

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GOLDEN JUBILEE PARK FOCUS GROUP held on 5 February 2004 in the Parish Room, 2 Fiddlers Lane, Saughall

In attendance: Councillor A Marsden
Councillor Mrs JE Storrar
Councillor C Wynne-Eyton (Tree Warden)
Councillor Mrs J Young (in the Chair)

Co-opted Members: Mr D Bird
Mr H Dobson
Mr J Huxley
Mr M Smith

8 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor A Bailey
Councillor C Moss
Mr M Bell
Mr B Huxley

9 CODE OF CONDUCT – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were received.

10 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Focus Group held on 8 January 2004 were **AGREED** as a correct record.

11 APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION
- RE-DESIGNATION OF LAND FOR RECREATIONAL USE
- REMOVAL OF HEDGEROW

(a) Progress on the Application

It was noted that there had been no progress made since the last meeting. The site layout was being amended to provide overspill car parking for 38 cars.

(b) Awareness Raising Event – 10 January 2004

Members received a copy of a report that detailed proceedings at this event prepared by Mr Bird and noted its content. It was **AGREED** that this had been a very worthwhile exercise, had kept local residents informed and provided them with a mechanism to input into the development process.

(c) Awareness Raising Event – 21 February 2004

It was **AGREED** that as the last Awareness Raising Event had been so successful it was appropriate to hold a further one and keep up the momentum. It was **AGREED** that this further Event would be held between 10:00am and 11:00am on

Saturday, 21 February 2004 in the Parish Room. No refreshments would be provided but the new site layout would be available for consultation.

It was also **AGREED** that the Clerk would write to all Members of the Council to inform them of this event and to request their attendance. She would post notices in the village as appropriate and provide letters informing of the Event for distribution to residents of Long Lane and Fiddlers Lane.

(d) Site Layout

Members considered the site layout and made suggestions for amendment and inclusion. Mr Bird **AGREED** to revise the site layout in the light of comments made in preparation for the Awareness Raising Event ((c) above refers).

(e) Environmental Project

Councillor Mrs Young reported that she had met with Mrs Helen Cakebread, a botanist who lived in the village, to discuss proposals in respect of the environmental project. Mrs Cakebread had subsequently **AGREED** to advise on the cleaning of the pond.

12 FACILITIES FOR RESIDENTS OF SAUGHALL

The Focus Group received a copy of a letter written by Mr C McIlwrick proposing that a purpose built 'Club' could be built in the village. He set out how the facility could be used and made comparisons with a Clubhouse in a village where he used to live in Surrey.

Members considered the proposal but noted that the Planners had indicated that planning consent would not be given for a Clubhouse on the Golden Jubilee Park land in the foreseeable future.

It was **AGREED** that developing the Golden Jubilee Park land was the Focus Group's main priority but that the provision of a Clubhouse may be considered in the future. It was also **AGREED** that a letter be sent to Mr McIlwrick thanking him for his ideas and informing him that they had been noted.

13 'IN PERPETUITY' IS A LONG TIME

The Focus Group noted the content of an article that had been included in a recent edition of the Local Council Review. The National Playing Fields Association had explained how important it was to protect recreation areas in local communities, especially as they were not always as safe as they seemed.

It was reported that Mr D Parry had been invited to the next meeting of the Council to give a presentation on how to establish a Charitable Trust and the merits of such action. The Focus Group **AGREED** that it would like to receive the views of someone involved in the financial affairs of a Charitable Trust before making a recommendation to the Council.

14 REPORT OF THE GOLDEN JUBILEE PARK FUNDING WORKING PARTY
- GRANT AID OPPORTUNITIES

The Focus Group received the Action List compiled following the last meeting of the Working Party held on 8 January 2004 and noted its contents.

It was reported that Gleeson Homes Limited had responded to the letter from the Clerk asking for a financial contribution to assist the development of the Golden Jubilee Park. Gleeson's had responded that they were unable to assist at the current time.

The Clerk had written to Ms Anne Lancaster, Chester City Council's Area Committee Manager, informing her that the Golden Jubilee Park development was a massive project for a small Parish Council and would cost upwards of £100,000. The Parish Council was reliant entirely on grant aid and would need to match fund it. Consequently, a savings fund had been established to build up the monies to pay the preferred tenderer and wanted to put a substantial amount of this year's grant into it. Until planning permission was given the Council was limited in what it could do with the land although it had been ploughed and sown and approximately 250 new trees had been planted. The Clerk wanted to know if this was allowed under the terms of the Area Committee's Grant as the Council had been successful in attracting £5,000 in the current financial year and also in 2004/2005. She asked when the cut-off date would be for claiming the funding promised in the current financial year. Ms Lancaster had responded informing that Area Committee funding was able to be rolled over by the Committee for up to five years. This meant that, for the first time, it was able to fund longer term schemes such as the Golden Jubilee Park project. Whilst the City Council would prefer spend to happen within the financial year payments were approved, providing the reasons for non-spend were valid (and in this case it had already taken on board the long term nature of the work and acknowledged this by agreeing to a two stage process) then there was no problem.

The City Council would be concerned if spend was postponed for a longer period – particularly if this meant that spending would overshoot the five year rollover period. However, as long as the Parish Council flagged up such problems as early as possible and there was good reasons for the delay in spend the Area Committee would be willing to ring-fence monies for as long as possible within the five year period.

Payment would be made on receipt of invoices when work had been carried out (and an invoice direct from the contractor enabled the City Council to pay the amount ex-VAT whereas most Parish Councils had to pay VAT – thus getting added value). The City Council was not able to make a payment to the Parish Council for work that was not yet completed i.e. into a savings fund. However, the Parish Council could be confident that the money (£5,000) was allocated to Saughall for the current financial year and that a further £5,000 was allocated for 2004/05. Ms Lancaster was happy to provide a letter to this effect if it helped with other fundraising. There was no pressure for the Parish Council to spend any of the money allocated in this financial year (2003/04) before 1 April 2004 if it would be inappropriate to do so.

RESOLVED:

That the Action List and contents of reports made be noted.

15 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was **AGREED** that the next meeting of the Focus Group be held at 7:30pm on Thursday, 26 February 2004 in the Parish Room, 2 Fiddlers Lane, Saughall.