 219 HIGHWAY ISSUES

### (a) Parked Cars on Pavements

It was agreed that there had been no improvement and there was a particular problem with parked cars on grass verges in Meadows Lane and the Ridings Estate. Parked cars continued to cause traffic congestion around the Ridings Community Infant School.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to alert PCSO Mike Butler to the problems identified.

(b) A5117 Major Roadworks

The Chairman had attended the A5117 Deeside Junctions Improvement Liaison Meeting on 6 November 2007 and reported that the works were 13 weeks behind schedule but it was hoped to switch over to the new part in December/January. Currently, traffic lights at the A540/A5117 junction were not a possibility. Carillion had agreed to reconsider the reconfiguration of the roundabout as there were definite visibility problems there. Experts were looking into this.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(c) Speeding Traffic and the use of the Speed Indicator Device (SID)

There was no progress to report.

(d) Fly Posting

PCSO Butler had agreed to find out if it was possible for Parish Councillors to remove the offending signs

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to remind PCSO Butler of the action he has agreed to take.

(e) Bus Stop opposite Aspen Grove

It was noted that the area by the bus stop had been cleared.

A Saughall resident had emailed the Neighbourhood Management Team's Co-ordinator to complain about "the desperate state of the Aspen Grove Bus Stop – outward bound". However, the Council could not see any problem with the current arrangement.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and the Saughall resident be informed that the Council does not think there is a problem at the Aspen Grove bus stop.

(f) Grass Verges on the Ridings Estate

As cars were blocking the area where buses waited on Hermitage Road until the bus already on the Ridings Estate passed them, they had no alternative but to continue on their way, often having to pass a bus by mounting the grass verge once on the Estate. The result was that the verges were being damaged.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to alert the District Engineer to the problem and ask if compensation can be claimed from the bus company.

## 220 GOLDEN JUBILEE PARK DEVELOPMENT

### (a) Site Plan

The Council considered a site plan prepared by Councillor R Shukla that set out proposals for further developments in the Park.

It was noted that the Council would need to decide where to put the seats that it currently had in storage.

RESOLVED:

That as it had been agreed that the Finance and General Purposes Committee would give consideration to Phase 2 of the development at its next meeting (Minute No 38/2007 of the Finance and General Purposes Committee refers), the site plan and seating arrangements be referred to the Committee for consideration on 3 January 2008.

### (b) The Millennium Stone

It was proposed that a fete be arranged in the Spring (possibly the first Monday in May (5<sup>th</sup>)) to mark the opening of the Golden Jubilee Park and all the Groups in the village be invited to have a stall or carry out some form of activity.

Arrangements would have to be made in advance of the opening to relocate the Millennium Stone into the Park. It was proposed that the Stone be put to the right of the drive and that a time capsule be buried under it. It was suggested that the Stone would sit on a plinth and there would be a plaque with appropriate wording detailing the history of the Stone.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the report be received; and

(2) Councillor Mrs D Whitton be requested to pursue the purchase of an appropriate receptacle to use as a time capsule.

### (c) Quotation to Secure Gates

It was noted that one quotation had been submitted to the Clerk. Members suggested that two other quotations be requested from local workmen.

RESOLVED:

That the Finance and General Purposes Committee be authorised to accept a quotation to “traveller proof” the Field Gates at its next meeting to ensure best

value and if no further quotations are provided to accept the quotation already in the Clerk's possession.

(d) Fiddlers Lane Playing Field

The Clerk informed that she had received the written report following the Annual Independent Play Area Inspection carried out in association with Chester City Council's Gowry North Area Committee on 9 July 2007.

It was noted that the gate fastening needed attention to make it "child proof" and work was required on the outer perimeter. When the cricket square had been dug out the spoil had been left in the Park in a pile.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be considered in detail at the next meeting of the Council scheduled for 7 January 2008;
- (2) Councillor Mrs H Thorniley-Jones be requested to ask a local workman if he is able to modify the gate fastening; and
- (3) Councillor Mrs J Young be requested to ask the Cricket Club to spread the spoil left over from the cricket square onto the car park.

221 ACCOUNTS

(a) 2007/08 National Local Government Pay Award

(i) Salary Award for Local Council Clerks

It was noted that the National Joint Council for Local Government Services had reached agreement on rates of pay applicable from 1 April 2007 for Council Clerks and had issued revised pay scales.

RESOLVED:

That the 2007/08 National Local Government Pay Award be noted and the revised pay scales be adopted.

(ii) Parish Orderly Grant Rate April 2007-March 2008

It was noted that following the national pay award within local government the hourly rate that would apply to parish Orderly grant applications was £6 per hour, effective from 1 April 2007.

Chester City Council had informed that it would automatically review claims previously submitted and paid at the old rates from 1 April 2007 and arrange to pay arrears of £166.40.

RESOLVED:

That the position be noted.

(b) Payments made since the meeting of the Council held on 5 November 2007:

RESOLVED: That

(1) the following payments be approved:

<u>Financial Year 2007/2008</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>Cheque No</u>
Cheshire Association of Local Councils (Annual Meeting refreshments)	5.00	102006
Mrs S Hudspeth (Salary and arrears Minute No 221(a)(i)/2007 refers)	711.45	102007
Mr R Hipkiss (November 2007 Street Cleaning)	910.23	102008
Mrs S Hudspeth (Expenses)	57.48	102009
Saughall Rangers (Newsletter Distribution)	25.00	102010

and;

(2) residents of the new houses at the bottom of Seahill Road in Flintshire will not receive Parish Council Newsletters via the Saughall Rangers in future accordingly the Rangers will receive £20 and not £25 for delivering newsletters to those Saughall and Shotwick Park residents that the Standard Newspapers Services do not reach.

(c) Receipts

RESOLVED: That

(1) the following receipts be noted:

	<u>£</u>
Interest on 14 Day Interest Account to 21 November 2007	161.31
Mr WI Humphrey (Minute No 200(a)/2007 refers)	40.25
Councillor Mrs H Thorniley-Jones (Christmas Fund float)	58.00

and;

(2) in respect of the Christmas Fund float a designated fund be set up.

(d) Cash to Bank Reconciliation and Golden Jubilee Park Development Fund Reconciliation

RESOLVED:

That the content of the Cash to Bank Reconciliation and the Golden Jubilee Park Development Fund Reconciliation be noted.

(a) Review of Litter Picking Routes

The Council had let a Street Cleaning Contract to Mr R Hipkiss in the sum of £10,992.80 per annum (£10.57 per hour) that ran from 22 May 2006 until May 2010 and was subject to annual review.

Councillor Kerr, when he had been Chairman of the Council, had agreed the routes that Mr Hipkiss would follow from day to day. Councillor Kerr outlined each route and detailed the reasons why the routes had been designed in the way that they had been.

Members felt that generally the village was clean and tidy but there were some minor problems that could be improved upon by some liaison with Mr Hipkiss. Concerns were raised that Mr Hipkiss had been litter picking early in the morning whilst it was still dark without wearing an illuminous vest.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) no major changes be recommended at this time in respect of the current daily litter picking routes;
- (2) the minor problems identified be drawn to the attention of Mr Hipkiss and he be requested to apply his professional judgement to alleviate them; and
- (3) the concerns over Mr Hipkiss litter picking in the dark without an illuminous vest be brought to his attention.

(b) Co-operative Store

In accordance with Minute No 200(b)/2007 the Clerk had written to the Chief Executive – Food Retail at the Co-operative Head Office in Manchester complaining about the state of the forecourt of the store in Saughall and the problems associated with the bottle and can banks.

The Clerk had received a reply promising to take appropriate action and the situation at the Co-operative Store had now improved.

RESOLVED:

That the position be noted.

223 PARISH COUNCIL SURGERIES

(a) Parish Council Surgery on 1 December 2007

Councillor Mrs JM Young informed that no one had attended the last Surgery held on 1 December 2007.

(b) Review of Time and Venue of Surgeries

Members discussed the arrangements for the monthly Parish Council Surgery noting that it was very rare that parishioners attended for consultations. It was proposed that the venue be changed to see if this encouraged a higher attendance.

RESOLVED:

That the next Parish Council Surgery be held between 10:00am and 10:45am on Saturday, 5 January 2008 in the Youth Club at the Vernon Institute and thereafter Surgeries be held in the Vernon Institute itself.

224 VERNON INSTITUTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (VIMC)

The Chairman informed of the proceedings of the last meeting of the VIMC. The Clerk's letter dated 6 November 2007 to the Chairman, Mr WG Murphy, regarding Parish Council grant aid for the repairs, fabric and refurbishment of the Vernon Institute building only had been read out.

It was reported that the band concert held the previous evening had gone well and had been well attended.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

225 ODD JOBS

RESOLVED:

That Mr Wilkinson be asked to provide a quotation to relocate the Millennium Stone on a plinth in the Golden Jubilee Park.

226 ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

(a) NALC Conference – Building the Future of Local Communities  
5-7 October 2007 at the Bournemouth International Centre

Councillor WI Humphrey reported on the proceedings at the Conference held in October 2007. It was noted that it had been a bustling and high profile event, with approximately 500 delegates and speakers including:

Parmjit Dhanda MP, Minister for Local Government  
Paul Coen, Chief Executive of the Local Government Association  
Tony Travers, director of the London Group at the London School of Economics.

The theme reflected well the current atmosphere of excitement and opportunity within the first tier, as well as the tone of the Conference itself. It was noted that there had been lots of opportunities to network, train and learn from experiences and that it had been a worthwhile event.

It was reported that increasingly Parish Councils were taking out loans to provide facilities within their local areas, etc so that the costs did not fall entirely on present generations but on future generations too.

The next Conference would be held in May 2008 in Eastbourne.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

- (b) Chester City Council's Goway North Area Committee  
Thursday, 8 November 2007 at the Thomas Wedge CE (Controlled) Junior School,  
Saughall

Councillor Mrs JM Young had attended this meeting and reported that it had been very disappointing as it had not been well attended and was inquorate so no decisions could be taken regarding finance. She, however, had been impressed with the speaker on re-cycling.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

## 227 CIRCULARS RECEIVED

The following circulars had been received. Anyone who wanted a copy would approach the Clerk.

Cheshire County Council's Cheshire Matters – November 2007  
Cheshire County Council's Winter Gritting Routes Leaflet 2007/2008