

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE held on 21 February 2008 in the Uniform Groups' Headquarters, Fiddlers Lane, Saughall

In attendance: Councillor DF Holman (in the Chair)  
Councillor Mrs J Johnson  
Councillor R Shukla  
Councillor A Warrington  
Councillor Mrs J Young

Invited Members: Councillor WI Humphrey  
Mr H Dobson  
Inspector Ian Thorp (for item No 4 (Minute No 10/2008 refers))

7 APOLOGIES FOR AUTHORISED ABSENCE

No apologies for authorised absence were received.

8 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

9 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That

(1) the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 11 October 2007 be confirmed as a correct record; and

(2) in respect of Minute No 6/2008, it was noted that, at the landlord's request, the Council had agreed to vacate the Parish Room on 29 February 2008 to accommodate the new tenancy agreement.

10 LOCAL POLICING AND THE PCSO INITIATIVE

Inspector Ian Thorp set out the details of the current policing strategies that had resulted in a massive reduction in crime levels in the local area. Structured patrols had been introduced and the police were also very responsive in relation to crime management. Another significant change in the policing of the area was in relation to customer satisfaction. The police were scheduling appointments and sticking to them. These appointments were followed up with telephone calls to report any progress.

The Committee received a report on recent crime figures in the local area. Members were also informed that there had been a considerable drop in nuisance youth calls in Saughall.

The Committee turned its attention to the jointly funded PCSO initiative and Inspector Thorp reported that PCSO Mike Butler's effort and commitment were good. He had been set a set of very challenging objectives and he continued to steadily improve and had gelled with the village.

Members reported that one of their primary concerns were the traffic problems experienced at the two schools when parents dropped off and picked up their children. The problem at the Ridings also meant that the access at Wain House was regularly blocked. It was considered that PCSO Butler needed to be stronger with parents. This problem was being exacerbated by the “bus war”.

It was reported that the 30 miles per hour sign at the junction of Long Lane and Fiddlers Lane needed to be moved back so that the traffic slowed down before it reached the Golden Jubilee Park. Inspector Thorp agreed to see if this requested could be acted upon.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the reports be received;
- (2) Inspector Thorp be thanked for his attendance and be requested to take a message back to PCSO Butler that the Council considers he is doing a good job and working well with the Saughall Neighbourhood Management Team; and
- (3) the PCSO initiative continues to be monitored via regular liaison meetings with the Inspector.

#### 11 APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

The Audit Commission had written to the Clerk on 28 January 2008 to let her know that it proposed to appoint Jackie Bellard, of its Limited Assurance Specialist Unit, as the Parish Council’s auditor for a five year period, commencing with the 2007/08 accounts.

The Commission also proposed to appoint a Panel of its own officers that could be the Council’s external auditor in the event that Jackie Bellard was not able to continue with the appointment, or to assist with, or act solely on, additional work where necessary.

If the Council wished to comment on the proposed arrangements it had until Friday, 29 February 2008 to do so.

RESOLVED:

That the Council make no comments on the external audit arrangements put in place.

#### 12 GOLDEN JUBILEE PARK

- (a) “Family Fun Day” – Monday, 5 May 2008

A small Steering Committee had been set up of co-optees and the Council had asked Councillor WI Humphrey to co-ordinate the arrangements. Mr Dobson had indicated that he was willing to take on the role of Treasurer if this post was required. The Committee would meet on a weekly basis and update a flip chart that would detail all the plans and arrangements made.

Councillor WI Humphrey set out provisional proposals in respect of the “Family Fun Day” and the official opening of the Golden Jubilee Park.

Concerns were raised that the proposed “Family Fun Day” had been scheduled for the same day as an annual event being held at the Greyhound Inn. Consequently, consideration was given to whether to postpone the event to an alternative date, or ask the Greyhound Inn if it could reschedule its event or continue with the arrangements regardless.

The Clerk informed that the Sheriff of Chester had accepted an invitation to open the Park at 2:30pm on Monday, 5 May 2008 and that the event had been advertised in the February 2008 edition of the Parish Newsletter.

Consideration was given to whether the event would be used to generate income and if so for what reason. Members agreed that the primary aim was to provide a worthwhile and enjoyable community event for the people of Saughall and if there was any income made as a result it would go into the Golden Jubilee Park’s development fund to assist further development of the recreational land.

At the request of the Council the Clerk had written an open letter to all organisations, groups, businesses and the two schools in the village inviting them to send a representative to a meeting to agree a strategy for the Family Fun Day and inform what they each intended to provide or contribute in respect of refreshments, entertainment, activities, stalls, items for the time capsule, donations, etc.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) no decision be made on whether to change the date of the Family Fun Day at this time;
- (2) the Clerk’s letter inviting representatives from organisations, groups, businesses and the two schools to a meeting at 7:00pm on Thursday, 6 March 2008 be distributed as appropriate by Steering Committee Members; and
- (3) when the meeting referred to at (2) above is held a decision be made on whether or not to move the Family Fun Day to an alternative date.

(b) Public Consultation on Phase 2 of the Development

The Committee considered what the Council should do at the Family Fun Day event in respect of the consultation exercise it had agreed to carry out on the next phase of the development.

RESOLVED:

That the Council will exhibit a plan of the Park at the event and invite members of the public to stick post-it notes on it containing their ideas and proposals.

(c) Millennium Stone and Time Capsule

It was noted that the village had a Millennium Fund that could be used to finance the relocation of the Stone, the plynth and the time capsule.

The Committee was informed that Councillor Mrs D Whitton had been unsuccessful in her attempt to obtain a time capsule.

RESOLVED: That

(1) Councillor Mrs J Young be requested to obtain a quotation for the relocation of the Millennium Stone; and

(2) Councillor WI Humphrey be requested to obtain a quotation for a time capsule.

(d) Progress Report

No progress had been made on the next phase of the development. The Council intended to seek advice on what could be achieved in the space available. This would be arranged later in the spring when the nights were light enough for a site visit to be carried out.

(e) Quotations and Future Grant Applications

(i) Aerial Runway

The Clerk informed that her funding application for £5,000 to match fund the purchase and installation of an aerial runway had been successful. She now awaited the official letter of confirmation.

(ii) Future Funding Applications

RESOLVED:

That a strategy for future development of the Park be drawn up as soon as possible so that the Council can act quickly when funding opportunities present themselves.

13 FIDDLERS LANE SWING PARK

(a) Annual Play Inspection Report

The Council considered an independent assessment provided by the Gowy North Area Committee. It was noted that the assessment had been carried out in July 2007 but the report had only been provided in January 2008. It was thought that the delay had occurred because the Inspector had been taken ill. However, the Council paid a company (Morrall Play Solutions) to carry out quarterly play equipment inspections and remedied any problems identified as soon as possible. Consequently, the annual report was out of date as improvements had been made since July 2007 and arrangements had been made for the gate to be adapted by a company who had "traveller proofed" the field gates to the Golden Jubilee Park as soon as possible.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(b) Chester City Council's Contributions to Play Areas in Parished Areas 2007-08  
Round 2

It was reported that Councillor WI Humphrey had agreed to take delivery of the balancing beam and stepping-stones on 29 February 2008. He would store this play equipment until the Field Committee decided exactly where to locate it in the Fiddlers Lane Playing Field.

RESOLVED:

That the Field Committee be requested to carry out a site visit and agree where to position the new balancing beam and stepping-stones in the Fiddlers Lane Playing Field.