

Saughall and Shotwick Park Parish Council



Draft Business Plan 2011 - 2016

Foreword

This Business Plan maps out the Parish Council's hopes and aspirations for the future. Parishioners who take the time to read it will understand and be aware of exactly what we do. It will help the Council to take a planned and consistent approach to the:

- design and delivery of the services it provides;
- prioritisation and allocation of its resources; and
- achievement of real value for money.

The Parish Council launched the first Saughall Parish Plan in 2005. This was well received but it is now in need of updating. The Council therefore, intends to draw up a new, community led, Neighbourhood Plan and investigate the practicalities of a Village Design Statement that will reflect the opinions of the majority of residents as to how the village could evolve.

It is intended that the Parish Council will apply for "Quality Parish Council" status as soon as it meets the qualifying criteria, expected to be in autumn 2012. This will give it the 'Power of Well-Being' and enable it to use the power to promote well-being where it considers this will achieve any one or more of the following three objectives:

- (a) the promotion or improvement of the economic well-being of its area;
- (b) the promotion or improvement of the social well-being of its area;
- (c) the promotion or improvement of the environmental well-being of its area.

Our Business Plan will continue to be the main way of telling you what we are doing to meet the needs of the community. Please tell us what you think about it. We welcome your comments and would particularly appreciate your views on its content and format. If you require any further information that would help you understand what we are trying to achieve, please let us know. We can also provide additional information on the issues raised in the Plan.

It is our intension to review the Business Plan annually, publish progress and make any changes it is considered necessary as a result.

Please respond to:

Mrs S Hudspeth
Clerk to Saughall and Shotwick Park Parish Council
10 Merton Close
Little Neston
CHESHIRE
CH64 0TR

Telephone: 0151 336 3367
Email: clerk@saughall.gov.uk

Saughall and Shotwick Park Parish Council's Business Plan 2011 – 16

CONTENTS	Page Numbers
Introduction	7
Vision	
Business Plan	
Parish Council	
An Effective, Transparent and Open Council	10
A Sense of Community	11
Sporting and Leisure Facilities	
Community and Social Centres	
A Safe Community	
Village Events	
Democratic Representation	
Creating a Better Environment	16
Conservation Area	
Allotments	
Street Planting and Street Scene	
Public/Permissive Footpaths and Bridleways	
Super Fast Broadband for our Future	
Housing and Development Strategy	19
Affordable Housing Scheme – Lodge Lane	
Housing Development just outside the Parish	
Section 106 Agreements	
Former Ridings School Building and Land	
Transport Strategy	21
Public Transport	
Traffic Control	
Pedestrians and Cycling	
Economic Activity	22
Financial Strategy	23
The Annual Precept	
Capital Budget	
Participatory Budget Initiative	
Community Action Projects (CAP) and CAP Team	
Best Value	
Annual Accounts	

INTRODUCTION

In 2011, as a Parish Council we modernised our ways of working and took the decision to be more proactive and less reactive. We decided that to achieve this we needed to have a long term strategy; this was to be in the form of a Business Plan. The Plan is designed to form a long-term vision for the Council to follow; many of the issues identified may take several years to come to fruition and significant amounts of money will be required. Where dates have been set out in the accompanying Business Plan Action List they are provisional. Targets will be agreed as resources become available and external grant making bodies will be targeted in this regard. We hope that this Business Plan will help us to attract external funding, over a number of years, to help us achieve our aims.

This is the first Council Business Plan. It is our blueprint for how we will work in a co-ordinated way, in the best interests of all who live, work and benefit from our actions and endeavours locally. It sets out our mission, objectives and key priorities.

The purpose of the Plan is fourfold, to:

- set out the objectives and plans of the Parish Council, acknowledging the important role of community groups who have a common vision with the Parish Council;
- help the Parish Council fulfil its role within the community;
- communicate the Parish Council's vision and plans to local people; and
- provide a basis for local people to become involved in shaping the future of their village.

This Plan has been written after discussion with other local organisations. It is the intention to review the Plan in 2012, allowing for feedback, with an annual review thereafter.

Vision

The Parish Council's vision is to put in place policies and initiatives which will help to improve Saughall and Shotwick Park, encourage a greater sense of involvement and pride in the community, and promote sustainable and vibrant economic activity in the Parish.

The Parish Council will conduct its business by means which are transparent, sustainable, environmentally friendly, and that present the best value in achieving the actions laid out in this Plan.

Business Plan

This five year Business Plan aims to meet the Parish Council's vision. The Parish Council will co-operate and liaise, where appropriate, with parishioners and existing village organisations with a view to improving the general wellbeing of Saughall.

The Parish Council will endeavour to:

- enhance its role within the community and improve its communication with its parishioners;
- improve and upgrade the Parish Council's website;

- enhance the facilities available to the community and by working in partnership with the Vernon Institute Management Committee, contribute to the costs of maintaining the structure and fabric of the Vernon Institute (Village Hall);
- further promote local democracy by encouraging more residents to stand for election to the Parish Council;
- work closely with local schools, Saughall Youth Club, Saughall Neighbourhood Management Team and local youth organisations to ensure that the needs of the young people in the village are adequately addressed;
- develop a new Neighbourhood Plan/Village Design Statement enabling the local community to exercise real power in respect of the design and precise location of the development that takes place in the local area;

[The Government has claimed that Neighbourhood Plans '***will become the new building blocks of the planning system where communities have the power to grant planning permission if a local majority are in favour***'. Communities will be able to develop a plan which, if it succeeds both at an independent examination and at a public referendum, can be adopted through a Neighbourhood Development Order that gives it statutory basis within Cheshire West and Chester Council's local development plan documents.]

- continue to develop the Golden Jubilee Park and play areas and solve the drainage problem in the car park;
- carry out pond maintenance when necessary;
- plant trees and bulbs to improve the look of the village;
- improve village approaches and welcome signs;
- revise and re-print the Parish Footpaths Booklet;
- exploit as many external grant aid opportunities as it can to fund village improvement activities;
- maintain continuing professional development for the Clerk and Parish Councillors; and
- support and encourage local businesses.

Parish Council

Saughall and Shotwick Parish Council has thirteen elected Members who are elected every four years. Members give their time free in order to support and develop the community. Elections were held in May 2011 and are scheduled to be held again in May 2015. Saughall has an electorate of 2,419 whilst Shotwick Park has an electorate of 33 (as of May 2011).

The Parish Council is supported by a part-time Clerk who ensures that all statutory and legal requirements are complied with, and who has the role of Responsible Financial Officer.

The Parish Council has a number of committees and their overall aim is to improve the quality of life of the residents in its administrative area:

- Planning
- Field (advises the Council on the development and maintenance of the Golden Jubilee Park)
- General Purposes
- Finance and Business Development

Areas of responsibility include:

- the management of the Parish Council's budget;
- maintenance and development of the Golden Jubilee Park (in the Parish Council's ownership);
- informing and lobbying Cheshire West and Chester Council when highway and footpath repairs and maintenance are required;
- liaising with Cheshire Police over crime and anti-social behaviour; and
- as a statutory consultee of the Planning Authority, Cheshire West and Chester Council submitting comments on all planning applications in Saughall and Shotwick Park.

The Parish Council has excellent relationships with Cheshire West and Chester Council, the local ward Borough Councillor and Cheshire Police.

The Parish Council is represented on a number of external organisations, including the Vernon Institute Management Committee, Cheshire Association of Local Councils and its Chester Area Meeting and Quality Forum, Chester Police Forum and Saughall Youth Club Management Committee.

The Parish Council holds a number of meetings as follows in both the Vernon Institute and the Uniform Groups' Headquarters throughout the year and members of the public are always welcome to attend:

- bi-monthly meetings of the Parish Council take place on the first Monday of the month (second Monday if the first Monday is a public holiday) in the Vernon Institute;
- the Planning Committee meetings are held monthly, either in the Vernon Institute or the Uniformed Groups' Headquarters, its primary aim is to encourage the Planning Authority to support sensible development, maintaining the openness of the Green Belt;
- the General Purposes and Finance and Business Development Committees meet bi-monthly in the Uniformed Groups' Headquarters;
- the Field Committee meets as and when it is considered necessary; and
- the Annual Parish Meeting is held between 1 March and 1 June (inclusive) each year.

Members of the public are able to address Councillors/ask questions, immediately prior to the commencement of Parish Council meetings providing the appropriate (five clear working days) notice is given to the Clerk.

AN EFFECTIVE, TRANSPARENT AND OPEN COUNCIL

The Parish Council understands the need for good, clear communications as this helps residents to understand what the Council is doing on behalf of the community. We will listen to the views of local people and make representations on their behalf whenever possible, and will promote our work via our Newsletter and better use of electronic media. By ensuring that the Council's work and deliberations are conveyed to parishioners on a regular basis, in a format that is easily understood, we hope this will encourage feedback that may influence final decisions and ensure they reflect the wishes of the community.

The Parish Council launched its website in 2001. This is currently hosted by Cheshire West and Chester Council, free of charge, and has proved an invaluable tool. It provides easy access to the latest news and to a database of all its Minutes etc. It promotes the village, has improved community relations and provides information on what is happening in the village. It is the public face of this Council and it is our intention to develop it further to include more about the local community and volunteer groups, local business and provide more links to other relevant websites. Eventually, we hope the website will be used as a method for parishioners to feed back their concerns to us and to do this our communication facilities must be improved.

The Parish Council will:

- continue to hold monthly Surgeries in various locations around the village enabling parishioners to raise issues and discuss concerns on a one-to-one basis with Councillors;
- try to find ways to encourage parishioners to attend its meetings so that they are able to see how the Council operates and understand the decision making process;
- engage the community by trialling a participatory budgeting (possibly a Community Chest) for projects chosen by parishioners;
- seek Quality Parish Council accreditation/the Power of Wellbeing and reap any benefits that may result from this;
- review its website www.saughall.gov.uk and investigate ways to improve and enhance it, making it as interactive as it can;
- continue to publish interesting quarterly Newsletters and ensure that they are delivered to every house in Saughall and Shotwick Park;
- issue press releases about important matters when it is considered appropriate to do so;
- continue to work with the local press, for example the Chester Chronicle, with a Saughall news round up each week to promote Parish Council initiatives and ensure accurate and unbiased reporting; and
- continue to review its policies and procedures to ensure that it is run in a legal and business-like manner.

A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Sporting and Leisure Facilities

The Golden Jubilee Park on Fiddlers Lane, Saughall provides sporting facilities and play areas for the whole community. The Uniformed Groups' Headquarters is located within the Park.

The Uniformed Groups' Headquarters building has a limited life span and it has been proposed that it be replaced, in the future, by a purpose built sports pavilion. The Parish Council is in the very early stages of working on proposals for an eco friendly structure with improved facilities, subject to securing adequate external funding. However, we are also aware that the Vernon Institute Management Committee (a Charitable Trust) is considering improvements to the Vernon Institute and that we may have to compete against each other to obtain external funding to improve community facilities in Saughall.

For its size, Saughall has a reasonable balance of good recreation grounds, and play areas within the Golden Jubilee Park. There are two ponds providing a habitat for local wildlife, including great crested newts. There is a cricket pitch, football pitches, a hard standing area with a goal end, an aerial runway, a pyramid climbing frame and a swing park for younger children. The Field Committee continuously reviews these facilities and offers advice to the Council on their maintenance.

The Parish Council is considering whether to further develop the Park, increasing its size, by purchasing adjacent land and providing additional facilities e.g. another goal end, a skateboard park, a boules court etc.

The Parish Council will continue to replace play equipment and surfaces as and when necessary, it has them inspected professionally every three months and any defects pointed out are addressed. We will exploit external grants to fund their renewal whenever the opportunity presents itself and have an established savings fund for match funding purposes.

The Golden Jubilee Park facilities complement the sports pitches at the bottom of Seahill Road (just over the parish border in Wales), in the ownership of the Vernon Institute Management Committee and that which is provided in the Vernon Institute building itself e.g. table tennis, badminton.

The Parish Council will strongly encourage local organisations and groups to make use of the Parish Council Newsletter in order to promote cultural, health and fitness, leisure and sporting activities.

Community and Social Centres

Saughall is fortunate in having within its boundaries a number of active and popular community and social centres, which together provide a range of facilities and benefits for the community. The Parish Council is keen to liaise and work together with these centres in planning co-ordinated developments for the wider benefit of the community.

The Uniformed Groups' Headquarters:

The present prefabricated structure in the Golden Jubilee Park has already been in situ for ten years and some maintenance work has been undertaken in recent times. It has a life span of twenty years and provides basic facilities for football and cricket teams. The building is serving the village well, but it is necessary to start to plan and raise funds for its replacement as its structure may deteriorate over time, and it may no longer adequately provide the facilities residents and visiting clubs may expect in future. The Parish Council is giving careful consideration to the provision of a new building, as this may be a very large capital project for us to undertake. If this project is to proceed, we are determined that the new building will reflect a modern, forward thinking community, and that it will be as 'green' as possible within an agreed budget, to benefit the environment and reduce future running costs.

The Parish Council will need considerable external grants to help meet the costs of a new building, and is fortunate to have the support of Saughall Cricket Club, which may assist in exploiting external funding to be able to contribute to the costs of any new build. The aim could be to have a new sports pavilion in use by 2020, and we will keep local residents fully informed of any progress with this proposed building project.

The Vernon Institute (Village Hall):

The Parish Council will continue to work with the Vernon Institute Management Committee to identify possible funding streams and provide funding itself through the parish precept to maintain the structure and fabric of the Vernon Institute, a building on the edge of the conservation area in Saughall, a popular meeting place and focal point of the village. We are willing to help the Vernon Institute Management Committee as much as we can to identify ways to maximise usage of the building and improve income.

All Saints Church:

All Saints Church offers a variety of different services and activities for the community. In its Statement of Purpose the church says 'We are here to help everyone to know God and grow in the love of Christ, through prayer and teaching, welcome and worship, fellowship and service to the community'. It seeks to work with the other local churches, in particular the Methodist Church and St Bartholomew's Church, Sealand, together contributing to the life of the village at three different levels: meeting spiritual needs, providing pastoral care, and contributing to the social life of the community.

This is put into practice by offering regular worship for all ages, baptisms, weddings and funerals, pastoral visiting, discussion groups, social activities and fundraising events. The main Sunday service is weekly at 10.30am, with evening services at 6.30pm roughly every other Sunday and a monthly 8.30am Prayer Book Communion service. On Wednesdays there is a 10.30am Communion service and at 2.00pm a 'Praise and Play' service for pre-school children and their carers. Monthly on Wednesdays at 3.30pm 'Messy Church' provides worship and activities for primary school children and their parents. There are regular joint services with the other two local churches, and a monthly Service for Families at 9.15am on the first Sunday in the month alternating between All Saints Church and the Methodist Church. Special services are offered at festival times, including Christmas, Easter and Harvest.

The Seniors group meets every other Monday at 2.00pm and provides an opportunity for people to meet, chat and be entertained. More 'senior' members of the community, many of whom have been bereaved, particularly value this group. There is a monthly coffee morning on Saturdays giving people the opportunity to meet, relax and chat, and this is offered as a service to the whole community. The 'Prayer Circle' is a group of people committed to respond to particular requests for prayer from anyone in the community or beyond.

A number of social and fundraising events are organised through the year, attracting people from the church and wider community. The main event is the Summer Fair and Crowning of the Rose Queen, traditionally held in the Vicarage garden, and this is very much a village event. There is also a Christmas Fair (visited by Santa), concerts in church, and social evenings (often in the Vernon Institute) usually involving food and entertainment.

There are close links with Saughall All Saints Primary School, which is a church school taking its name from the church. The vicar takes regular assemblies in school and the school holds services in church several times a year. The church appoints three members of the school's Governing Body.

The church receives no money from the state, the Diocese, or the Church of England. It has to be financially independent and is currently required to pay £35,000 annually to the Diocese to cover the cost of the vicar's stipend (salary), housing, and other expenses of the wider church. It needs a total income in excess of £50,000 pa to sustain its life and activities. Over two thirds of this comes from the regular giving of church members and almost all of the rest comes from fund-raising and the 100 Club, supported by many people from the wider community. From time to time money is raised through special appeals and £70,000 is currently required for re-roofing the church building.

The Methodist Church and Hall:

Form of words are awaited from the Church

Saughall Health Centre:

Form of words are awaited from the Health Centre

All Saints C of E Primary School:

Saughall All Saints C of E Primary School held its official Opening Ceremony in May 2011, Rev Brian Harris of All Saints Church cut the ribbon. A number of local dignitaries were present and attended a special assembly to mark the occasion.

We have held an open day to invite members of our community both past and present to come and see our school and the children in their working environment.

We held a Harvest Service in All Saints Church and will be singing at the switching on of Saughall Village Lights ceremony in December.

We will be supporting the British Legion poppy appeal, Smile International shoe box appeal and Children in Need.

We encourage all our pupils to 'Wear their Badge with Pride'.

Co-op Store

Form of words are awaited from the Co-op Store

Three Public Houses:

The Greyhound:

Form of words are awaited from the Pub

The Egerton Arms:

Form of words are awaited from the Pub

The Wheatsheaf:

Form of words are awaited from the Pub

A Safe Community

Although Police statistics define Saughall as an area of low crime, the Parish Council has identified four particular areas of concern:

- (a) a fear of crime
- (b) anti-social behaviour and nuisance youth activity

- (c) speeding traffic
- (d) litter and dog fouling

Cheshire Police work closely with the Parish Council as does the Saughall Homewatch. The Council pays a contribution to the Cheshire Police Authority for the services of a full-time Saughall based PCSO enabling us to address problems directly with the Police.

The Parish Council established the Saughall Neighbourhood Management Team made up of local volunteers who meet regularly to look at local issues and concerns and to plan what can be done to tackle them. Although grant aid is no longer available to fund this worthwhile initiative, it is still going strong, carrying out good work and in particular, running a very successful Summer School each year keeping our youngsters out of 'trouble'. The Team has recently been tasked with formulating a proposal to modernise the children's swing park so if external funding becomes available for play equipment, a scheme will already be worked up.

The Parish Council will:

- continue to fund the PCSO initiative during 2011/12 and 2012/13, carry out a review thereafter and discuss future options with the Police;
- participate in initiatives that address anti-social behaviour and nuisance youth activity, and continue to work with other authorities (Cheshire Police, Cheshire West and Chester Council) to try to reduce crime and the perception of crime;
- give consideration to new general recreation and youth facilities that can be based within the Golden Jubilee Park e.g. open a tuck shop in the Uniform Groups' Headquarters, skate park/ramps;
- support Saughall Youth Club and provide some funding for its initiatives e.g. outings;
- regularly invite the PCSO and the Police's local Beat Officer to Council meetings to discuss any concerns;
- encourage residents to become Homewatch Co-ordinators and play their part to improve community safety;
- continue to support the Saughall Neighbourhood Management Team in any way that it can;
- continue to lobby Cheshire West and Chester Council for traffic calming measures, speed restrictions, and to reduce the potential risk of accidents at hazardous junctions e.g. Parkgate Road/Long Lane;
- educate residents and visitors to "Kill their Speed" and to continue with the help of the PCSO to make use of the portable speed sign and speed gun to highlight the current speed at which people are travelling; and
- seek to deal with the problems of litter, dog fouling, graffiti, fly posting, noise pollution etc by helping to foster a responsible attitude and enhancing the sense of community and good neighbourliness.

Village Events

The Parish Council supports village events in a number of ways and will continue to do so. We lead in the organisation for Remembrance Sunday and support it financially. We support the Saughall Sports Day and Saughall Mile which is organised by the Rotary Club and held in the Golden Jubilee Park. We also support Village Fairs and have a presence at these events and are involved with the arrangements for the Christmas Lights Switch On celebration in partnership with the Vernon Institute Management Committee.

The Parish Council is also taking the lead on a celebration to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in June 2012 and will provide funding for it in its 2012/13 Budget.

Democratic Representation

The Parish Council hopes that a greater sense of community will develop through this Business Plan and the actions arising from it. We hope that this will lead to an increased awareness of our activities and, as a consequence, will encourage more residents, to stand for election to the Parish Council or join other voluntary community groups. The Parish Council is keen to encourage youth participation in its activities.

CREATING A BETTER ENVIRONMENT

Saughall and Shotwick Park is a parish that lies to the north west of the City of Chester, and is contained within the newly created Borough of Cheshire West and Chester. It is five miles away from Chester City itself, so for many parishioners it acts as a "dormitory" village to the City.

However, unlike some other "dormitory" villages around the country, Saughall and Shotwick Park retain their distinctive and pleasant features that make the area a desirable place to live within the Cheshire property market. This may be down to the Green Belt that surrounds the village with open farm land on all sides. The western Parish boundary forms the historical boundary between England and Wales.

Three separate settlements of Great and Little Saughall and Shotwick Park make up the Parish area. Great and Little Saughall became part of the Saughall Civil Parish in 1948, whilst Shotwick Park joined up in 1972.

Presently the village can be described as thriving, in comparison to some other parishes. The Parish contains:

- A brand new Primary School (All Saints)
- Toddler Group
- Private Nursery
- Playgroup
- Three Public Houses
- Two Places of Worship
- Vernon Institute (Village Hall)
- Playground and Leisure Facilities (The Golden Jubilee Park)

- A Post Office
- A Doctors' Surgery
- A Pharmacy
- A Library Service operating out of the Vernon Institute
- A number of thriving community groups, e.g. a Women's Institute, the Golden Link, and the Gardening Club
- and a number of Retail Outlets

The area covered by Saughall and Shotwick Park Parish is a pleasant and healthy location in which to live. It is incumbent upon the Parish Council to ensure this environment continues to be enhanced for the benefit of all residents and will do so with the advice of its Environment and Tree Warden. Therefore, the Parish Council will monitor the environment and support initiatives that protect and improve local wildlife habitats, tree cover, hedgerows and other important landscape features.

Conservation Area

The Conservation Area is a tract of land in the village that has been awarded protected status in order to ensure that natural features and cultural heritage are safeguarded. It covers that part of the village focussed on the Vernon Institute and the Greyhound Public House. It is an important part of the character of the village and needs to be carefully protected.

Allotments

There are a number of allotments in Saughall, in the ownership of Cheshire West and Chester Council that have all been allocated and the Parish Council is aware that there is increased demand nationally for them from gardeners eager to grow their own fruit and vegetables. We will investigate the feasibility of increasing allotment areas in Saughall if there is local demand for this. More locally-grown produce could make parishioners healthier and reduce carbon emissions. Allotment sites promote community cohesion and are a good example of what the Government wants to achieve with its 'Big Society' initiative.

Street Planting and Street Scene

The Parish Council will:

- improve the appearance of verges and other open spaces by continuing to plant bulbs;
- discourage parking on grass verges;
- adopt a tree planting/replanting strategy, including on-going tree husbandry;
- undertake an audit to identify where new signs are needed to replace old or broken signs and unnecessary signs, and seek to have them removed or re-sited;
- continue to report potholes to Cheshire West and Chester Council and lobby for them to be repaired;
- identify areas where litter is a problem, and work with the local community to tidy up these black spots and fund, from the parish precept, additional litter picking where it is considered necessary, over and above that which is currently provided by Cheshire West and Chester Council;

- work with Cheshire West and Chester Council to identify places to install more litter/dog fouling bins around the village and request the Dog Warden and Enforcement Officer to visit Saughall and hand out bags; and
- take appropriate steps to deter fly tipping, fly posting and graffiti.

Public/Permissive Paths and Bridleways

A large area of the County Farms estate lies within the parish of Saughall and Shotwick Park. The village is fortunate to have a comprehensive network of public footpaths and bridleways giving access to the countryside and surrounding villages.

The Parish Council, working with its Parish Paths Warden and Cheshire West and Chester Council's Rights of Way Section will continue to:

- try to ensure paths and bridleways are maintained in a good condition at all times;
- identify and report areas that need repair and attention; and
- promote the benefits from walking and the local area by providing map boards and selling its Parish Footpath Booklets and consider, as a future project, carrying out a review, revision and a publication of a new edition of the Booklet.

Super Fast Broadband for our Future

Cheshire East Council, Cheshire West and Chester Council and Warrington Borough Council are working together to try to secure £20m of grant funding to deliver superfast broadband by 2015. The aim is to make the whole of Cheshire completely superfast broadband-enabled by 2015.

The three authorities are working together to develop a business case to try and secure the funding, including some of the £530m the government has set aside for investment in superfast broadband across the UK.

The Cheshire and Warrington Superfast Broadband Project has only recently been formed and aims to secure both public and private sector funding to achieve 100 per cent superfast broadband coverage across the area by 2015.

It is estimated that superfast broadband would support the creation of 5,500 jobs in Cheshire and Warrington and will add £197m in growth to economy year on year.

Improved connections enable innovation and the creation of wealth, particularly in Cheshire and Warrington where the digital and creative industries are strong.

Residents would benefit from superfast broadband by being able to access council, banking and shopping services online, reducing the need for journeys, saving time and money.

The Parish Council is actively championing broadband as it is well aware of its potential for a more sustainable future for our village. To this end it is raising local awareness of its benefits through this Business Plan and its Newsletters.

There is not a single person in Saughall and Shotwick Park who cannot benefit from superfast broadband. The superfast broadband infrastructure will make our area one of the best connected locations in the world and this opens up huge benefits for all.

Imagine the extra freedom and opportunity that superfast broadband will mean.

People with disabilities or caring responsibilities who would find it hard to travel to work may now be able to work effectively from home.

Flexible working will make it easier for people to have an improved quality of life through having more control over where and when they choose to work, with home broadband connections as powerful as in a city office.

Elderly people may now be able to stay at home and enjoy 'telecare' in preference to going into residential care.

Connections to friends, family and colleagues will have a new dimension as use of video becomes an everyday reality.

Online learning will open new doors and expand horizons for thousands of people in Cheshire.

People of any age, who have never before considered setting up their own business, may find that it is a realistic option now that they have world class broadband connections at their fingertips.

And businesses will be able to reach out to customers in new and innovative ways, streamlining the way they work and enjoying a greater quality of life, as well as greater productivity.

HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Principal Authority has currently got work in hand to produce the Local Development Framework (LDF) for Cheshire West and Chester. The LDF will, in time, replace the Local Plans that were produced by the former authorities of Chester City Council, Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council and Vale Royal Borough Council, and the Cheshire County Council Structure Plan.

The residents of Saughall and Shotwick Park place great value on their village which, combined with a good range of services, gives the village its special, dynamic character. This needs to be continually enhanced and protected. We are committed to the principles of sustainability.

A large proportion of the parish is attractive farm land and countryside. The Parish Council will resist any development in the Green Belt other than is essential in support of agricultural activity or, as an exceptions site, to provide affordable housing for local people. We aim to ensure that the village maintains its individuality, whilst developing a housing strategy to cope with future demand, and that we make the best use of available land and protect the Green Belt for future generations.

Affordable Housing Schemes

It has been identified that Saughall is sadly lacking in affordable housing and that there are already a number of residents who are in a position of being unable to move out of a family home to secure a home of their own in the parish because of house prices in the village.

The Parish Council's position statement on this matter is as follows:

- it wants to see the village developed for the benefit of the local community;
- it wants to be fully consulted on any proposed development in Saughall and Shotwick Park;
- it will seek to encourage residential developments within the village and especially affordable housing to meet local housing needs
- it will identify additional suitable sites to meet demand.

Housing Development just outside the Parish

Recent housing development, just outside the parish boundary, has increased pressure on the social and physical infrastructure of the village. The Parish Council will continue to press the appropriate authorities for increased provision of medical, educational and youth facilities together with any other support services it considers necessary.

Section 106 Agreements

Section 106 (S106) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 allows a local planning authority (LPA) to enter into a legally-binding agreement or planning obligation with a landowner in association with the granting of planning permission. The obligation is termed a Section 106 Agreement.

These agreements are a way of delivering or addressing matters that are necessary to make a development acceptable in planning terms. They are increasingly used to support the provision of services and infrastructure, such as highways, recreational facilities, education, health and affordable housing.

The scope of such agreements is laid out in the government's Circular 05/2005. Matters agreed as part of a S106 must be:

- relevant to planning
- necessary to make the proposed development acceptable in planning terms
- directly related to the proposed development
- fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development
- reasonable in all other respects.

A council's approach to securing benefits through the S106 process should be grounded in evidence-based policy.

The Parish Council will request Cheshire West and Chester Council (the LPA) to obtain section 106 agreements whenever legally possible for the following: affordable housing;

improvements to the highway and drainage infrastructure; recreation, play areas and equipment; footpaths and cycle routes; nature areas and tree planting; allotments; bus shelters, street seating and litter bins.

Redundant Land Sites within the Village

From time to time buildings and land may become redundant within the village (such as the former Ridings Infant School site).

The Parish Council's preference is for such sites to be firstly considered for re-use for the wider community's benefit. Should re-development of such sites occur then the Parish Council will seek to obtain some section 106 benefits for the village.

TRANSPORT STRATEGY

The Parish Council has no direct responsibility for transport and related matters. Thus, its role is principally one of advocacy in the interest of the village.

Public Transport

As the Parish of Saughall and Shotwick Park lies only five miles from Chester City centre the public transport system currently in place appears to work well for most residents. However, only a small percentage of residents actually make use of the public transport available with the vast majority preferring to use their cars.

The Parish Council, in association with interested partners, will:

- promote an increased usage of public transport, not only to safeguard its future, but to reduce traffic congestion and be more environmentally friendly;
- seek to reduce the reliance on private cars;
- promote the health benefits of leaving your car at home and joining car sharing schemes;
- liaise specifically with the bus companies and consider, together, the possible provision of more flexible public transport and lobby them for improved services to the Countess of Chester Hospital and to Chester Railway Station;
- consider local school transport issues e.g. request/encourage the local school (All Saints) to promote alternatives to cars e.g. walking bus;
- liaise with Cheshire West and Chester Council's Transport Co-ordination Service regularly regarding bus service issues; and
- lobby bus and rail companies for a co-ordinated bus/rail network.

Traffic Control

The Parish Council will work in partnership with Cheshire West and Chester Council, as the Highways Authority, for the provision of improved road markings and surface areas at bus stops, as well as timetable panels and appropriate kerbs.

The Parish Council recognises residents' concerns about speeding, illegal parking and parking on grass verges and pavements. We will continue to lobby Cheshire West and Chester Council and the Police for appropriate traffic calming measures and other

controls, and consider contributing to the cost thereof. We will support and aspire to becoming a Community Speedwatch area and to have Twenty's Plenty areas.

Pedestrians and Cycling

In association with the Police and Cheshire West and Chester Council, the Parish Council will seek improvements to the pedestrian environment, and will continue to monitor the condition of footways, street lighting and road surfaces and seek to ensure they are properly maintained.

The Parish Council wishes to see an increase in walking and cycling, and will press for measures to improve the provision of, and environment for, these modes of transport and investigate possible safe cycling routes in and around the village. We will also promote and sell our Parish Footpaths Booklet.

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

Saughall has a range of facilities which fulfil most of the daily needs of local residents. The Parish Council supports appropriate business development which is in keeping with the local environment.

The Parish Council has a stated Policy on the future employment in the village. It is as follows:

- the Parish Council recognises the importance of ensuring that there are jobs in the rural area and will seek to maximise appropriate employment opportunities both in the village and on its borders for the residents of Saughall and Shotwick Park;
- the Parish Council will support regeneration of redundant sites within the village and encourage new and appropriate industry/businesses etc to establish themselves there and provide job opportunities;
- the Parish Council will actively support an increase in the level of entrepreneurship within the local community and try to foster growth at a local level. This may include activity to increase the potential for social enterprises and community based business start-ups, enable community businesses to grow and sustain growth and improve the operating environment for existing businesses. The Local Produce (Farmers) Market is an example of such entrepreneurship.

The parish currently has a number of retail services, a lot more than some neighbouring parishes. A large number of residents use the local shopping facilities on a regular weekly basis and believe that the facilities are generally of a reasonable standard for essential needs. The Parish Council will actively work to ensure the retention of these services. Parking in the village is problematic and the Parish Council will support appropriate developments which encourage additional use of local services.

The Parish Council encourages the growth of local businesses and promotes them in its Newsletters.

Wherever possible, the Parish Council will source services and supplies from local businesses.

FINANCIAL STRATEGY

In this current period of austerity it is important to keep a sharp eye on the purse strings whilst still meeting community aspirations and this Business Plan is an excellent tool for carrying out this task.

The Annual Precept

The Parish Council is aware of the financial pressure on residents and always attempts to limit any increases in its share (known as the parish precept) of the total Council Tax bill.

However, where the Parish Council proposes to fund special projects from the precept, e.g. repayment of any external loans for a new sports pavilion, land purchase etc. then an addition will be made to the annual precept.

Capital Budget

As the Parish Council's resources are limited, many of the proposals, particularly the provision of a sports pavilion, will depend on external grants, the availability of which will be restricted by the economic downturn. It is, therefore, proposed that we give some thought to public fund raising initiatives.

Participatory Budgets

The Parish Council is considering participatory budgeting as a means of allocating funding for useful projects. We will hold a public meeting to get parishioners thinking about what they would like to see in Saughall with a view to making a 'community chest' available and enlisting members of the public to sit on a task group.

Community Action Projects (CAP)

The Parish Council wants to support Community Action Projects which meet a local and community need. Consequently, it has kick started the CAP Fund with an initial grant of £2000 and if this initiative is successful the Parish Council intends to continue to provide financial assistance annually thereafter. It also wants to encourage, by any means it can, private individuals, businesses, developers etc to make donations to the CAP Fund which will be used to finance Saughall community projects and initiatives, on a match funding basis.

The Parish Council wants to establish, build and motivate a winning CAP Team to engage partners and work within an agreed remit, to successfully shape our community by driving forward appropriate initiatives and to administer the CAP Fund that will be used to assist and match-fund worthwhile community projects and initiatives.

Best Value

The Parish Council is duty bound to provide value for money and will always examine proposals for expenditure carefully to ensure they are necessary and represent best value for the parish.

Accounts

The Parish Council's Accounts are audited (internally by the Internal Auditor and by the External Auditor) annually.

A summary of the audited accounts for each year is available on the Parish Council's website www.saughall.gov.uk

The Parish Council will:

- ensure there are sufficient reserves to cover contingencies;
- review, and where practicable reduce, expenditure;
- trial participatory budgeting;
- provide grants for worthwhile community action projects;
- investigate, and exploit appropriate grant aid opportunities;
- consider introducing a public fund raising initiative to finance any major projects.