

MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF SAUGHALL AND SHOTWICK PARK
PARISH COUNCIL held on 3 December 2001 at the Parish Room, Fiddlers Lane,
Saughall

In attendance: Councillor Mrs M Anderson
Councillor A Bailey
Councillor Mrs BW Bell
Councillor H Dobson
Councillor Mrs P Humphrey
Councillor B Kerr (in the Chair)
Councillor Mrs JE Storrar
Councillor RA Storrar
Councillor Mrs J Young

Mr R Dunn, Amenities Manager, Direct Services, Ellesmere
Port and Neston Borough Council

Mr D Tonks, Strategy & Development Officer, Chester City
Council

Mr S Lewis, Planning Officer – Forward Planning, Chester
City Council

Mr B Holmes, Rural Housing Enabler, Cheshire Community
Council

205 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from:

Councillor SS Evans
Councillor Mrs D Whitton
Councillor A Warrington

206 STREET CLEANING IN SAUGHALL

Mr Dunn was in attendance at the meeting at the request of the Council to receive feedback on the Street Cleaning Service provided by Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council.

Members agreed that the village was much tidier since Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council had been contracted to delitter it. However, there were one or two problems that needed to be addressed and Mr Dunn would inform his staff of these and ensure that they were rectified.

Mr Dunn informed the Council that he would be happy to attend Council meetings on occasion to hear Members' views on the Service provided at first hand. Also, any issues causing concern would continue to be passed to him by telephone and e-mail by the Clerk.

Mr Dunn also told the meeting that his machine operators had been told to take necessary action if approached by Members of the Council with delimiting requests whilst in the village.

RESOLVED:

That Mr Dunn be thanked for his attendance at the meeting and be requested to convey Members comments to his staff.

207 FIDDLERS LANE PLAYING FIELD

Mr Dunn had also been invited to the meeting to offer advice on issues associated with the Fiddlers Lane Playing Field.

Mr Dunn reported that the Playing Field was in need of attention to enable it to be a useful facility for the youth of the area. Members noted that the field was quite wet even though Chester City Council had undertaken work at a cost of £2,200 to drain it.

Whilst a fence along the hedge line would protect the housing and allow the field to be used without disturbing neighbouring residents too much, it would not solve the problem of the poorly drained grassed area and the resulting restricted access to the field.

Full size vandal proof nets were not readily available and whilst probably able to be manufactured to specifications, would be quite costly.

Added to the problems on the site was the extensive mole problem. Moles were very difficult to control and whilst Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council's Pest Control Service might be of some use, it was of limited value when similar problems had been experienced on the Golf Course in Ellesmere Port. It may be possible to move the problem elsewhere (to the sides of the field), however, and Mr Dunn agreed to provide a price for the treatment of the area in question.

With the range of problems on the site, Mr Dunn recommended that the Council contact the Cheshire County Playing Fields Association for advice on design and funding opportunities. They were also likely to be able to direct the Council towards other organisations that might be able to help.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Mr Dunn be requested to provide costings for treatment of the field to move the problem moles on; and
- (2) the Council give further consideration to the problems identified on the field before formulating and appropriate action plan.

As part of Chester City Council's statutory housing duties, a Rural Housing Needs Survey had been undertaken to enable and facilitate the consideration of housing conditions and needs within the District.

Data analysis was now complete and the results of the Survey had been produced at rural ward and (where possible) parish level. A copy of the main report from the Rural Housing Needs Survey 2000 was circulated to Members together with the appropriate Ward Appendix for Saughall and Shotwick Park.

The documents were designed to be used together, with the main report highlighting the methodology approach used and setting out information for the rural area as a whole. The Ward Appendix showed more localised detail.

Officers of Chester City Council along with a representative of the Cheshire Community Council attended the meeting to make a Saughall and Shotwick Park specific presentation. Included within the papers supplied was information on affordable housing. Members discussed how this could be best achieved to meet the requirements of Saughall's residents. Young people brought up in Saughall often had to move away from the village because they were unable to afford properties available. Members were keen therefore to see more affordable housing to specifically meet local need.

Members and officers deliberated the general issues and noted the following points:

1. The Rural housing needs survey identified need and demand for housing across the rural area and disaggregated this down to wards and parishes. In this respect it was a measure of the **demand** side of the equation.
2. The Planning system could help to address the **supply** side of the equation. Establishing both the overall strategy and principles for meeting (or not meeting demand) as well as providing a more detailed basis for determining the precise quantity, quality and location of new homes.
3. The overall number of houses to be provided across the County and District were established at regional and county level. The role of the Local Plan was to determine how they should be distributed.
4. The Local Plan was at an advanced stage in its production and made sufficient provision to meet strategic needs up to 2011. The approach would remain one of focusing the bulk of new housing on urban regeneration sites in and around the city centre, close to public transport and other facilities. Only a modest amount of further development was proposed in the rural area and this was targeted at a limited number of key villages in line with Government policy.
5. The main emphasis in the rural area would be upon meeting locally generated needs, and in particular, seeking to provide homes for those local people who would not otherwise be able to meet their housing needs on the open market.

6. The City Council was committed to addressing the needs of local communities for affordable housing across both the urban and rural areas. There were three key mechanisms through which this could be achieved:

?? Seeking a proportion of affordable units on allocated sites in accordance with the level and type of need identified in relevant surveys.

?? Assisting Registered Social Landlords and other affordable housing providers in bringing forward developments in suitable locations within villages.

?? Identifying opportunities to develop sites on the edge of villages which would not ordinarily be released for open market development, where this is specifically to meet the identified needs of local people. (The “exceptions” approach)

(The City Council had recently approved a draft Planning Guidance Note, which explained in more detail exactly how the above approach would be implemented. This had been subject to full public consultation in September 2001)

Officers went on to clarify the situation in Saughall as follows:

1. The rural housing needs survey identified an overall demand for 66 new homes in the Saughall Ward over the next 5 years, of which 21% (14 units) were for affordable housing.
2. The Chester District Local Plan did not make any specific allocations for housing development in the village for the period up to 2011.
3. However, units had (or were likely to) come forward on sites which were not specifically identified in the Local Plan, but which were nevertheless considered acceptable in planning terms. These sites may take the form of conversions and subdivision of existing buildings, the redevelopment of previously used land, or modest infill developments within the settlement. Since the survey was carried out 8 of these had been completed in Saughall and a further 12 had current planning permissions.
4. Hence, of the 66 units of demand identified in the Rural Housing Survey 20 had already or were likely to be met from existing supply. These would provide 20 of the 52 general market homes identified in the survey.
5. Consequently, there was little in the survey to give comfort to developers who were pressing extensive further land allocations to meet general market demand. Indeed, the City Council would continue to resist such proposals.
6. However the survey clearly identified a requirement for a modest number of affordable units specifically to meet the needs of local people. There were a number of ways in which this could be met:
 - ?? The City Council had resolved to grant planning permission for the construction of 12 affordable houses as an “exceptions” site at Lodge

Lane. However, this had not been progressed to date due to site constraints and the land sale being unresolved.

?? If this scheme progressed, then the remaining 2 units could be met on another site within the village if an appropriate location could be found.

?? If the Lodge Lane scheme does not progress, then an alternative “exceptions” site could be identified on the edge of the village to be released solely for Affordable Housing and managed through a Housing Association to ensure that it remained as such in perpetuity.

7. Clearly the options for suitable sites were limited by environmental and other constraints. Therefore, before proceeding further, the Development Services Department was keen to ascertain the views of the Parish Council, both in relation to the overall principle of seeking to meet the identified need, and to assist in the identification of possible locations for a modest affordable housing scheme.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) officers be thanked for their attendance at the meeting; and
- (2) a small Working Group be set up to include, if possible, representatives from both the City Council and the Cheshire Community Council, to consider Saughall in detail and identify possible sites that may be suitable for housing development.

209 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting for the items of business listed below on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.

Item	Paragraph
Industrial Relations	(1) Particular Employee (11) Industrial Relations

**PART 2:ITEMS OF BUSINESS CONSIDERED IN THE ABSENCE OF THE
PRESS AND PUBLIC**

210 INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

The Council received a progress report from the Chairman and noted that the matter was now resolved to everyone's satisfaction and no further action would be required.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.