

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE
held on 26 June 2003 in the Parish Room, 2 Fiddlers Lane, Saughall

In attendance: Councillor A Bailey (in the Chair)
Councillor C Moss
Councillor RA Storrar
Councillor A Warrington
Councillor Mrs J Young

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor C Wynne-Eyton.

2 CODE OF CONDUCT – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were received.

3 TERMS OF REFERENCE

RESOLVED:

That the proposed Terms of Reference be adopted. (Appendix)

4 ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

(a) Play Area Inspection – Fiddlers Lane Playing Field

It was noted that the play equipment, fencing, access and seating were all in good order and that one of the litter bins was loose and not firmly fixed to the ground.

The Chairman reported that himself and Councillor Moss had wiped grease off the swing's chains. It was thought that Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council was using an inferior lubrication that had melted in the sun.

Chester City Council's Parks & Open Spaces Department had written to the Clerk with arrangements for the Annual Independent Inspection of Children's Play Areas.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the reports be noted;

(2) Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council Officers be informed that the grease being used on the swings is substandard; and

(3) the Council continue to receive weekly play area inspections as per its contract with Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council.

(b) Tree Warden's Report

Councillor RA Storrar reported that the tree nearest the Scout Hut was in a dangerous condition and needed to be taken out and there were doubts about another tree.

Mr P Murray of Chester City Council would provide a replacement tree planting scheme and the bid to fund additional trees had been submitted.

Thirteen moles had been removed from the Fiddlers Lane Playing Field at a cost of £210.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the report be noted; and

(2) Councillors C Wynne-Eyton and A Marsden be requested to explore with urgency ways of removing the dangerous trees identified and take the necessary action.

(c) Parish Paths Warden's Report

Mr Tony Leach had informed the Chairman that Cheshire County Council was carrying out some maintenance work on public footpaths, bridges and rights of way. There had been vandalism to one of the bridges.

There were currently a lot of people using the rights of way in the village.

Members were concerned about nettles overgrowing the paths and the Chairman agreed to ascertain the situation.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(d) Vernon Institute Clock

Mr R Murphy had received instructions from the Clerk and a copy of the drawings provided by JB Joyce advising how to remedy the illumination problem in respect of the clock. However, it was not known whether he felt able to carry out the work proposed. Councillor Warrington informed that he knew an electrician who may be able to improve the lighting.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Warrington liaise with Councillor Mrs P Humphrey and take action as necessary.

(e) Passageway – Fieldway

Councillor Moss informed that he was unhappy over the way the Housing Trust was handling this matter. All but two occupiers of houses in Fieldway wanted the passageway closed because of safety issues.

The Trust had sent out a questionnaire requesting views but it had been circulated to residents of Park Avenue too. They were not affected by the passageway. The Trust was not in a position to close the passageway at this stage.

Councillor RA Storrar reported that people had used that passageway for 30-40 years and a right of way had been established. If the Trust did close the passageway and there were objections they would have to reopen it.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the position be noted; and

(2) Councillor C Moss be requested to progress this matter and bring a report to the next meeting.

(f) Golden Jubilee Park

The Committee received a report from the Chairman that updated it on progress made with the development.

The Planning application for Change of Use had been submitted and a response was required by 4 August 2003.

The Clerk reported that one of the contractors had asked for a drawing of the basketball court and car park along with dimensions, etc. Councillor Moss informed that he did not think a drawing had been produced but would check this with Mr R Easby.

The tendering process was underway and the closing date was 5pm on Friday, 25 July 2003.

It was noted that the Gowy North Area Committee had £28,000 of grant aid available and a number of Parish Councils had already submitted bids. The City Council had now drawn up an appropriate application form that it would distribute. The closing date for applications was 10 September 2003.

The Chairman reported that he intended to put a Business Plan together once the tenders were in.

RESOLVED:

That the progress made be noted.

(g) Grassed Amenity Areas

(i) Grass Cutting

RESOLVED:

That Chester City Council be informed that in future the Council does not want the grass on the villages four amenity areas to grow any longer than 2 inches.

(ii) Bollards

RESOLVED:

That Councillor RA Storrar be requested to pursue progress and make a report to the next meeting.

(h) The Ridings Community Infant School

In the past complaints had been received that Cheshire County Council was not cutting the grass on the School's reserved land and that the whole area was an 'eyesore'. Agreement had been reached and the grass was cut back 2 or 3 times a year. Now complaints were being received from people who believed that the reserved land was a nature reserve and they didn't want the grass cut back.

RESOLVED:

That the arrangements for grass cutting of the Ridings Community Infant School reserved land stay as they are.

5 HIGHWAY ISSUES

(a) Mass of Concrete on Verge – Hermitage Road

It was noted that the concrete had now been split into two and Members were worried that the two pieces could be rolled onto the road and cause an accident.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to alert Mr Graham Anderton, the District Engineer, and ask him to take appropriate action.

(b) Lock-up Garages – Saughall Hey

The Housing Trust had reported that there was no graffiti on the garage doors, only on the sub-station which was not its responsibility.

(c) Lodge Lane/Church Road Junction

The District Engineer had given an undertaking to mark up the junction as white lines were missing. This had not happened yet.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to ascertain timescales in respect of this work.

(d) Obstructed Vision – Access to Parkgate Road

Overgrown hedges had been blocking out the view for vehicles pulling out onto the Parkgate Road. The offending hedges had now been cut back.

(e) Proposal to reduce the speed of passing traffic at the Thomas Wedge CE (Controlled) Junior School

It was known that a full time traffic light scheme was being put in place over the border on Sea Hill Road. It may be more convenient in future for motorists to take a short cut through the village.

The Chairman had asked if the mobile speed board could be located outside the Thomas Wedge CE (Controlled) School for a week. The alternative site would be Hermitage Road.

RESOLVED: That

(1) Miss Kay Hallas of Cheshire County Council be asked to ensure that there are traffic counts undertaken on Church Road before the traffic light scheme is operational and after so that any increase in traffic can be recorded; and

(2) a debate on traffic calming be held at the September Council meeting.

(f) Traffic Congestion at the Ridings Community Infant School

The Council had been concerned for sometime about the congestion at the School when parents dropped off or picked up their children. It was extremely dangerous at certain times of the day and Members were worried that there would be accidents.

The Council had done all it could. Its newsletters had carried articles pointing out the dangers and asking parents to leave their cars at home and walk their children to school. The Clerk had written to Mrs Judith Davies, the Headteacher, and she had in turn had written to the parents asking for co-operation. PC Gareth Cooper had been approached and had agreed to patrol at the relevant times of the day and act as a deterrent. This had all been to no avail. There was no improvement in the situation.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to ask Sergeant Ian Ankers to arrange to ticket as the Council had done what it could and it was now down to enforcement.

(g) Bus Shelters

The Clerk had asked Mr Brian Ebbrell for quotes to bring the Council's three remaining wooden bus shelters up to an appropriate standard. Unfortunately, he

had not responded to her fax. She would chase this up but at the same time Councillors C Moss and A Warrington would also try to obtain quotes from other craftsmen for the repairs necessary.

A bus stop sign was missing at the Peg. The Clerk had asked Ms Christine Garner of Cheshire County Council's Transport Coordination Section if it had been removed in advance of work programmed to be carried out at the stop.

Ms Garner had informed that her records suggested that there had not been a bus stop sign at the location for several months. The Inspector had confirmed that buses were stopping and that the location was marked by a bus stop road marking and so a sign was not urgently required.

Ms Garner had agreed to review requirements for a new bus stop pole and sign to be installed when other works on Hermitage Road bus shelters were carried out. Copies of the detailed drawings for the two proposed sites and a schedule of implementation would be provided as soon as possible.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the report be received; and

(2) a further report on quotations received for bus shelter repairs be considered at the next meeting of the Committee.

(h) Cheshire railings on A540/A5117 Junction

The Clerk had queried why damaged Cheshire Railings had been replaced by ranch fencing at the roundabout. The District Engineer had informed that as the A5117 remained a Trunk Road the fencing work would have been carried out by Adkins.

The Committee was not happy that the village's heritage was being destroyed. It surmised that as the damage to the railing had been caused by a road/traffic accident the insurance would allow for 'like for like' replacement.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to pursue the return of the Cheshire Railings with the District Engineer, etc.

(i) Roadworks on the A540 Parkgate Road

The Committee noted the content of Minutes of a meeting called to discuss traffic management whilst a scheme was underway to resurface the carriageway and undertake kerbing and drainage on the A540 between Woodbank Lane and the A5117 roundabout.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the A540 Woodbank/Saughall Traffic Management Meeting held on 7 May 2003 be received and their contents noted.

6 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the next meeting of the Committee be held at 6:30pm on Friday, 25 July 2003 and not at 7:30pm on Thursday, 24 July 2003 as previously agreed so that the tenders submitted for the Golden Jubilee Park development work can be opened at the beginning of the meeting.

APPENDIX

ENVIRONMENT AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Council refers and delegates as indicated to the above Committee the following responsibilities and duties:

- (1) To advise the Council as appropriate in relation to the Council's functions in respect of Highways, Land Drainage, Building Cleaning, Building Control, Street Cleansing and Sewerage.
- (2) To administer all matters relating to litter and make recommendations for the letting of contracts for litter picking as necessary.
- (3) To formulate responses to consultations in respect of Environmental and Highway issues.
- (4) To monitor the actions of the Principal Authorities in respect of Environmental and Highway issues that effect Saughall and Shotwick Park.
- (5) To make representations to appropriate bodies in respect of Environmental and Highway matters that effect Saughall and Shotwick Park.
- (6) To oversee and care for community trees and ponds.
- (7) To monitor the public rights of way in Saughall and Shotwick Park and alert Cheshire County Council's Countryside Officer to any problems identified e.g. obstructions and maintenance.
- (8) To protect the local environment and wildlife.
- (9) To promote cultural, sporting and recreational activities in Saughall and Shotwick Park.
- (10) To consider ways to improve community facilities and the local environment, seeking appropriate grant aid and making recommendations on the letting of contracts in these respects.
- (11) To monitor the state of sewers on the former Council Housing Estates.
- (12) To provide, procure, maintain and repair bus shelters using a partnership approach wherever possible.
- (13) To keep traffic calming measures in the village under review.
- (14) To make recommendations on Street Lighting in Saughall and Shotwick Park.
- (15) To offer advice on the development and maintenance of the Golden Jubilee Park.
- (16) To make recommendations on the letting of contracts for grass cutting and hedge trimming where necessary.