

MINUTES OF AN INFORMAL MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE held on 18 September 2003 in the Parish Room, 2 Fiddlers Lane, Saughall

In attendance: Councillor A Bailey (in the Chair)
Councillor C Moss
Councillor RA Storrar

12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(a) Apologies were received from:

Councillor A Marsden
Councillor C Wynne-Eyton (Tree Warden)
Councillor Mrs J Young

(b) Apologies were not received from:

Councillor A Warrington

13 CODE OF CONDUCT – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were received.

14 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 25 July 2003 be confirmed as a correct record.

15 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Minute No 10(d) – Parish Paths Warden's Report

It was agreed that any future schemes that were brought forward would be for possible permissive footpaths and not public footpaths.

16 ENVIRONMENT ISSUES

(a) Fiddlers Lane Playing Field/Golden Jubilee Park Development

(i) Play Equipment Inspection Report

It was noted that the play equipment, fencing, access and seating were all in good order.

(ii) Hedges

Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council had not yet trimmed the hedges but had been requested to do so. The hedges on the Fiddlers Lane side of the Golden Jubilee Park also required trimming.

(iii) Tree Planting Scheme

The Ash trees that had been unsafe had now been removed. A bid to fund a planting scheme had been submitted but there was no further progress to report at the current time.

(iv) Planting and Seeding

It was suggested that as an interim measure the Golden Jubilee Park land should be ploughed and seeded.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the reports be noted;
- (2) Councillor RA Storrar be requested to ask a local contractor to cut the hedge around the Golden Jubilee Park on Fiddlers Lane and to obtain quotes to plough and seed the Park; and
- (3) Council be **RECOMMENDED** to plough and seed the Park as an interim measure as soon as possible.

(b) Tree Warden's Report

As the Tree Warden was not in attendance at the meeting therefore his report was deferred until the next meeting of the Committee.

(c) Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000 – Section 60 Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)

The Chairman and the Parish Paths Warden, Mr Tony Leach, had given consideration to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan drawn up by Cheshire County Council's Public Rights of Way Section.

RESOLVED:

That no additional Rights of Way improvements be put forward for consideration at the current time.

(d) Parish Paths Warden's Report

It was noted that the Parish Paths Warden could see no benefit at the moment of proposing any new schemes. A number of footpaths were overgrown but Cheshire County Council had commissioned contractors to cut back the overgrowth in the

Autumn. There had been some incidents of vandalism and the Principal Authority was carrying out repairs. It was noted that the bridge over the brook opposite Overwood House required repairs.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and the Clerk be requested to draw the state of the bridge to the attention of Mr Alan Oulton, the Countryside Manager, and ask that repairs be carried out as soon as possible.

(e) Vernon Institute Clock

No progress had been made on enhancing the Clock's lighting. Mr Murphy had obtained a copy of JB Joyce's recommendations.

RESOLVED:

That the Chairman be requested to find out if there is a problem and whether the work proposed can be carried out.

(f) Passageway – Fieldway

Chester District Housing Trust had informed that it was not in a position to let the Council know when a decision would be made on whether or not to close the passageway.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to inform City Councillor Bob Rudd of the position and request him as the Chairman of the Trust to find out why the decision is being delayed.

(g) Golden Jubilee Park

The Committee was brought up to date on progress in respect of the Golden Jubilee Park development as follows:

?? The tender evaluation process was underway. (Four tenders had been received, 3 full, 1 in part)

?? Planning Officers and Highway Officers had been invited to the next Golden Jubilee Park Focus Group scheduled for 7:00pm on 29 September 2003 to offer advice on the planning application.

?? Following negative representations from residents of Long Lane and Fiddlers Lane, the Council was revisiting the site layout and the Saughall Colts representative on the Golden Jubilee Park Focus Group had been asked to find out if reductions in football pitch sizes or provision of two pitches instead of three would affect the Colts grant aid opportunities.

?? The need to attract grant to develop the Park and the possibility of establishing a Working Party to draw up a Business Plan and exploit funding opportunities.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(h) Grassed Amenity Areas

As no progress had been made in respect of the long running problem of grass cutting and the prone bollard, Councillor RA Storrar was asked to contact Chester City Council Officers and sort the matter out once and for all.

It was suggested that Councillor Mrs J Young could mark the bulbs she had been planting in the village with lime in February 2004 so that they were not cut down with the grass before they flowered as they had been this year.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and a report be made on the bollard by Councillor RA Storrar at the next meeting.

(i) Community Seating

Requests had been received from time to time to provide some benches in the village so that older people were able to take a rest on their way to and from local shops.

RESOLVED:

The Council be **RECOMMENDED** to provide one seat as a pilot scheme on Saughall Hey by the Golden Jubilee trees.

17 HIGHWAY ISSUES

(a) Mass of Concrete on Verge - Hermitage Road

It was noted that the concrete, now in two pieces was still on the verge despite the County Engineer agreeing to remove it.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to ask the County Engineer to remove the concrete as soon as possible.

(b) Overgrown Hedge

Councillor RA Storrar had requested quotations from local contractors to cut back the hedges on Hermitage Road where they were obstructing the footpath.

RESOLVED:

That the quotations requested be considered at the next meeting of the Committee.

(c) Proposal to Reduce the Speed of Passing Traffic at the Thomas Wedge CE (Controlled) Junior School

Miss Kay Hallas of Cheshire County Council's Traffic and Transportation Section had provided details of traffic counts. These had been summarised by the Chairman as follows:

Traffic Volume Counts: 9 – 15 April 1997 (Hermitage Road only)
14 – 20 July 2003 (Hermitage Road and Church Road)

Hermitage Road, Saughall (Both directions)

Busiest day:

Friday, 11 April 1997 = 4,682 vehicles

Friday, 18 July 2003 = 4,920 vehicles

Increase of 238 (5%)

98 % of those vehicles used the road between the hours of 0600 and Midnight.

Church Road, Saughall (Both directions)

Busiest day:

Friday, 18 July 2003 = 5,055 vehicles

98 % of those vehicles used the road between the hours of 0600 and Midnight.

Speed Counts: 26 February 2003

Hermitage Road, Saughall (Towards Blacon)

Total Vehicles =	2,367
Over 30 mph =	2,324 (98.5%)
Over 40 mph =	1,134 (48%)
Over 50 mph =	215 (9%)
Highest Speed =	2 @ +70mph

Hermitage Road, Saughall (Towards Saughall)

Total Vehicles =	2,259
Over 30 mph =	2,213 (98.5%)
Over 40 mph =	1,302 (58%)
Over 50 mph =	152 (7%)
Highest Speed =	1 @ +61mph

Long Lane/Church Road, Saughall (North)

Total Vehicles =	2,386
Over 30 mph =	949 (40%)
Over 40 mph =	135 (5%)
Over 50 mph =	9
Highest Speed =	1 @ +61mph

Long Lane/Church Road, Saughall (South)

Total Vehicles =	2,191
Over 30 mph =	669 (30%)
Over 40 mph =	66 (3%)
Over 50 mph =	2
Highest Speed =	1 @ +61mph

Conclusions:

Hermitage Road recorded 4,682 vehicles on the date surveyed this was an increase of 238 vehicles in 6 years, not a great deal.

The speed of this traffic however could cause a debate about whether the Council considered the request made by Cheshire Highways some years ago to increase the speed limit to 40 mph?

98.5% of all vehicles using this road during the survey were travelling over 30 mph; the 43 vehicles that were below the 30 limit were all travelling at less than 20 mph and were probably pedal cycles!

If the Parish supported this then far better markings could be included in the general scheme, including red patches, more signage and other on road warnings.

Long Lane/Church Road speed results showed that in both directions on the date of this survey only 35% of vehicles were travelling over 30 mph. Although this does not prove as excessive as Hermitage Road, we should still seek some sort of speed reduction outside the Thomas Wedge CE (Controlled) Junior School, by whatever means possible.

These results will be used in the debate we will be having on traffic calming at a future Council meeting.

There was little evidence to suggest speeding on Church Road. However, there was a school on Church Road and shops so obviously more pedestrians. The traffic counts indicated that there was a speeding problem on Hermitage Road.

Concerns had been raised over the parking of vehicles across the Church Road/Saughall Hey junction opposite the Church.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the detail of the traffic counts be noted and further ones be received in due course;
- (2) the Chairman be requested to ask Mr John Hallas to put an article in the church magazine discouraging motorists from parking across the junction opposite the Church; and
- (3) the District Engineer be asked for advice on erecting information signs on both sides of Long Lane drawing attention to the children's playing field on Fiddlers Lane.

(d) Traffic Congestion at the Ridings Community Infant School

The Committee had no information on the situation at the School.

RESOLVED:

That the traffic flow at the School continue to be monitored.

(e) Bus Shelters

(i) New Scheme

The Countryside Agency had raised concerns that the Scheme should have been completed in May 2003, a report submitted and the last instalment of funding claimed. The Clerk had informed that the Principal Authority (Cheshire County Council), who was providing 90% of the funding for the four shelters to the Countryside Agency's 10%, had not yet completed the work.

The Clerk had asked Ms Christine Garner of Cheshire County Council's Transport Co-ordination Department for a timescale for completion of the Scheme and a response was awaited.

The Countryside Agency had asked to be kept informed of progress.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(ii) Repairs

The Clerk had received two quotations for bus shelter repairs for the three on:

Church Road
Hermitage Road
Parkgate Road

The quotations were as follows:

Time Served Joiner	£1,975.00
Brian Ebbrell	£540.00+VAT

RESOLVED:

That the Council be **RECOMMENDED** to award the contract to repair the three bus shelters to Mr Brian Ebbrell in the sum of £540.00+VAT.

(iii)Lighting

Ms Christine Garner of Cheshire County Council's Transport Co-ordination Department had informed that the two new bus shelters were on sensors (like street lamps) and were adjusted to come on when it became dark, Timers would need to be adjusted regularly throughout the year and would therefore not be practical.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(iv)Terminus Hardstanding

It was reported that the loose flags at the Terminus were being pulled up and used to break the glass in the telephone box.

RESOLVED:

That the Chairman be requested to ask Mr Brian Ebbrell to remove the flags.

(f) Litter Bins

It was noted that Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council had replaced the litter bin on Meadows Lane.

There had been no litter bin at the Church Road bus stop for some time as it had been vandalised. The area was untidy so Members gave consideration to replacing the bin.

RESOLVED:

That Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council be requested to replace the litter bin at the Church Road bus stop.

(g) Cheshire Railings on A540/A5117 Junction

The Highways Agency had responded with a holding letter to the Clerk's complaint that the Cheshire Railings on the A540/A5117 Junction had been replaced with ranch fencing.

RESOLVED:

If the full response to the complaint has not been received by the time the Committee next meets the Clerk be requested to write again to the Highways Agency.

(h) A540 Parkgate Road, Saughall – Woodbank

Members received advanced notice of major roadworks on the A540 between Saughall and Woodbank. The work would commence on 6 October 2003 and continue for at least three weeks. During the first two weeks, work would be undertaken daily from 9:30am to 7:00pm.

A letter informing of the forthcoming roadworks had been sent by the County Engineer to residents of Parkgate Road, Powey Lane, Woodbank Lane, Shotwick Lane and Lodge Lane.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

(i) Bus Information Strategy for Cheshire

RESOLVED:

That the content of the Strategy be noted.

(j) Pathway - Hermitage Road – from Ridings to Vernon Institute

It was reported that the path was in a state of disrepair and was the result of an old reinstatement

RESOLVED:

That the District Engineer be requested to carry out necessary repairs as soon as possible.