

MINUTES OF SAUGHALL AND SHOTWICK PARK'S ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held on 29 April 2013 at the Vernon Institute, Saughall

In attendance: Councillor Mrs J Edwards  
Councillor Mrs K Ford  
Councillor DF Holman  
Councillor H Jennings  
Councillor B Kerr  
Councillor Mrs J Knox  
Councillor Mrs JE Storrar  
Councillor RA Storrar  
Councillor Mrs JM Young (in the Chair)  
Councillor PP Young

Cheshire West and Chester Councillor B Crowe  
Bob Salisbury, Internal Auditor

And 3 parishioners as recorded in the attendance register.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor Mrs J Johnson  
Councillor RK Shukla  
Councillor A Warrington  
Councillor Mrs D Whitton

**2. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of Saughall and Shotwick Park's Parish Meeting held on 30 April 2012 be confirmed as a correct record.

**3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT**

The 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 made and the Council's aims and aspirations for the future.

Various issues were highlighted and considered in detail. The report was presented as follows:

**Introduction**

This was the Chairman's fifth Annual Report and she believed that the Council continued to provide Saughall and Shotwick Park with value for money in respect of the work it did on the community's behalf. The Council had met each month to manage particular matters pertaining to

the parish as well as its usual business of oversight of the highways, footpaths, street lighting, and the conservation area. It continued to enjoy good working relationships with other bodies serving the community within the parish.

### **Councillor Ian Humphrey**

In November 2012 it was with great sadness that the Council learned of the death of Councillor Ian Humphrey. Ian had been a parish councillor since November 2005. He was a stalwart supporter of the community and a defender of all the parish's amenities. It was the Council's intention to commemorate Ian's contribution to the parish and to record the high regard in which he was held, by having a road in the new Lodge Lane housing development named after him. Members were also sad to hear of the death of Ian's wife, Philamena, a former parish councillor, in March 2013.

### **New Councillors**

The Council had welcomed two new Councillors to its meetings during the year. Howard Jennings was elected unopposed and took up the vacant seat that had existed on the Council since May 2011 when 13 of the 14 seats had been filled following an uncontested election. Councillor Jennings attended his first meeting on Monday, 5 November 2012. Jane Edwards was elected onto the Council to fill the vacant seat (following Ian's death) at a By Election held on 21 February 2013.

### **Finance**

The Council had set its budget for 2013/14 and kept the precept the same as for 2012/13 which meant that the Council Tax would, for the second year running, be £54.98 per household per Band D property.

The Government had changed the way in which Council Tax was charged, effectively reducing the tax base. To offset this Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC) had provided a grant of £6,032, the amount equal to the tax base reduction for the Council.

The Council had requested a Parish Precept of £58,389 for 2013/14 from CWaC. The Parish Council's budget amounted to £76,906. Budget comparisons are set out below:

2012/13	£66,296
2013/14	£76,906

<b>Council Budget 2012/13</b>		<b>Council Budget 2013/14</b>	
<b>Budget Head</b>	<b>Allocation (£)</b>	<b>Budget Head</b>	<b>Allocation (£)</b>
Environment	16,366	Environment	18,800
Admin	29,130	Admin	20,250
		Annual Payments	6,213
		Community Facilities Fund	13,343
Police	11,800	Police	11,800
Neighbourhood Management Team	1,000	Neighbourhood Management Team	500
		Uniformed Groups' HQ Rental	500
Community Facilities and Projects	5,000	Community Action Projects	1,000
		War Memorial Fund/New Roll of Honour	1,500
Contingency	3,000	Contingency	3,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>66,296</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>76,906</b>

### **Protection of the Local Green Belt**

The green belt had been introduced to prevent urban sprawl, to stop Chester joining with Ellesmere Port and Merseyside and to protect the city from swallowing neighbouring villages.

The Council continued to campaign and did all in its power to protect the green belt for future generations. This year there had been two major threats to the Chester green belt:

- CwaC had consulted on rolling back the green belt around Chester to build 2000 new houses; and
- A planning application for 2,300 flats in the green belt between Blacon and Saughall had been submitted to the Planning Authority and refused.

### **Planning**

One of the Council's primary aims was to encourage the planning authority, CWaC to support sensible development, maintaining the openness of the green belt. The Council was a statutory consultee on all planning applications and this year it had considered and submitted observations on 27 applications, compared with 26 last year.

### **Parish Council Surgeries**

The Council aimed to be effective, transparent and open and so continued to hold Council Surgeries monthly at various times and in various locations around the village. Details were always published well in advance on village notice boards.

### **Parish Planning**

The Council had made good progress on the review and refresh of its Parish Plan and the Refreshed Plan and Action Plan had been adopted by the Council at a Special Council meeting on 25 April 2013. The thoughts, concerns, observations and needs of parishioners had been collected via a survey and had been collated and analysed. The Chairman thanked Nigel Crossley, who had led this work, for his time and commitment.

The Refreshed Parish Plan would have the opportunity to influence a wide range of organisations, such as grant providers and CWaC.

### **Litter Picking**

The Council paid for the Golden Jubilee Park to be delittered regularly. It also monitored the state of the village but it was CWaC's responsibility to keep the village clean and tidy. Any problem areas were reported and CWaC was expected to take the appropriate action. Anyone could report litter problems by ringing Tel No. 0300 123 8 123.

### **The PCSO Initiative**

Safety and security remained the cornerstone of this Council's vision for Saughall. The village has had its own PCSO since April 2007 and this arrangement continued to work well. Consequently, it had signed a new Partnership Service Level Agreement with Cheshire Police and intended to continue to contribute to the cost of providing a PCSO in Saughall for the next three years. The cost remained at £11,800 per annum and was considered to represent extremely good value for money.

### **Homewatch**

Saughall Homewatch continued to thrive. Its activities had been expertly co-ordinated by Ian Humphrey until November. Howard Jennings was now carrying out this work and aimed to provide a valuable service. The Chairman thanked him for volunteering to fulfil this role. Parishioners who wanted to join the Homewatch were encouraged to contact Howard. Joining was free and all were welcome.

### **Saughall Neighbourhood Management Team**

This Team took action to solve problems within the community and worked with local partners to improve the local environment and quality of life. It arranged and ran popular play schools in the summer and at Easter and helped fund play days run in conjunction with CWaC.

Saughall was again on the route of the Chester Half Marathon on 12 May 2013. The Neighbourhood Management Team would be looking after the drinks stand and needs helpers. Tony Summers was the Chief Marshall and was also seeking volunteers to assist him.

The Chairman thanked all Team members for their tireless efforts, which continued to make a real difference to Saughall.

### **Golden Jubilee Park**

The play areas continued to be well used and had not required any major maintenance. Ian Humphrey and Andrew Storrar had carried out some work in the car park and, fingers crossed; it seemed to have solved the flooding problem.

The Parish Council was working with volunteers, as the Saughall Community and Sports Pavilion Committee, to produce a specification for an affordable and suitable community building as well as provision for the diverse sporting and leisure facilities requested by parishioners. This project was dependant on attracting the necessary external funding.

The Council was also considering applying for funding for a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) and further consultations on this proposal would be carried out to establish if there was a need.

### **Vernon Institute**

The Council had built up and maintained a savings fund which it used to provide grants towards the costs of improving the fabric of the Vernon Institute, an important community facility and village meeting point.

The Vernon Institute Management Committee had requested a funding contribution towards the cost of alterations to the small hall (library). It had built storage cupboards, moved existing cupboards, removed library boxes from the walls, created a serving hatch from the kitchen, fitted kitchen units and intended to decorate. The Council had agreed, at its Special meeting on 25 April 2013, to contribute £3,350 towards the cost of this work.

### **Car Parking in the Village**

Throughout the year several residents had expressed concerns about the increasing car parking problems around the village – particularly outside the Co-op Stores and All Saints C of E Primary School. The Council had considered a number of options to help address and alleviate the problems including publishing articles in the Parish Council Newsletter. However, its powers were very limited in respect of ‘controlling’ or enforcing parking issues but it would continue to monitor the situation and liaise with others (local authority and other agencies if necessary) to try and help the situation.

### **Highways Issues**

The Council continued to spend a lot of time at Council meetings on traffic congestion, problems with the buses, damage to grass verges, parking, potholes and speeding cars. It worked with the police, the highways authority and the bus companies to try to remedy these problems. The Council wanted a Twenty's Plenty zone in Saughall. CWaC was progressing this initiative and Saughall was on its list.

### **Affordable Housing - Lodge Lane**

Planning permission had been granted for, 18 properties, providing a mix of two and three bedroom houses and two bedroom bungalows. Rapid progress had been made and it was expected that work would begin on site in June 2013.

### **The Queen's Diamond Jubilee**

The Council had invited all the various clubs and groups in Saughall to make proposals on how they would spend up to a maximum of £500 on a project, which must benefit the local community, to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

Cheques for £500 had been presented to representatives of:

- The Vernon Institute Management Committee to help fund the provision of Diamond Jubilee Planters and flowers outside the entrance to the Vernon Institute; and
- All Saints Parochial Church Council to help fund the provision of a gateway.

### **Supporting Village Events**

The Council was pleased to support various community events throughout the year.

#### **- Remembrance Sunday**

The Council had arranged Remembrance Sunday services for the last three years. The Chairman had attended the service last November at the war memorial, as did other Parish Councillors, and had laid a Royal British Legion poppy wreath on the Council's behalf. The Council would continue to take the lead on this important community event.

#### **- Music in the Park – 4 June 2012**

This had been an excellent community event, organised to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. Over 1,000 Saughall residents and their families had been entertained by numerous talented local bands. There had been non-stop music while people picnicked and lazed in the sun, though many enjoyed dancing to the music. Refreshment stalls had been run by local people and a bouncy castle had entertained the children. Plans were now progressing well in respect of a similar event to be held on **Sunday, 26 May 2013** from **3pm**. The Chairman thanked everyone who had helped to make these events successful.

### **- Christmas Celebrations**

The Christmas Lights and Fair continued to be very well supported each year. There were always lots of stalls and a Santa procession through the village.

### **New Website – [www.saughall.gov.uk](http://www.saughall.gov.uk)**

The Council now had a fresh-looking and newly-redesigned website. This work had been completed by the University of Chester's Informatics Centre at a total cost of £1,250. The new design featured a much-improved navigation system based on clear menus and enabled visitors to the website to find information about the village much more easily. New additions included a 'news' feature on the front page where the Council posted items as it heard about them and a photo album where it posted snapshots of events as they happened. The Council welcomed feedback on the new design as well as additional items and detail for inclusion on the website. These should be sent to the Clerk email: [clerk@saughall.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@saughall.gov.uk)

The Parish Council was now on Twitter, thanks to Kathy Ford. You could find [@SaughallPC](https://twitter.com/SaughallPC) easily by visiting the Council's website and clicking on the Twitter link.

### **So in Conclusion**

**The Parish Council's goals for the coming year:** Were to

- as always, seek ways to better engage with its parishioners;
- continue to provide value for money in all of its activities;
- assign its priorities and then drive its projects and initiatives forward; and
- robustly defend Saughall and Shotwick Park's interests.

### **And finally –**

The Chairman thanked the team of Parish Councillors who really did their best for Saughall and Shotwick Park; giving up their own time to make it a great place to live. The Council had achieved a lot during this last year and she thanked Members for their support. She also thanked CWaC Councillor Brian Crowe, the local ward Member, for keeping the Council up to date with what was happening at Borough level.

The Chairman thanked Tony Leach and Dennis Holman, Parish Paths Wardens, for walking all the public and permissible footpaths in Saughall and Shotwick Park and reporting any problems to CWaC, Helen Cakebread for her work as our Tree and Environmental Warden, the Internal Auditor, Bob Salisbury and the Responsible Financial Officer, Graham Hudspeth for their work on the accounts and for attending Council meetings. The work of the Parish Council was hugely varied, the Annual Report could only give a flavour, and without the hard work of the Clerk, Shirley Hudspeth, the Chairman was sure some things would fall by the way.

Also, the Chairman thanked all those parishioners, who have helped the Council by bringing matters to its attention, and/or who had come along to its meetings.

#### **4. PUBLIC DISCUSSION**

Questions and subsequent discussions centred on the following issues:

- **Progress on the housing development on the former Ridings Infant School site.**

The Parish Council had not received any correspondence on this matter but it was expected that there would be some further consultation on the proposal.

- **All Saints C of E Primary School – September 2013 Admissions**

The School was not over-subscribed in respect of places for new entrants in September 2013. Those children who wanted places should get them. The School had been over-subscribed in the previous year but those children who lived in Saughall had been granted places in the School on appeal. It was possible that the School would be over subscribed in future years and the Council intended to monitor the situation.

- **Speeding traffic on Kingswood Lane**

Councillor Brian Crowe informed that he may arrange for the speed of traffic on the Lane to be monitored.

#### **5. VOTE OF THANKS**

Councillor RA Storrar proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman for the onerous tasks she had carried out on behalf of the Parish Council.

Councillor Brian Crowe informed that he had admiration for the work of and initiative shown by the Parish Council. He was impressed by what it did for its parishioners.