

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF SAUGHALL AND SHOTWICK PARK PARISH COUNCIL held on 7 January 2008 at the Vernon Institute, Saughall

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

PCSO Mike Butler

1 APOLOGIES FOR AUTHORISED ABSENCE

Apologies for authorised absence were received from Councillors Mrs J and JG Johnson, B Kerr, RK Shukla and Mrs D Whitton.

2 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were received.

3 URGENT BUSINESS – PARISH ROOM OCCUPANCY

The Chairman informed that she intended to take an urgent item of business which was a recommendation from the Finance and General Purposes Committee that had met on 3 January 2008 to give up the Council's tenancy of the Parish Room. The reason why this matter was considered urgent was because if the Council wished to approve the recommendation to vacate the Room by 31 March 2008 it was appropriate to give the landlord as much notice as possible as soon as possible.

Members were informed that the Finance and General Purposes Committee had made the recommendation to withdraw from the Parish Room on 31 March 2008, when it had given consideration to the Council's 2008/09 budget. The Committee's decision was made because it did not think that the Parish Room was providing value for money and another venue – the Uniform Groups' Headquarters – had been offered to the Council for its meetings and to the PCSO free of charge. It was noted that Saughall Neighbourhood Management Team could use the Headquarters for its meetings and would pay rent as detailed in the successful funding application to the Cheshire Community Council.

RESOLVED:

That the landlord be informed as soon as possible that this Council wishes to vacate the Parish Room on 31 March 2008 and the necessary arrangements be put in hand to effect the vacation.

4 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 3 December 2007 be confirmed as a correct record.

5 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of meetings of the Planning Committee held on 3 December 2007 be received.

6 POLICE/HOMEWATCH

(a) Police

PCSO Mike Butler reported on issues that had been drawn to his attention and his activities as follows:

“

- Crime

Since the last Council meeting there had been two reported incidents of burglaries and two thefts in the village:

The first happened in the Lodge Lane area of Saughall where an elderly female had money stolen from her purse. The money was stolen by two males after they forced their way into the premises after telling her they were from the water board. Crime prevention advice had been given to the resident and there were still ongoing investigations into the incident.

The second happened at an address on Church Road. Four off-road motorcycles were stolen from the rear of the premises. CSI had attended at the address and the incident was still being looked into by a police officer and myself.

Since the last Council meeting there had been two thefts reported:

The first was from an address on Kingswood Lane. Some poultry was stolen. Unfortunately, nothing was seen or heard with no CCTV in the area and nothing for CSI. The area was being patrolled more regularly at night and re-assurance and crime prevention advice had been given to the victim.

A house on Hermitage Road had some plant pots stolen from the front of the house. Unfortunately, there had been no leads as there was nothing seen or heard and no CCTV.

- Anti-Social behaviour

Since the last Council meeting there had been no reported incidents of anti-social behaviour in the village that were reported to the police.

- Traffic

Three x £30 Fixed Penalty Notices had been issued due to obstructive parking.

There had been no reported incidents regarding traffic problems around the village. However, the issue still remained along Church Road of highway disruptions caused by legally parked vehicles and increased traffic congestion in the mornings and early evenings.

One vehicle removed along near to Crofter's Way due to no insurance and being reported off road.

- Other

The bus shelter near the junction with Saughall Hey had been repaired. CCTV footage at the bus stop was still being looked into, but a more precise time of the incident was needed. The CCTV system at the bus stop was not owned or operated by the police or the CCTV operators at the town hall; it was operated by the bus company itself.

The Council's thoughts were requested on purchasing its own speed gun for the village. The gun cost around £800 to purchase new but part of the funding towards it (approximately £500) may be secured.

The Council agreed that PCSO Butler would pursue this matter.

With regards to the Fly posting signs, contact had been made with Tom Cowie at the Highways Department to establish whether there was permission from Highways to have the signs in place. If there was no permission then Highways may remove the signs themselves and charge the company for doing so. The Parish Council was not advised to remove the signs.

- Future

Within the forthcoming weeks PCSO Butler hoped to produce a crime prevention awareness pack for all residents of Saughall. Within the pack there would be practical advice for residents on how best to protect their homes, vehicles and themselves. Within the pack there would hopefully be the following;

- Cold calling information (stickers, pens and doorstep crime awareness booklets etc.)
- Police crime prevention booklet
- Contact details
- Parish Council contact details
- Saughall Neighbourhood Management Team contact details
- Warden contact details

- Fire safety advice from Cheshire Fire Service
- Smartwater leaflets – Smartwater was a way of identifying your property with a unique, and invisible, marking solution.

Also within the pack would be a cover letter with concerns about parking within the village, parking on the verges and the ongoing issue with parking around the schools.

Within the next two weeks PCSO Butler hoped to be holding a road safety talk for the pupils of The Ridings School.

PCSO Butler would also be attending the Chester District Housing Trust Estate Walk for Saughall. The walk would start at Wain House on Thursday, 17 January 2008 at 10.30am and was open to all residents of Saughall to attend.

PCSO Butler agreed to provide the Clerk with a copy of his current shift pattern.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(b) PCSO Scrutiny Group: Summary of Findings

The Chief Executive of the Cheshire Police Authority, Mr Mark Selwood, had written to the Clerk to inform that the Police Authority had recently completed its scrutiny of the role of Police Community Support Officers in the Cheshire Constabulary. The Authority had been very supportive of the development of PCSOs and the scrutiny project had been commissioned to give the Authority a greater understanding of the way in which they were deployed and utilised.

The Clerk had received an executive summary which detailed the key findings. The Chief Constable, Peter Fahy, had accepted the recommendations and the Police Authority would receive an update in six months time on the actions taken to address them.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(c) Homewatch

Councillor WI Humphrey, in his capacity as Homewatch Coordinator, detailed activity that had taken place over the last month.

A panel had been smashed in the bus shelter on Church Road and youths had been climbing on the roof. There was graffiti in the bus shelter beside the Vernon Institute, also on Church Road and it was in need of repair and painting.

On the whole it had been very quiet over the last month.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Homewatch Coordinator's report be received;
- (2) Cheshire County Council be requested to paint the bus shelter on Church Road with vandal proof paint; and
- (3) Mr Wilkinson be requested to carry out repairs and paint the bus shelter by the Vernon Institute.

7 YOUTH ISSUES

It was reported that the Youth Club's outing had not yet taken place as there had been confusion over who was arranging it. There continued to be problems and there were difficulties in attracting a Leader to run one of the youth clubs.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

8 HIGHWAY ISSUES

(a) Parked Cars on Pavements

PCSO Mike Butler reported that he had put tickets on three cars over the last month that were causing an obstruction.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and the position continue to be monitored.

(b) A5117 Major Roadworks

The roundabout had not yet been reconfigured but Carillion had informed that it would do this because of recent accidents.

There was a problem with rats on the Parkgate Road.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be received; and
- (2) the Clerk be requested to report the rat problem to Chester City Council's Rodent Inspector, Mr David Hosker, and ask Mandy Stott of Carillion to put this item on the agenda for the next Liaison Meeting.

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

The Clerk had asked when the Council could borrow the SID and Mr Derek Bowker of Cheshire County Council had informed that he needed to know start and finish dates so he could be sure that the machine would be utilized fully.

Mr Trevor Clibery of Chester City Council's Community Services had informed that the assessment the Council had requested had not been carried out due to staffing problems but that the lease of the SID could still go ahead on existing authorised sites.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the report be received; and

(2) the Clerk be requested to offer dates from 1 April 2008 for the loan of the SID.

(d) Damage to Grass Verges

Members reported on damage caused to grass verges. There was damage at the Terminus and on the Ridings Estate. Some of the damage had been caused by the bus company and some by a big lorry.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the report be received; and

(2) Councillor RA Storrar be requested to speak to Arriva about the damage at the Terminus and about the attitude of some of its bus drivers.

(e) Flooding

(i) Hermitage Road

It was reported that the flooding problem on Hermitage Road had been sorted out by Mr Tony Summers, the Co-ordinator for the Saughall Neighbourhood Management Team.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(ii) Long Lane

It was reported that Mr Bland had cleared out his ditches and that the tenant farmer was willing to clear out the ditches parallel to Long Lane. However, it was reported that Mr David Jobs of Cheshire County Council's Property Services would not give his permission for the farmer to carry out the work.

Members were reminded that the last time the ditch was cleared out it had caused upset because the spoil had been piled up on the verge and the Spring bulbs had not come through.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to contact Mr Job and ask for his permission for the farmer to clean out the ditch and spread the spoil in keeping with the grass verge.

9 GOLDEN JUBILEE PARK DEVELOPMENT

(a) Progress

The Chairman reported that the Finance and General Purposes Committee at its meeting on 3 January 2008 had given consideration to the next phase of the development and proposed that professional advice be sought on the options available and that a five-year Plan of Action be drawn up and adhered to.

Councillor RK Shukla had been looking at the possibility of providing an aerial runway on a strip of land identified for this purpose and quotations would be obtained to assist a funding bid to Chester City Council. He was also going to obtain quotations for a multi-court.

The contractor had been invited to submit his invoice in respect of phase one of the development but it had not yet been received.

The Chairman reported that the local garage would “traveller proof” the gates.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(d) Fiddlers Lane Playing Field

It was reported that there was a build up of water in Long Lane following the ditch being piped in the Golden Jubilee Park. Mr Hipkiss’ garden was water logged. It was suggested that perhaps the pipe had not been laid deep enough.

It was suggested that the problem may be remedied if a pipe was run from the ditch to one of the ponds.

Councillor WI Humphrey informed that Bewcraft Signs of Milton Street, Chester would provide the blue “In” and “Out” signs required and two “No-Entry” signs with screw fixings.

The Annual Play Area Inspection Report had been received from Chester City Council and had been circulated with the agenda.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be received;
- (2) the Clerk be requested to ask Mr Gordon Dutton of Castle Farm to provide a quotation to run a pipe from the ditch to one of the ponds;
- (3) the Clerk be requested to order four blue A4 signs as detailed above; and
- (4) the Annual Play Area Inspection Report be referred for detailed consultation to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

10 ACCOUNTS

(a) Payments made since the meeting of the Council held on 3 December 2007:

RESOLVED:

That the following payments be approved:

<u>Financial Year 2007/2008</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>Cheque No</u>
Mrs M Abrams (Honoraria for the six ladies helping in the library)	150.00	102011
Mr W Abrams (Honorarium for clock winding)	25.00	102012
Mr H Wilkinson (payment for odd jobs)	427.50	102013
Cheshire County Council (maintenance for 3 bus shelters)	881.25	102014
Mr C Moss (Parish Room rental 1 Jan – 31 March 2008)	312.50	102015
Mr R Hipkiss (December 2007 Street Cleaning)	910.23	102016
HM Revenue & Customs	885.17	102017
Mrs S Hudspeth (Expenses)	52.68	102018
Mrs S Hudspeth (Salary)	604.11	102019
Vernon Institute Management Committee (Repairs and Refurbishment)	412.06	102020

(b) Receipts

RESOLVED:

That the following receipts be noted:

	<u>£</u>
Interest on 14 Day Interest Account to 21 December 2007	147.50
Chester City Council's Street Cleaning Grant Arrears (following the Local Government Pay Award)	166.40

(c) 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.

11 LOCAL GOVERNMENT RE-ORGANISATION (LGR) IN CHESHIRE

The Council received a copy of the decision letter on LGR in Cheshire dated 18 December 2007 from Mr Paul Rowsell of the Department of Communities and Local Government, a letter dated 19 December 2007 from Mr Jeremy Taylor, Chief Executive, Cheshire County Council and the People and Places Leader's Bulletin Issue 7.

The Clerk reported that the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government had announced on 18 December 2007 that she had confirmed the decision she had been minded to make in July 2007.

This meant that it was all systems go to set up the two new unitary authorities in Cheshire – Cheshire West and Chester and Cheshire East. The first step would be for the District Councils and the County Council to appoint a joint committee of fifteen Councillors in each area who would oversee the transitional arrangements until the full shadow authorities were elected in May 2008.

The Government still needed to put the structure changes Order, which set out the new arrangements, to Parliament but that should be dealt with early in January 2008. The Order required all councils in Cheshire to co-operate in implementing the changes. There was still the possibility of councils challenging the process leading to the decision but that was unlikely to delay the implementation.

Joint Implementation Teams would be set up for each of the new authorities and Vale Royal was leading in respect of Cheshire West and Chester.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

12 PARISH COUNCIL SURGERIES

(a) Parish Council Surgery on 5 January 2008

Councillor Mrs P Humphrey informed that no one had attended the last Surgery held on 5 January 2008.

(b) Parish Council Surgery at the Vernon Institute (Library) on Saturday, 2 February 2008

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Councillor Mrs J Knox be requested to preside at the next Parish Council Surgery from 10:00am to 10:45am and bring a report on its proceedings to the next meeting of the Council.
- (2) the Clerk be requested to inform the Vernon Institute's Booking Secretary, Mrs Shelia Jones, of the dates scheduled for Parish Council Surgeries so that she can ensure that the Library is available.

13 VERNON INSTITUTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (VIMC)

The Treasurer of the VIMC had provided the Clerk with invoices totally £824.11 in respect of the recent repairs and refurbishment work carried out at the Vernon Institute. The Council had a fund set up to assist such improvements to the building.

RESOLVED:

That the Council reimburse the VIMC for half the cost (£412.06) of the recent works carried out at the Vernon Institute in the Library.

14 ODD JOBS

Last year the Council had purchased some rolls of mesh from Tenax UK Ltd at a total cost of £8,722.55 and N&NJ Enterprises had laid them at a total cost of £2,220.75. The mesh had been purchased because Tenax's sales personnel had assured Members that it would stop the mole activity as they would not be able to penetrate the mesh.

Unfortunately, the mesh had failed to stop the moles and Councillor WI Humphrey passed around photographs to illustrate this.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to write to Mrs J Edwards, Marketing Executive at Tenax UK Ltd, enclosing photographs, to ask for her comments on the situation.

15 THE FUTURE OF THE THOMAS WEDGE CE (CONTROLLED) JUNIOR SCHOOL BUILDING

The Council discussed the future of the Thomas Wedge CE (Controlled) Junior School building and agreed that the preferred option was to retain the whole of the School's site intact. Members considered that the new Primary School should be located directly behind the Co-operative Store. At this stage it was felt that the new School and its car park should be away from the current Junior School building on other land owned by Cheshire County Council.

The Council also agreed that the Thomas Wedge name should be retained for the new School because of its historical significance in the village.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to write to Mrs Carol Lewis, Chairman of the new Primary School Shadow Governing Body, to inform her of the Council's views about the retention of the Junior School's site, the location of the new Primary School and the retention of the Thomas Wedge name as detailed above.

16 ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

It was noted that the next Cheshire Police Authority – Have Your Say meeting would be held on 15 January 2008 at 7:00pm at Kelsall Community Parish School, Flat Lane, Kelsall.

17 COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED

The following communications had been received:

- (a) a letter from Mrs M Abrams thanking the Council on behalf of all the ladies who work in the library for the honoraria of £150 paid just before Christmas as a token of the Council's appreciation for the voluntary work carried out by these ladies for the good of the community.

Mrs Abram also thanked the Council for its honorarium payment of £25 to her son for winding the Clock all of the year.

- (b) a letter dated 5 January 2008 from Ms Kathleen Evans expressing disappointment at the lack of a Christmas Lights Switch On ceremony in the village and asking why this was allowed to happen.

The Council discussed the contents of the letter noting that the switching on of the Christmas Lights had been an initiative of Councillor Mrs D Whitton, not the Council, but that the Council had supported it, provided a financial contribution and budgeted for this annually.

Unfortunately, last year someone else took over the job of organising the event and due largely to communication problems no Switch On Ceremony had occurred.

The Council was keen to ensure that the Ceremony was resumed this year and intended to take the lead on what it considered an important community event. Therefore, it agreed to establish a small Sub-Committee to make plans and take this initiative forward and because of Mrs Evans' interest agreed to invite her to sit on the Sub-Committee as a co-opted Member.

RESOLVED:

That the course of action detailed above be endorsed and the Clerk be requested to write to Ms Evans in these terms.

18 CIRCULARS RECEIVED

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

Cheshire County Council's Cheshire Matters – December 2007
Chester City Council's Community Safety Warden Annual Report 2006