

MINUTES OF SAUGHALL AND SHOTWICK PARK'S ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
held on 23 April 2007 at the Vernon Institute, Saughall

In attendance: Councillor DF Holman
Councillor Mrs P Humphrey
Councillor WI Humphrey
Councillor Mrs J Johnson
Councillor Mrs JE Storrar
Councillor RA Storrar
Councillor HL Thorniley-Jones
Councillor Mrs D Whitton
Councillor Mrs JM Young – Vice-Chairman (in the Chair)

County Councillor D Rowlands
PCSO M Butler
Sergeant M Houghton

And 3 parishioners as recorded in the attendance register

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor JG Johnson

2 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of Saughall and Shotwick Park's Parish Meeting held on 19 April 2006 be confirmed as a correct record.

3 VICE-CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Vice-Chairman welcomed parishioners to their Annual Assembly and then presented her Annual Report setting out the Council's achievements and successes over the last twelve months. She detailed ongoing initiatives, progress and the Council's aims and aspirations for the future.

Various issues were highlighted and considered in detail, these included:

- **Membership**

There had been no changes in membership during the year. However, March 2007 had seen the much respected Chairman, Councillor Brian Kerr, deciding to take a back seat. A new Chairman would be elected at the Council meeting on 14 May 2007. The Vice-Chairman recorded her grateful thanks to Brian for all the hard work contributed in his leadership over the years and particularly for his efforts in respect of the recent successful funding bid for the Neighbourhood Management Team.

- **Policing**

The Council had continued to push for additional policing in the village. The outcome was that from 1 April 2007 Saughall had its own Police Community Support Officer (PCSO), Michael Butler. A third of the post's cost was being borne by the Council whilst the other two thirds of the cost was being provided by the Cheshire Police Authority.

Mike was providing a visible uniformed presence in order to contribute to the reduction of crime and disorder and the promotion of public reassurance and quality of life.

The Council was contributing £11,000 per annum for the first three years to help finance this initiative. After that, the sum would increase to reflect the cost of living.

The agreement between the Police Authority and the Council could be terminated by either party giving 12 months notice after the scheme has been in place for a minimum of 12 months.

- **Finance**

The Council's budgets for the financial years 2006/07 and 2007/08 were as follows:

2006/07	£57,696.00
2007/08	£62,231.00

The 2007/08 precept had increased by 20% on the previous year because of the Parish Council's funding contribution towards Saughall's own PCSO.

Unlike the other two tiers of local government, Parish Council's did not receive Government grants and were funded by means of the local Council Tax - £39.56 per household per band D property. This compared to £61 for the fire service, £116 for the Police, £172 for the City Council and £1,002 for the County Council.

- **Community Safety Challenge**

The Council had been successful in attracting funding of £10,000 to establish and support a Neighbourhood Management Team for an initial three year period. This Team, made up of volunteers, would require training, equipment and premises.

The aims of the Neighbourhood Management Team were to provide a consistent presence working with the community to establish and maintain control. It would identify concerns, target action and solve problems. It would work with the local community to make an impact, improve the local environment and residents' quality of life.

- **Golden Jubilee Park**

It was hoped that the Council's contractor would complete Phase 1 of the project by the end of April 2007. This included rolling and seeding the sports pitches and completing the perimeter path.

- **Affordable Housing**

There had been little progress in developing the site off Lodge Lane. A meeting had been held with a representative of Northern Affordable Homes Ltd and the County Property Manager on 16 April 2007. Northern Affordable Homes Ltd intend to take things further with the County Council and would report to the Parish Council in due course. The Council would keep parishioners informed of any developments.

- **Parish Plan**

The Parish Plan had been published two years ago and had been reviewed annually. The last review had been in September 2006 when various actions had been taken as the Council attempted to find solutions to achieve its stated objectives. A further review would be carried out in September 2007.

- **Youth Club**

The Youth Club was up and running with a new Management Committee and Constitution. The Parish Council was very supportive and wished it every success.

- **The General Appearance of the Village**

There were particular spots in the village that needed a bit of attention to bring them up to an appropriate standard. As residents were aware, the Parish Council could not itself, arrange to re-seed verges, install new dog bins or remove unsightly village signs.

However, the Council did keep in close contact with the Authorities who were responsible for these different aspects and reminded them of the work that needed to be done and made every effort to ensure that maintenance was carried out as soon as possible. The Council also asked residents to keep the village tidy, be careful how they disposed of their litter and pick up after their dogs. The Council could only improve matters with the cooperation of every resident.

The Council had awarded its litter picking contract to a local resident, Mr Roy Hipkiss. He was doing a good job and the village, on the whole, was clean and tidy.

- **Traffic Issues**

Traffic issues, problems with parking and speeding cars were a recurring theme at Council meetings. The Parish Council would continue to work with the Police and the Highways Authority to try to remedy these problems. Councillors had been trained in the use of a speed gun that could be borrowed from Chester City Council and would be using it around the village soon, in an effort to get motorists to slow down.

- **Bus Shelters**

The Council remained in partnership with Cheshire County Council and had provided and maintained five new shelters in the village. The annual maintenance costs were £1,250.00.

- **A5117 Major Roadworks**

Improvements were well underway and the Council sent its representatives to the contractor's (Carrillion) regular liaison meetings so that it could monitor progress and make representations over any proposals that could adversely affect Saughall.

- **Planning**

One of the most important functions of a Parish Council was to review planning applications. It was a statutory consultee on all applications in its administrative area. The Council provided a focal point for the views of local residents and had an opportunity to support or oppose each application.

The plans were received and circulated to Committee Members, between meetings, to allow ample time for each Member to consider and prepare a response. Meetings took place immediately before the Parish Council meetings, usually at 7:00pm on the first Monday of the month in the Vernon Institute. The press and public were always invited to attend.

In the course of this Municipal Year the Council had dealt with 55 applications.

- **Newsletter**

The Council aimed to publish its newsletter four times a year. All village organisations were welcome to contribute to it. Contributions should be forwarded to the Clerk.

- **Website**

The Parish Council's website continued to be used as a point of information for the village. Village groups (Clubs, Shops, Churches, etc.) were able to announce their events, etc. Links were provided to other local authorities and to other sites which contained information of interest or benefit to residents. The website could be found at www.saughall.gov.uk

- **Vote of Thanks**

The Vice-Chairman thanked Mr Tony Leach, the Parish Paths Warden, for walking all of the public footpaths in the parish and liaising with Cheshire Council Council's Countryside Officer regarding any problems encountered and ensuring that they remained accessible and were safe to walk. She also thanked Mrs Helen Cake-Bread, the Parish Environmental Warden, for her help and advice with the trees and ponds in the Parish.

The Vice-Chairman placed on record her thanks to all Parish Councillors for their continued hard work and efforts throughout the year on behalf of the residents of Saughall and Shotwick Park. They were entirely unpaid and so much of what they did was unrecognised, but benefited all of the community.

4 PUBLIC DISCUSSION

The following issues were raised and considered:

- The amount of traffic passing through the junction of Hermitage Road and Church Road and the need for a Pedestrian Crossing by the Vernon Institute. This was very dangerous and the junction was also coping with an increase in traffic flow because of the improvements taking place at the junction of the A5117 and A540. It was suggested that Cheshire County Council, the Highways Authority, be requested to support the introduction of a Crossing.
- Use and operation of the Speed Gun. Because of insurance issues, volunteers could not operate the Speed Gun, only those Councillors who had received appropriate training (Councillors DF Holman, Mrs P Humphrey, WI Humphrey, Mrs JE Storrar and A Warrington) were allowed to. They could record the number plates, speed of vehicles and their descriptions. This information would be given to the Police who would write to those motorists who had exceeded the speed limit. If this happened three times the Police would watch out for them in future.
- A parishioner alleged that a co-option onto the Council following the Election in 2006 had been by illegal means. Although the Clerk attempted to refute the allegations and explain what had happened, the parishioner, who had raised this matter, had trouble hearing what was being said so the Council agreed that the Clerk would write to him disputing the allegations and detailing the process that culminated in the co-option.
- Completion of Phase 1 of the works in the Golden Jubilee Park. The Council wanted the rolling, seeding and perimeter path completed by the end of April 2007. The Vice-Chairman had been to see the contractor and informed that she would be making a report to the next meeting of the Council.

5 VOTE OF THANKS TO THE VICE-CHAIRMAN

Councillor RA Storrar, on behalf of the Council, thanked Councillor Mrs Jenny Young for Chairing the meeting and presenting her report and for stepping in at short notice on the resignation of the Chairman in March 2007 to act as the Chairman.