

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SAUGHALL AND SHOTWICK PARK PARISH PLAN STEERING GROUP held on 23 April 2003 in the Parish Room, 2 Fiddlers Lane, Saughall

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

Miss S Brooks – Uniform Groups
Mr J Hallas – All Saints Parochial Church Council
Mrs A Leslie - Vernon Institute Management Committee
Mr G Southey – Saughall Gardening Club
Mr P Webb – Parish Plans Development Officer, Cheshire Community Council

16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Kerr, Mrs A Amesbury, Revd M Banks, Mr D Bird, Mr B Huxley and Mr K Evans.

17 CODE OF CONDUCT

No Declarations of Interest were received.

18 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Steering Group held on 30 October 2002 were **AGREED** as a correct record.

19 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Minute No 14(f)(ii) – Community Safety

The Chairman has agreed to meet with Chief Inspector Hill on an occasional basis to discuss community safety. This has not yet been possible. The Council did have a number of concerns over policing in Saughall and the Chairman expected that this would culminate with himself and Chief Inspector Hill meeting up.

20 THE BID FOR FUNDING TO COMPILE A PARISH PLAN

The Chairman reported that the bid submitted to the Countryside Agency for a grant of £5,000 to compile a Parish Plan under its Vital Villages programme had been successful and the Council was now in receipt of an interim payment of £2,500.

Members considered the contents of the bid along with the Action Plan detailing what had to be done and within what timescale. It was important that there was no slippage so work must begin immediately if the Plan was to be published within the twelve month period stated.

21 PARISH PLAN PROCESS

Mr Peter Webb of the Cheshire Community Council informed the Group that he had been appointed in January 2003 exclusively to work on Parish Plans. He set out the latest advice received from the Countryside Agency on the Parish Plan process.

It was noted that since the funding application had been made there had been some movement by the Countryside Agency. It had produced a new Parish Plans guidance pack for Parish and Town Councils that included numerous additional resource leaflets and a handbook that described the essential characteristics of Parish Plans as follows:

- ?? They are local plans which address problems and opportunities affecting rural communities.
- ?? They can include environmental, economic and social issues.
- ?? The whole community should be involved in their preparation, with the Parish Council taking the lead.
- ?? They should be consistent with related policies set out in the local planning authority's local plan and other planning policies, and with local strategic partnerships.
- ?? They should be based on information provided through survey, research, consultation and community participation.
- ?? They should identify action which can be taken forward by the Parish Council, by other individuals and groups in the community or by other service providers and statutory bodies.

It was Government policy to increase individual participation in public life and for public bodies to consult communities about the delivery of services. As part of the policy of "active citizenship" the Government wanted to give more power to parish councils to decide what's best for their own communities.

If the Parish Council could show it was taking the future seriously, a Parish Plan might increase its chances of getting local authority support to enhance the parish's economic, social and environmental well being.

The Plan would provide the evidence to help inform policy making by a range of organisations, from the local Planning Authority to Police and Health Services. It would also help develop and maintain effective working relationships with all those outside bodies who provided services to the community, now or in the future.

Local Authorities were continuously involved in drawing up and reviewing land use plans as well as deciding individual planning applications. A Parish Plan could potentially influence both these processes. It was noted that good practice advice for local Planning Authorities had also been produced by the Countryside Agency and an extract was made available to Members.

In addition, most county and unitary authorities had signed up to negotiate a Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) with central government, comprising a dozen or so specific targets to improve local services such as health and police. LPSA authorities were encouraged to involve local partners, particularly through the parish councils and

the community strategy, in drawing up and delivering these targets. A Parish Council had the potential to influence LPSAs through such community strategies.

There were structures which existed to help deliver social and community services at ground level. A Parish Plan could help feed into these processes and give the village a real voice and influence in the wider community.

Mr Webb presented the Clerk with a draft copy of the contact setting out how it was proposed that the Parish Council and the Community Council would work closely together to achieve the successful production of a Parish Plan. It was noted that additions or deductions could be made.

Mr Webb also reported that Cranage Parish Council was at a more advanced stage in the Parish Plan process having sent out its questionnaire and it was willing to share best practice and meet up if requested. He also informed that Tarporley Parish Council had produced a Village Design Statement that had been adopted by Vale Royal Borough Council as Planning guidance. However, it was **AGREED** that the production of a Design Statement for Saughall was an initiative that would not be taken forward at the present time.

The Council was **RECOMMENDED** to consider the draft agreement on the Parish Plan drawn up by the Community Council at its meeting scheduled for 20 May 2003.

22 'DESKTOP RESEARCH'

Mr Webb presented the Clerk with the findings of the 'Desktop Research' he had undertaken so far along with a map of the Parish area. This information was provided to assist the Steering Group in its development of its Parish Plan. The following had been included:

- ?? A copy of the completed application form for a Parish Plan grant from the Countryside Agency as it contained many useful items of background information in terms of population level, numbers and type of shop units, churches, community facilities, etc.
- ?? Local Plan background information including Green Belt, Archaeology, Conservation Area and Listed buildings.
- ?? Chester and Saughall statistics.
- ?? Bus Timetable.

It was **AGREED** that the documentation provided formed a good information base on which to start off the Parish Plan process.

23 CONSULTATION AND INFORMATION GATHERING TECHNIQUES

The Group turned its attention to how it could generate interest and involve the community in the process. The key to a successful Parish Plan was total community involvement. The Council would have to reach out and make contact with parishioners in ways which were interesting, entertaining and, most important of all, ways which suited their lifestyles. Suggestions included:

Flyer for every household
Special Meeting
Publicity in newspapers, supplements, Newsletter
Suggestion boxes
Informal chats in pub, at the shop, outside school
Write to all clubs and societies and send representatives to their meetings
Hold an 'ideas' competition
Run a drop-in event
Run a competition for schools
Walkabout

24 FOCUS GROUPS

The Steering Group had already agreed to divide the work among three smaller Focus Groups and this had been included in the work the Community Council had been commissioned to undertake. Members revisited this and proposed that there should now be six groups, two of which were already established as a Panel and a Committee. The Groups would cover the following areas:

Golden Jubilee Park
Community Safety
Commerce and Business (including broadband & a Farmers Market)
Youth Issues
50+
Community Halls

The purpose of each Focus Group would be to assist the Steering Group to prepare an Action Plan for the community. Each would tackle a specific issue, or set of issues, or the needs and opportunities facing a specific group of people within the community. Members informed the Clerk which Focus Groups they would be willing to sit on.

It was **AGREED** that:

- (1) further consideration be given to the establishment of the Community Halls Focus Group at the next meeting;
- (2) the Chairman will attend meetings of the Gardening Club, Women's Institute, Golden Link, Friday Club, Monday Club, etc. to find out members views on what is required for villagers over 50; and
- (3) reports of the proceedings of the Community Safety Committee and Golden Jubilee Park Panel meetings scheduled for 7 and 8 May 2003 be provided for consideration at the next meeting.

25 PONDS IN SAUGHALL AND SHOTWICK PARK

It was noted that there was an exceptional number of ponds in and around the village. Consequently, it was considered appropriate to make some provision for them within the Parish Plan.

It was **AGREED** that the Clerk would write to Mr Mark Robinson (who had previously been the Parish Pond Warden) to ask if the information he had gathered on the ponds was still available and to invite him to become involved with the Parish Plan.

26 BROADBAND FOR SAUGHALL

An important issue for Saughall currently was the need to get the telephone exchange upgraded so that parishioners could have access to broadband. A campaign was underway and Mr Vince Pleasant, a resident of Saughall, and Mr John Murray of Chester City Council had recently attended a Parish Council meeting and made a presentation on Broadband.

It was **AGREED** that Mr Pleasant and Mr Murray be invited to join the Business and Commerce Focus Group when it was established.

27 THIRD PARTY LIABILITY INSURANCE

The Council was concerned about the problems associated with obtaining third party liability insurance particularly in respect of its Golden Jubilee Park development. The Chairman reported that the problem of getting third party liability insurance and associated costs had been discussed at the Annual General Meeting of the Cheshire County Playing Fields Association. It had been suggested that perhaps the Cheshire Association of Town and Parish Councils could launch a campaign on its members behalf as this problem was common to all parish councils, in an attempt to obtain blanket cover insurance for them at affordable rates.

The Chairman **AGREED** to take this matter forward and discuss it at the next Council meeting.

28 ALL SAINTS CHURCH BURIAL GROUND

It was **AGREED** to inform through the questionnaire that the churchyard would be full within 5 years and to include a Survey question asking if those who wished to be buried would be willing to go to Blacon.

29 CHESTER CITY COUNCIL'S AREA COMMITTEES

Councillor RA Storrar reported that the new Area Committees had now been established to ensure that local people could participate in Chester City Council's decision making and policy processes.

The emphasis was on listening and devolving Town Hall powers to enable ward Councillors to make decisions locally in consultation with their communities. Saughall was one of the villages that came under the Gowy North Area Committee along with Barrow, Christleton, Elton, Kelsall, Mickle Trafford, Mollington, Tarvin and Waverton.

Each Area Committee had its own budget that would be used to grant aid various local initiatives and even though Saughall had been successful in attracting £3,200 in the previous financial year from the former Local Panel 7 it was important to submit a bid

as early as possible for the Golden Jubilee Park development, as it was a major project and would take many thousands of pounds to complete.

It was **AGREED** that the Clerk would contact Ms Anne Lancaster, the Area Committee Manager (Rural Wards), for information on how to make applications for funding to the Gowy North Area Committee.

30 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was **AGREED** that the next meeting of the Steering Group would be held at 7:30pm on Monday, 21 July 2003 in the Parish Room, 2 Fiddlers Lane, Saughall.