

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF SAUGHALL AND SHOTWICK PARK PARISH
COUNCIL held on 4 March 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 (Part)
Councillor RA Storrar
Councillor A Warrington
Councillor Mrs J Young

Mr C McIlwrick – Homewatch Co-ordinator

39 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from:

Councillor SS Evans
Councillor GF Williams
Councillor Mrs D Whitton

40 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 4 February 2002 be confirmed as a correct record subject to Sophia in Minute No 25 (b) – Homewatch being replaced with Zaphira.

41 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

42 ACCOUNTS

(a) Payments made since the meeting of the Council held on 4 February 2002:

Financial Year 2001/2002	£	Cheque No
Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council	763.75	101477
United Utilities	9.99	101478
Mrs S Hudspeth (Salary)	400.33	101479
Mrs S Hudspeth (Expenses)	67.24	101480

(b) Receipts

Interest to 23 February 2002 (Treasurer Account)	0.04
Interest to 21 February 2002 (14 day Interest Account)	24.17

(c) Parish Council Accounts 2000-2001

During the course of the Audit for the year ended 31 March 2001, Hacker Young, the Auditors, identified the following control weaknesses and practices that might need to be improved and that should be addressed by Members:

- (1) The Income and Expenditure sheets were not signed by the Clerk and the Chairman; it would be advisable in future for all Income and Expenditure sheets to be dual signed.
- (2) There are eleven cheques of at least one year old which have been written out to Mr C Kearton; these should be added back to the Council's bank balance as they are now out of date.
- (3) The Parish Council has a number of assets; it would be good practice for these to be marked with 'Property of Saughall and Shotwick Park Parish Council'
- (4) Not all vouchers were available to support Income and Expenditure; it would be good practice for all Income and Expenditure vouchers to be kept with the Parish records.
- (5) The receipt of the Precept does not appear to have been written into the Minutes; all Income and Expenditure should be recorded in the Minutes.

The Council had already addressed point (2) and agreed to take the advice of the Auditor in respect of points (1) and (5) and asked the Clerk to seek further information in respect of points (3) & (4).

(d) Parish Council's Bankers

Councillor A Bailey agreed to investigate whether the Co-operative Bank could offer the Council a better deal than its current bankers HSBC.

(e) Outstanding Cheques

It was noted that cheques written out to the Cheshire Playing Fields Association for £30 and to Mr Abram for £25 (cheque Nos 101409 and 101372) had not been cashed.

It was agreed that Councillor Mrs J Young would contact Mr Abram and the Clerk would investigate the situation in respect of the Cheshire Playing Fields Association.

43 PROPOSED BYELAW – NO BALL GAMES

Councillor RA Storrar reported that the Chester City Council Portfolio holder, City Councillor Paul Roberts, intended to take the proposed Byelaw forward. It would be discussed at the City Council meeting scheduled for Wednesday, 27 March 2002. It would also be necessary to advertise the proposal in the local newspaper (Chester Standard).

RESOLVED:

That the progress made to date in pursuit of this Byelaw be noted and a further report be brought to the next meeting of the Council.

44 POLICE/HOMEWATCH

(a) Police

RESOLVED:

That as PC G Cooper was not in attendance at the meeting his report be deferred to the next meeting of the Council

(b) Homewatch

Mr McIlwrick reported on two incidents which had occurred in Parkway. One had involved an air rifle. The Police response had been excellent. They had accessed the premises and took away the weapon and eight people.

Youth nuisance had been experienced on the Thomas Wedge CE (Controlled) Junior School site. The Headteacher was to take his own action.

The Homewatch's open meeting would be held on Tuesday, 19 March 2002. The Divisional Commander, Superintendent Nick Ingram, had accepted an invitation to attend and had been sent a copy of the questions that he would be asked on the night.

A Drugs Awareness Evening was in the planning stage and a request had been received to hold a crime prevention evening.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(c) Communities Against Drugs Budget

Chester City Council's Local Panel Lead Officer, Mr Clive Roberts, had written to inform that approximately £3,000 had been allocated to address drugs and drugs related problems in the Panel Area . To identify eligible schemes the Panel had asked the Sub-Committee who considered Community Safety Schemes earlier in the year, to meet with the Police and seek advice on how money may be best spent. A number of wide ranging initiatives and projects were discussed.

It was agreed that drug awareness training would be useful in the Local Panel area and a suitable date for a trial session with Local Panel members would be sought at the next meeting.

Measures to protect property were also considered relevant and the Police Crime Reduction Officer, Phil Topliss, would attend the next Panel meeting to expand on how schemes may be practically implemented.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

45 NALC, NATIONAL CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION, PRESTON GUILDHALL – 14-16 JUNE 2002

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to make a provisional booking for two Members to attend. (Representatives to be decided at the Annual Meeting of the Council scheduled for Monday, 13 May 2002)

46 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES ETC

The Chairman drew the Council's attention to Minute No 15 – Parish Plan and Action List, informing that this initiative was eligible for 75% grant and suggested that Cheshire Community Council be commissioned to undertake the survey work identified subject to the Parish Council being successful in obtaining 75% of the cost in grant aid from the Countryside Agency.

The Chairman also informed in respect of Minute No 21 - Chester City Council's Consultation on the option for moving from the system of Local Panels to a system of Area Committees – that he had recently attended a public meeting where the message delivered to the City Council was loud and clear “Why are you rushing this through?”. Parish Council representatives in attendance wanted the City Council to wait until the Government's decision on Quality Parish Councils was known.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the Minutes of the meetings of the following Committee meetings be received:

Crime and Disorder Committee held on 23 January 2002

Planning Committee held on 20 February 2002

Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 21 February 2002

and

(2) the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee be postponed from Monday, 21 to Monday, 28 March 2002.

47 MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT AND NALC GUIDANCE – ETHICAL FRAMEWORK

The new Ethical Framework was contained in Part III of the local Government Act 2000, which was given Royal Assent on 28 July 2000. A Statutory Instrument brought the Ethical Framework into effect on 19 December 2000.

The aim of the Ethical Framework was to ensure high standards of conduct in local government. It therefore included Parish, Town and Community Councils in England and Wales. It was designed to ensure that the high degree of probity, which currently existed, was maintained as well as acting as a safety net to catch the minority of people who operated in such a way as to bring local governance into disrepute.

Members would now have to sign a declaration to comply with the new Code of Conduct contained within the Ethical Framework and would have to register and declare interests.

All Councillors were required to declare an interest even if he/she had previously registered it in the Register of Members Interests.

Chester City Council's Monitoring Officer would be required to hold a copy of the forms Councillors were required to complete in respect of the Ethical Framework and the Code of Conduct. Members were required to let the Monitoring Officer know, in writing, of any changes or additions which should be made to the entries in the Register of Interests.

The Council was told that a particular model of Code of Conduct had been drafted for each type of local authority. There was therefore a model Code of Conduct for Parish and Town Councils. Members received a copy and noted that the core content of the model Code was the same for all local authorities. Where differences did occur this was to reflect differences in political arrangements and the terminology used by authorities. No local authorities may omit anything included in their model Code.

The National Association of Parish and Town Councils, together with the Standard Board for England and the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions, strongly advised local councils against adding to the model Code for Parish and Town councils. The Code related specifically to ethical behaviour. It had been carefully drafted in a effort to avoid any legal pitfalls. Any Council wishing to add to the model Code would need to seek professional legal advice.

The Council was therefore strongly advised to adopt the model Code without amendment.

The local Code placed a positive duty on Members to:

- ?? promote equality by not discriminating against others;
- ?? respect confidential information; and
- ?? inform the Standards Board if they reasonably believed any other Member had broken the Code.

There were also a number of things that Members should not do. There were:

- ?? bring their Council or Office into disrepute;
- ?? misuse their official position to their own advantage or to the advantage or disadvantage of others;
- ?? unduly influence any person who worked for the Council;
- ?? stop somebody seeing or getting copies of documents they were allowed to have; or
- ?? misuse Council resources or authorise misuse, in particular for unauthorised party political purposes.

RESOLVED:

That a resolution be passed at the Council meeting scheduled for 8 April 2002 to adopt the model Code without amendment.

48 HIGHWAY MATTERS

(a) Fiddlers Lane/Church Road Junction

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to ask Cheshire County Council's District Engineer when Fiddlers Lane will be resurfaced.

(b) School Transport in Saughall

Councillor Mrs BW Bell reported that in view of concerns expressed over the school bus stopping at the junction with the Ridings she had contacted Ms Sandra Howard, an officer in Cheshire County Council's Transport Co-ordination Service. She had agreed to take action and to ensure an

article was included in the Bus Company's News publication which was circulated to all drivers.

The situation would continue to be monitored over the next few weeks.

RESOLVED: That

(1) Councillor Mrs Bell be thanked for her prompt action; and

(2) a further report be brought to the next meeting.

(c) Replacement Bus Shelter Scheme

The Chairman reported that he had received a telephone call from the Countryside Agency informing that the Council's application had been received along with a number of others from parish councils in Cheshire who wished to take advantage of Cheshire County Council's bus shelter replacement scheme.

Guidance was being sought from the Countryside Agency's National Office.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

(d) Highway & Transportation Joint Committee for Chester
– Meeting Thursday, 17 January 2002

The Clerk had received a letter from Chester City Council's Members' Services explaining why the agenda for the meeting was received again on the day after the meeting. A promise was made that it would not happen again.

(e) Fiddlers Lane

No progress had been made in the attempt to get chevron boards on Fiddlers Lane.

RESOLVED:

That this item be removed from future Council agenda.

(f) Boulder on Verge – The Peg

It was noted that the boulder was still there but had been pushed well under the hedge.

RESOLVED:

That this item be removed from future Council agenda.

(g) No 28 Bus Service

Mr SI Hyslop, the Managing Director of Chester City Bus Transport, had responded to the Clerk's letter complaining over lack of consultation when altering a bus route. He informed that before altering Service 28 he had carried out extensive passenger surveys. Findings were that it was uneconomic for the Company to continue with the original service. He also informed that the number of Saughall residents travelling to Seahill Road and the Kwik Save was minimal.

Councillor RA Storrar reported that he was taking this matter forward with the bus company. It had been suggested that the bus may be re-routed and issues around it would be discussed by the Board.

It was noted particularly that elderly residents could not get to the dentists or doctors on Western Avenue without a walk or two buses – which proved more expensive.

RESOLVED:

Any comments Members had on the Service be sent to Councillor RA Storrar in writing.

(h) Church Road Driveways

The District Engineer had agreed to write to the residents concerned about stones from their driveways falling onto the pavement and he asked if there were any other incidents in the village.

RESOLVED:

That the position be noted and the addresses of two more properties be submitted to the District Engineer for appropriate action.

(i) Hedge – Aspen Grove

It was reported that the left hand side hedge was wide and obstructing motorists visibility.

RESOLVED:

That the District Engineer be informed and asked to take appropriate action.

(j) Meadows Lane – New Gas Main

Following work on the new gas main the verges in Meadows lane were now in a terrible condition.

RESOLVED:

That the District Engineer be requested to ask the contractors – Kennedys – to reinstate the verges.

48 ENVIRONMENT MATTERS

(a) Play Area Inspection - Fiddlers Lane Playing Field

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

It was also noted that no quote had yet been received in respect of goal nets, fencing etc. from Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council.

The drainage work on the field had not been completed. Chester City Council officers were waiting for the right weather conditions.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the position be noted; and

(2) the Clerk be requested to chase up the requested quote from Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council.

(b) Millennium Park Land

No progress had been made.

RESOLVED:

That this matter be further discussed at the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

(c) Water Quality

RESOLVED:

That the Council continue to monitor the water quality at Hermitage Court.

(d) Street Cleaning and Litter Bins

RESOLVED:

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

(e) Grassed Amenity Areas

The Deputy Lord Mayor of Chester would plant 5 Jubilee trees on Saughall Hey on Friday, 15 March 2002 in the presence of young people from the village.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

(f) Notice Boards

The keyholes on the notice board at the Ridings School had been glued up again.

RESOLVED:

That Mr Ebrell be requested to attend to the problem.

(g) Supporting Local Shops

No progress had been made.

RESOLVED:

That this matter be considered further at the next meeting of the Council.

(h) No Dog Fouling Signs – Aspen Grove

The signs had still not been put up by Chester City Council's Dog Warden, Mr David Wood, despite his promise.

RESOLVED:

That an item be included in the next Parish Newsletter urging residents to clean up after their dogs.

50 PLANNING MATTERS

(a) The Planning Green Paper: Delivering a fundamental change

The consultation period ran until 18 March 2002.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor A Bailey be requested to formulate and submit views on behalf of the Council.

(b) Costco Store – Chester Gates

The Council noted that the Clerk had written to the Planning Authority in response to the recent planning application. She had asked the Planning Board to take into account the likely impact that such a retail outlet would have on the village shops in the neighbouring areas.

RESOLVED:

That the action be noted.

(c) Deeside Development Public Inquiry

It was reported that the Inspector had turned the application down, the Welsh Assembly had agreed and so consequently the proposed development on primary agricultural land would not go ahead.

The Council had agreed to support Puddington and District Parish Council and others in their endeavours to fight the proposal and the financial contribution agreed was now due and an invoice would be sent.

RESOLVED:

That the excellent result be noted and all those involved be thanked for and congratulated on their efforts.

(d) Cheshire Planning Forum

It was noted that the next meeting would be held at 2:00 PM on Friday, 22 March 2002 at Wyvern House, Winsford.

(e) Planning Application – ‘Chorley’

Councillor A Bailey informed that he had received a planning application in respect of Chorley. He had discussed it with members of the Planning Committee and there were no objections to the planning proposal.

RESOLVED:

In view of the urgent need to respond to the Planning Authority the Clerk be requested to inform it that the Council has no objections to the planning proposal.

(f) Planning Application – 14 Meadow Croft, Saughall

The Planning Authority had been told that the Council considered the proposed extension to be an over intensive use of the site.

RESOLVED:

That the action taken be endorsed.

(g) Development Control and Parish Councils

The Secretary of the Cheshire Association of Parish and Town Councils, Mrs Jackie Weaver, had informed that the Policy Committee had discussed the Council's proposal concerning property developers being asked to contribute some funding to improve quality of life in areas where they had been successful in obtaining planning permissions.

Mrs Weaver informed that her members had requested that she draw to the Council's attention the current provision under Section 106 arrangements. This of course needed to be considered before negotiations with the developer got underway. The most appropriate way to move forward would be by negotiation with the Planning Department at Chester City Council.

If there was resistance from the Principal Authority then the Association would consider taking this matter up on behalf of the Parish Council. In the first instance it might be helpful to bring the matter to the attention of the Area Meeting through its Secretary, Mr David Norbury.

The Green Paper on Planning would change the current system and might require promoters of large scale developments to pre-consult before submitting their planning applications, this in turn might make the Section 106 provision easier for the Parish Council to get involved in.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the response by the Cheshire Association of Parish and Town Councils be noted; and
- (2) the Clerk be requested to contact Mr David Norbury and get an item on the agenda for discussion at the Chester Area meeting.

51 VERNON INSTITUTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

It was reported that the Chairman of the Vernon Institute Management Committee, Mr Brian Huxley, had cancelled the meeting that had been arranged between his organisation and the Parish Council to discuss the village hall's refurbishment plan and funding. Consequently, the funding set aside would continue to accrue interest for the Council.

Councillor H Dobson, the Parish Council's representative on the Management Committee, was asked to find out for the next meeting who were voting members on the Committee currently and the reasons they were there.

There were a number of issues to be considered following the Vernon Institute Management Committee's decision to lease the Youth Club's premises to a third party and these would be discussed further at the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

52 YOUTH FORUM

RESOLVED:

That this issue be deferred until problems in respect of the Youth Club are ironed out.

53 PARISH COUNCIL SURGERIES

RESOLVED:

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

Date	Member
9 March 2002	Councillor Mrs P Humphrey
16 March 2002	Councillor Mrs M Anderson
23 March 2002	Councillor H Dobson
30 March 2002	No Surgery – Easter Sunday
6 April 2002	Councillor A Warrington

54 COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED

The following communications had been received:

Letter dated 20 February 2002 from Chester City Council's Members Services advising that the next meeting of the Chester Rural North Local Panel will be at 6pm on Thursday, 11 April 2002 at Mollington Village Hall.

Letter dated 14 February 2002 from the Chief Executive of United Utilities re. England's Northwest Renewables Conference on 28 March 2002 at the Manchester International Conference Centre

Letter dated 28 February 2002 from the Countryside Agency acknowledging receipt of formal comment on the draft maps produced under the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000

Letter dated 27 February 2002 from Mr P Durham, Chief Executive, Chester City Council, and consultation document in respect of Chester City Council's Best Value Performance Plan.

55 CIRCULARS

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

The Past Uncovered – February 2002

Monster Leisure Product Brochure – Children’s Play, Youth, Sport and Social facilities

Chester Police Forum – Minutes of meeting held on 21 January 2002

Cheshire County Council’s initiative Walking the Way to Health – Introducing the initiative and asking if the Council wishes to start up a scheme?

Chester Matters Jan/Feb 2002

Cheshire County Council’s CQC

Chester City Council’s Local Distinctiveness