

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF SAUGHALL AND SHOTWICK PARK PARISH  
COUNCIL held on 7 January 2002 at the Vernon Institute, 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 A Warrington  
Councillor Mrs D Whitton  
Councillor Mrs J Young

Mr C McIlwrick – Homewatch Co-ordinator  
Mr C Wynne-Eaton – Tree Warden

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from:

Councillor SS Evans  
Councillor GF Williams  
PC G Cooper

2 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME

Mr K Stinson made representations to the Council over the proceedings of the Planning Committee held on 19 December 2001.

The Council, as a consultee, had been asked by Chester City Council, the Planning Authority, for its comments on a proposal to erect a dwelling on land adjacent to The Beeches, Beeches Lane, Saughall. A site visit had taken place and the applicant had been told when the Planning Committee would meet to consider the planning application. Consequently, the applicant's wife had attended the Planning Committee meeting to observe its proceedings.

Mr Stinson objected to the applicant's wife being allowed to attend when the neighbours, who were also consultees of Chester City Council, had not been informed of the date and time of the meeting. He considered that the Parish Council had adopted a one-sided approach.

The Chairman indicated that this matter would be discussed when the Council received the Minutes of the Planning Committee, this was an item later on the agenda.

3 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 3 and 10 December 2001 be confirmed as a correct record subject to the following amendments:

Minute No 213 – Matters Arising from the Minutes

(h) Flooding – 18 & 20 Lodge Lane

replace ‘had visited the properties earlier in the day’ with ‘would visit the properties the next day’

Minute No 223 – Environment Matters

(h) Tree Warden’s Report

2nd paragraph replace with:

It was noted that the Horse Chestnut tree on the Lodge Lane/Church Road corner had outgrown its guard, it needed to be removed and the work required would cost £65.

4 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Minute No 216 – Police/Homewatch

(c) Community Safety

Councillor RA Storrar requested that the Clerk contact Mr Robert Callow, Chester City Council’s Community Safety Manager to confirm his attendance at the next meeting of the Council.

It was also agreed that Mr Callow be requested to bring a senior police officer with him to the meeting.

Minute No 220 – Highway Matters

(h) Boulder at the Peg

The District Engineer had reported that he had moved the boulder into a safer position on the verge but he was unable to take it away because it was the responsibility of the landowner.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk request the District Engineer to write to the landowner with a view to getting the boulder, which was considered dangerous, moved from the grass verge.

## Minute No 221 – Model Code of Conduct for Parish Councils

### RESOLVED:

That the Model Code of Conduct be placed on the agenda for the 4 February 2002 meeting of the Council so that it can be adopted.

## 5 ACCOUNTS

(a) Payments made since the meeting of the Council held on 10 December 2001:

|   | £      | Cheque No |
|---|--------|-----------|
| Financial Year 2001/2002                        |        |           |
| Chester City Council (re-provided cheque)       | 79.55  | 101455    |
| Rural Services (Removal of Horse Chestnut tree) | 65.00  | 101463    |
| Mr C Moss (Parish Room rental Jan-March 2002)   | 437.50 | 101464    |
| Mrs S Hudspeth (Exp)                            | 45.70  | 101465    |
| Inland Revenue                                  | 454.48 | 101466    |
| Mrs S Hudspeth (Sal)                            | 400.30 | 101467    |
| Rural Services                                  | 40.00  | 101468    |

(b) Receipts

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| Interest to 23 December 2001 (Treasurer Account)       | 0.10  |
| Interest to 21 December 2001 (14 day Interest Account) | 28.21 |

## 6 PROPOSED BYELAW – NO BALL GAMES

In accordance with the Council's wishes, the Clerk had asked Mr John Richardson of Chester City Council's Legal Services to pursue the proposed byelaw with the Home Office.

A response had been received from Mr Brian Reed, one of Mr Richardson's colleagues. It informed that Mr Richardson had not taken the Council's request forward as he was absent sick. Prior to this leave, Mr Richardson had contacted the Government Department and obtained some information about model byelaws and what restrictions they might contain.

In the light of this Mr Reed had provided advice to Mr Clive Roberts who was responsible for sport and recreation at the City Council. He would be considering whether the City Council should proceed with byelaws, taking into account issues such as how they might be enforced in terms of resources and whether, practically, they could be enforced.

Mr Roberts would contact the Clerk when he had formed a view on the matter.

### RESOLVED:

That the position be noted.

7 POLICE/HOMEWATCH

(a) Police

PC Cooper was unable to attend the Council meeting, due to his shift system and other commitments. He was aware that disappointment had been expressed at the lack of police attendance at meetings. He informed that officers were very busy and were unable to attend all Parish Council meetings in the rural section.

PC Cooper had reported that in recent weeks there had been damage to two windows at the Ridings School, a cruel incident involving a cat and a ram-raid at the Woodvale Stores.

The last offence was very much in the style of numerous offenders from the Ellesmere Port area. Enquiries were ongoing in both Chester and Ellesmere Port.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(b) Homewatch

Mr McIlwrick reported that the next Homewatch Newsletter would be distributed at the end of January 2002. There would be a village Forum meeting on Tuesday, 19 February 2002 to discuss a whole range of issues and the Homewatch's open meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, 19 March 2002.

Mr McIlwrick informed that other rural policemen had been in contact with him regarding problems in Saughall and that these officers were good at keeping in touch.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(c) Community Safety Initiative – Project Rural Matters

The Rural Sector for Chester Police was shortly embarking on an initiative entitled 'Project Rural Matters'. The aim of this initiative was to enhance Community Safety (with particular emphasis towards reassurance) in rural areas through positive action by not only the Police, but communities themselves. The initiative was fully supported by the Chester District Community Safety Partnership, which also included both the Chester City and Cheshire County Councils.

Dedicated Police Officers were being assigned to high visibility initiatives in a specifically marked Community Safety vehicle. It was envisaged that

the officers would be accompanied by Community Volunteers and jointly become involved in fact finding and problem solving in villages and rural areas, for the benefit of all those residing in and visiting those areas.

His Grace, The Duke of Westminster had kindly allowed the Long Room on the Eaton Estate to be used for the launch of Project Rural Matters and had agreed to make the opening address. A representative having an interest in Community Safety from each Parish Council had been invited, together with local Police, Council Officers and other Community Stakeholders within Chester's rural areas.

The launch would take place on Tuesday, 15 January 2002, with arrival from 6:30pm at the Long Room itself.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Mrs D Whitton be nominated to attend the launch of Project Rural Matters.

## 8 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES ETC.

### (a) Youth Liaison Group

Members considered the Minutes of the Youth Liaison Group held on 12 December 2001. Councillor RA Storrar reported that Chief Inspector Dave Hill had agreed to serve on the Youth Club's Management Committee purely as a resident of Saughall. Mr David Bell, a local property developer and business man, had also agreed to be a member of the Committee. Councillor RA Storrar now intended to approach Shotwick House Residents Association to ask if it was willing to nominate a representative. It was also suggested that Mr Keith Evans may serve representing the Saughall Colts.

It was reported that the Vernon Institute Management Committee would meet the following day and one of the items on the agenda was to decide whether or not to award the lease for the Annexe to the Vernon Institute to a third party or to the Youth Club who had made a bid for it.

Members were aware that the Vernon Institute Management Committee was apprehensive about leasing the Annexe to the Youth Club and agreed that it was imperative that a meeting took place between representatives of the Council and the Vernon Institute Management Committee before a decision on the future use of the Annexe was made.

The Chairman reported that he had received a letter from Mr Russell Biggs, Team Leader, Community and Youth Service, Cheshire County Council, thanking him for inviting him to the meeting. He had welcomed the opportunity to get his face known by councillors and other interested community members.

Cheshire County Council's Youth Service was in the process of restructuring its services to young people and in the light of forthcoming changes it was vital that it made clear the level of support provided.

The Youth Service was willing to support the Youth Club's Management Committee and volunteers in its goal to re-establish the Club. This support could include training for volunteers and the Committee and helping staff develop a broad based programme for young people based on educational as well as recreational needs.

In the meantime, the Youth Service had an input into the village. This consisted of a team of detached youth workers from the 2 Way Street Project. This project sought to work specifically with targeted young people to engage them in a community-based project. Although in the short term this approach attempted to improve the image young people had within their own community, it was very much a two way process with young people and the Service developing an idea and seeing it through.

In the longer term the establishment of the Youth Club by the community would no doubt be of a positive benefit for the young people and ultimately the wider community.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Minutes of the Youth Liaison meeting held on 12 December 2001 be received;
- (2) Councillor H Dobson be requested to represent the Council at the Vernon Institute Management Committee's meeting on 8 January 2002 and stay for all of the proceedings;
- (3) the Vernon Institute Management Committee be requested to defer any decision regarding the leasing of the Annexe until a meeting has been held between its representatives and those of the Parish Council; and
- (4) a further report be brought to the next meeting of the Council.

(b) Planning Committee

Members considered the Minutes of the Planning Committee held on 19 December 2001.

The Chairman reported that he had received a letter from Mr Stinson complaining about the way the recent planning application in Beeches Lane had been dealt with by the Parish Council and accusing it of showing favouritism towards the developer.

Mr Stinson's letter suggested that the Planning Committee had received a presentation from the property developer. Councillor A Bailey (the Chairman of the Planning Committee) refuted this accusation informing

that no such presentation had taken place and that the developer's wife had indeed attended the meeting but only to listen to the debate. However, she had been asked a couple of questions.

The subsequent decision made by the Planning Committee not to object to the planning proposal had been unanimous.

It was noted that Chester City Council, as the Planning Authority, would consider all objections before it made its decision and the Parish Council was only one of its consultees amongst a number of which Mr Stinson was another.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 19 December 2001 be received; and
- (2) the principles on inviting applicants and objectors to Planning Committee meetings be considered in detail at the next meeting of the Planning Committee.

9 LOCAL GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER  
'STRONG LOCAL LEADERSHIP – QUALITY PUBLIC SERVICES'

The Council considered the content of the White Paper provided by the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions noting that the Government hoped the package of proposals would help all parishes to move towards Quality Parish and Town Council Status, whilst allowing extra flexibilities and funding for Best Value parishes. The key measures identified were:

- ?? When legislation permits, to pay a grant of £30,000 per year from central government to each Best Value parish;
- ?? To legislate to increase the ceiling on 'Section 137' expenditure to £5 per elector and then raise it annually in-line with inflation;
- ?? To issue good practice guidance to promote the avoidance of 'double taxation';
- ?? To make it possible for parish councillors to authorise payments by their parish using electronic methods;
- ?? To improve the borrowing approval system by removing the annual fixed limit, streamlining the application process, and by clarifying and advertising the criteria more widely;
- ?? To give best value parishes a general power to charge for discretionary services.

In addition:

- ?? Since the Green Paper was published, the accounting and audit burden on small parishes has been reduced;

?? The treatment of parish precepts under the Council Tax Benefit Subsidy Limitation Scheme will no longer be a problem, as the scheme is being abolished from 2002-03;

?? Parishes will be able to be key partners in business improvement districts in some areas, playing an important role in agreeing and delivering the projects that business ratepayers want, and helping the whole community to benefit from the results.

RESOLVED:

That the content of the White Paper be noted.

#### 10 VITAL VILLAGES – PARISH PLAN

The Council considered the Action List in respect of arrangements to develop a Parish Plan and noted that amendments were required as there had been some slippage. It was also noted that it was appropriate to submit a bid for grant aid to assist the compilation of the Parish Plan before the end of the current financial year.

The Clerk had asked a private individual and the Cheshire Community Council to quote for the survey work needed prior to the Plan being drawn up. Responses were awaited.

RESOLVED:

That issues surrounding the compilation of a Parish Plan be considered at the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee scheduled for Thursday, 17 January 2002, the Action List be revised as appropriate and any quotations received in respect of survey work be considered and a decision be made.

#### 11 HIGHWAY MATTERS

##### (a) C203 Church Road, Saughall – Proposed Pelican Crossing

It was reported that Mr Graham Lowe of Cheshire County Council's Engineering Service had informed that the Local Government and Rating Act 1997 enabled Parish Councils to contribute to traffic calming works but he was unsure if this included pelican crossings. Any measures funded in this way would still require the consent of the Principal Authority as the Highway Authority and go through the normal political and legal channels before it could be implemented.

Also, the actual cost of a pelican crossing would be in the region of £50,000.

Two school crossing patrol assistants had now been appointed.



RESOLVED:

That the situation be noted and this item be removed from future Council agenda.

(b) Fiddlers Lane/Church Road Junction

RESOLVED:

That the Council continue to monitor the state of the road surface at the junction.

(c) School Transport in Saughall

The Clerk reported that the County Transport Co-ordinator, Mr Garth Goddard, had not responded to her letter of 25 November 2001 detailing the problems with school transport in the village.

Councillor Mrs D Whitton informed that she had been told that it was not possible for the school bus to be diverted through the Ridings Estate. There was also inconsistency as the bus driver changed on a regular basis.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to ask the County Transport Co-ordinator if he was now in a position to respond to her letter and the matter be further considered at the next meeting of the Council.

(d) Junction of Long Lane and A540 – Proposed Ghost Island

Councillor RA Storrar reported that until traffic lights were installed at the A5117/A540 junction there would be no improvement. He intended to make representations to the County Engineer, Mr Peter Cocker.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to ask County Councillor David Rowlands to help by lending his support to the Parish Council's proposal for the introduction of a ghost island at the Long Lane/A540 junction.

(e) Hermitage Road Hedge – from Blacon Boundary to Garston House

It was noted that the hedge had now been cut.

RESOLVED:

That this item be removed from future Council agenda.

(f) 76 Church Road

It was reported that although there was no drop kerb at 76 Church Road the occupier continued to drive over the verge into the garden.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to ask the District Engineer for advice on this matter.

(g) Guttering in Saughall

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to ask the District Engineer to attend to the village's gutters.

(h) 2 Lodge Lane

It was reported that a very large six wheel lorry was being parked at 2 Lodge Lane.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to bring this matter to the attention of PC Gareth Cooper.

(i) 8 Meadows Lane

It was reported that the occupier of 8 Meadows Lane was working on cars outside his home. Regularly, there were between 8 and 10 cars parked in the Lane.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to bring this matter to the attention of PC Gareth Cooper.

(j) Fiddlers Lane

Councillor RA Storrar reported an accident on the bend near Hey House Farm and the need for more chevron signs to alert motorists to the hazard.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to ask the District Engineer to provide more chevron signs on the bend.

12 ENVIRONMENT MATTERS

(a) Play Area Inspection

It was noted that all play equipment in the field was in good order.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

(b) Fiddlers Lane Playing Field

There were still perceived problems on the Playing Field. Members were not happy with the work carried out by Chester City Council and arrangements had been made to put a hold on the invoice for £2,200.

It was noted that until the field was drained to a satisfactory standard there was no point in making any plans for further improvements.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk and Councillor RA Storrar be requested to liaise with Mr Barry Davies of Chester City Council in an attempt to find a remedy for the current situation.

(c) Millennium Park Land

It was noted that a meeting had been arranged for 10:00am on Monday, 14 January 2002 in the Parish Room between representatives of the Parish Council and the County Council's Property Manager and External Funding Officer in the hope that the project could be moved along.

RESOLVED:

That Councillors Kerr, Mrs JE Storrar, RA Storrar and Mrs D Whitton be nominated to attend this meeting.

(d) Water Quality

RESOLVED:

That the Council continue to monitor the water quality.

(e) Street Cleaning and Litter Bins

RESOLVED:

That the Council continue to monitor the street cleaning arrangements and litter bins.

(f) Grassed Amenity Areas

Councillor Mrs JE Storrar reported that she had been in contact with Mr Duncan Henderson of Chester City Council. He had informed that improvements would be made with the planting of extra heavy standard trees. He had obtained a competitive price for these in the sum of £120 each. They could be strategically placed to deter organised football games but to allow children's play but also without them becoming goalposts themselves.

It was suggested that the Parish Council contact the Local Panel Co-ordinator to see if some funds were available, Ideally some 12-15 trees could be placed.

The Council was aware that the little funding the Local Plan had was being used to provide parish councils in the Chester District with first aid training.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Mrs JE Storrar be requested to contact Mr Henderson again to request that he give the problem more thought and to remind him of the credit of £400 the Parish Council has with him as a result of the aborted planting scheme last year undertaken on a matched funding basis.

(g) Notice Boards

It was reported that the notice boards at the Ridings School and the Winery were steamed up and therefore it was impossible to see the notices.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to ask Mr Bob Ebbrell to carry out the necessary work to rectify the problem identified.

(h) Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

RESOLVED:

That this matter be deferred until the next meeting of the Parish Council.

(i) Street Nameplates

The Clerk reported that new nameplates were on order and would be delivered as soon as possible.

RESOLVED:

That the situation be noted.

(j) 'Factory Corner'

It was suggested that a sign carrying the name 'Factory Corner' be erected in the village for nostalgic reasons to remind people of the old name for a part of the village.

However, it was also suggested that the new residents of Kingston Court might not care to be reminded of the previous term used for this area of the village.

RESOLVED:

That before this matter is considered any further the history of the area in question be checked out properly.

(k) Tree Warden

The Tree Warden reported that the work in Greenway had been carried out (not without complaints) at a cost of £40.

(l) Trees and Drains

Councillor RA Storrar reported on a problem with trees and drains in Lodge Lane. Tree roots could be the cause of the flooding which was being experienced between No's 18-20.

(j) "No Dog Fouling" Signs

Councillor Mrs B Bell requested two "No Dog Fouling" signs in Aspen Grove.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to contact Mr David Wood, Chester City Council's Dog Warden, to ask if he would provide and erect the signs.

13 VERNON INSTITUTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

RESOLVED:

That this item be deferred until the next meeting of the Council when a report on the proceedings of the meeting scheduled for 8 January 2002 will be brought to the Council by Councillor H Dobson.

14 PARISH COUNCIL SURGERIES

RESOLVED:

That the Parish Council Surgeries rota for the next five weeks be as follows:

| Date            | Member                    |
|-----------------|---------------------------|
| 12 January 2002 | Councillor B Kerr         |
| 19 January 2002 | Councillor A Bailey       |
| 26 January 2002 | Councillor A Warrington   |
| 2 February 2002 | Councillor Mrs J Young    |
| 9 February 2002 | Councillor Mrs P Humphrey |

15 COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED

The following communications had been received:

- letter dated 28 November 2001 from the Countryside Agency informing of Community Services Grant Scheme to help rural communities maintain and enhance provision of essential services.  
Help is sought to identify local shops, pubs, garages and other providers of essential services who may benefit from the scheme.

Noted

- letter dated 20 December 2001 from Mrs V Ellis, Principal Office, Cheshire Community Council, regarding the Parish Transport Grants Event – 31 October 2001. Answers to questions previously unanswered.

Noted

- letter dated 27 December 2001 from Chester City Council's Chief Executive, Mr Paul Durham, informing of a forthcoming consultation on Plans for next year. Draft plans will be ready by mid-January 2002. The Parish Council is being alerted now because of the importance of receiving views.

Noted

- letter dated 21 December 2001 from DLTR and enclosed new Declaration of Acceptance of Office Order and guidance suggesting a form of written undertaking.

Noted

16 CIRCULARS

The following circulars had been received. Anyone wishing to see a copy would contact the Clerk.

Cheshire's Agenda 21 – Check Up 2000

Cheshire County Council's CQC – December 2001

Cheshire County Council's Chester Matters – December 2001

Cheshire Community Council – Member's News December 2001

Cheshire County Council – Winter Gritting Routes in Cheshire 2001-02

Cheshire County Council – Best Value Inspection – Engineering Services  
October 2001

Peter Nyssen Ltd – Spring 2002

Cheshire County Council Engineering A-Z Guide 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition