

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF SAUGHALL AND SHOTWICK PARK PARISH
COUNCIL held on 3 July 2006 at the Vernon Institute, Saughall

In attendance: Councillor DF Holman
Councillor Mrs P Humphrey
Councillor WI Humphrey (Homewatch Co-ordinator)
Councillor Mrs J Johnson
Councillor JG Johnson
Councillor B Kerr (in the Chair)
Councillor C Moss
Councillor RK Shukla
Councillor Mrs JE Storrar
Councillor RA Storrar
Councillor HL Thorniley-Jones
Councillor A Warrington
Councillor Mrs JM Young

Mr H Dobson (Internal Auditor)
PC Hughes (Cheshire Constabulary)
PC Leach (Cheshire Constabulary)

104 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from:

Councillor Mrs D Whitton

RESOLVED:

That in future the reasons for not attending meetings will be taken into account and it will be recorded in the Minutes whether the Member has an authorised or unauthorised absence.

105 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

RESOLVED:

That Standing Orders be suspended whilst a presentation that had not been included on the agenda is made by Mr John Gittens, Executive Director, Cheshire Landscape Trust, on his organisation and the work it is doing in respect of the production of Village Design Statements.

106 CHESHIRE LANDSCAPE TRUST/VILLAGE DESIGN STATEMENTS

Mr Gittens informed that Cheshire Landscape Trust was a non-membership registered charity established in 1981. It worked at the grassroots level with community groups, including parish and town councils, schools and the Woman's Institute to promote landscape awareness and conservation through community action. In partnership with Cheshire, Warrington and Halton Borough Councils and Parish Councils the Trust was helping a number of parishes, via a pilot arrangement, to produce their own Village Design Statements and to obtain Supplementary Planning Guidance for these documents/influence the Statutory Spatial Planning System.

Members were informed that a Village Design Statement described a village in its present form and placed the qualities valued by their inhabitants under the spotlight. The views, ideas and knowledge of local residents were used to develop a vision of quality and prosperity for the villages and their surrounding environment.

If a parish council commissioned the Cheshire Landscape Trust to produce a Village Design Statement for its administrative area it would be written up under its guidance and be supported by the principal authorities. Throughout the process, local people and children (through working with the local schools) would be consulted through a series of public meetings, workshops and presentations. The aim of Village Design Statements was essentially to ensure that new development respected features of a village, which local people found pleasing and which added individual character or distinctiveness to the Statement.

Change was brought about not only by large developments, but also by the smaller day-to-day adjustments to homes and gardens, open spaces, paths and hedges, which altered the look and feel of a whole village. The Statement was therefore addressed to:

- Statutory bodies and public authorities
- Planners, developers, builders, architects, designers and engineers
- Local Community Groups
- Household holders and businesses

The aim was to get the Planning Authority to adopt the Statement and consequently take recommendations into account when planning applications were assessed. In this way the Statutory Spatial Planning System would be supported as it affected the village and would assist the work of the Parish Council.

Therefore, the aim of a Saughall Village Design Statement would be to ensure that any development or change featured “good design” as required under the new Spatial Planning System and be closely linked with the Parish Plan. It would set out clear and simple guidance for the design of all development in Saughall, based on its character. It would be an advisory document produced by the local community, not by the Planning Authority. It would not stop change from happening, but it would help effect how any new buildings fitted into the village and ensure harmony with its setting and make a positive contribution to the immediate environment.

Mr Gittens informed that if his organisation was commissioned to draw up the Village Design Statement the work would cost in the region of £2,500 and a proven process would be gone through to achieve the final result.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Mr Gittens be thanked for his informative presentation;
- (2) the Clerk be requested to supply Mr Gittens with a copy of the Saughall Parish Plan; and

- (3) consideration be given to commissioning Cheshire Landscape Trust to draw up a Village Design Statement for Saughall at the next meeting of the Council scheduled for 7:30pm on Monday, 4 September 2006.

STANDING ORDERS BACK IN FORCE

107 CODE OF CONDUCT – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were received.

108 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That subject to the following amendment, the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 15 May 2006 be confirmed as a correct record:

Minute No 86 – Annual Assembly (page 47, second paragraph, last sentence)

Replace with:

“A meeting was being arranged between parents and representatives of the Parish Council in the hope that the number of evenings the Youth Club opened could be increased.”

109 POLICE/HOMEWATCH

(a) Police

PC Hughes informed of the staffing arrangements and organisation of the Community Action Team that covered the areas of Saughall, Blacon and Blacon Hall.

There had been problems with youths causing a nuisance earlier in the year but this problem had been alleviated to a certain extent. This had had a big impact and as a result the village was quieter now.

The drink and drugs situation in the village was being closely monitored and members of the public were encouraged to telephone the police with information.

Members asked the Police Officers a number of questions which they answered as appropriate.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(b) Homewatch

Councillor WI Humphrey informed that he had been appointed Homewatch Co-ordinator, Mr Keith Stinson had been appointed Treasurer and that there was currently £392.19 in the organisation's bank account.

A function was being arranged at which the way forward for the Homewatch would be discussed and debated.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received

(c) Police Community Support Officers

The Council had received copies of the Cheshire Constabulary's publication Police Community Support Officer – Enhancing the Delivery of Local Neighbourhood Policing.

The Council had also been informed of a meeting scheduled for 7:30pm on Wednesday, 14 June 2006 at Oldfield County Primary School from the Clerk to Great Broughton Parish Council. Councillors B Kerr, Mrs JE Storrar, WI Humphrey and C Moss had attended the meeting where the police had made it clear that it was their intention to appoint 300 Community Support Officers over the next two years. However, they would only recruit if there was a partnership (parish councils could band together and share costs) arrangement in place and the partner agreed to contribute 35% of the cost (£11,000). A contract in respect of this arrangement was currently being drawn up by the police and partners were expected to commit for between three and five years.

RESOLVED:

That the Cheshire Constabulary be informed that this Council has registered to participate in the Community Support Officer Scheme subject to satisfactory contractual terms being agreed.

(d) Community Speedwatch

The Clerk reported that project Rural Matters were now in possession of a speed gun and could provide training on its use.

RESOLVED:

That Project Rural Matters be informed that this Council is very interested in Community Speedwatch and some of its Members are willing to undergo the appropriate training in the use of the speed gun.

The Quality Parish and Town Council Scheme was launched in June 2003, following the publication of the Government's Rural Paper 2000. The Scheme was designed to provide a benchmark minimum standards for parish and town councils and enable them to better represent the communities they served. The Scheme also aimed to give enhanced relationships between local councils, principal authorities and community and voluntary sector organisations.

The Clerk informed that in order to achieve Quality Status the Parish Council must demonstrate that it had reached the standard required by passing several tests. These tests were summarised as follows:

Test 1: Electoral Mandate

- On first accreditation only: at least 80% of all Council seats were filled at the beginning of the current four year term by Members who stood for election at that time.
- On re-accreditation: all Council seats filled at the beginning of the current four year term by Members who stood for election at that time.

Test 2: Qualifications of the Clerk

The Clerk had responsibility for ensuring that the Council acted within the law – whatever the size of the parish. It was therefore considered vital that the Clerk possessed the necessary knowledge, skills and competence to carry out his/her duties correctly.

For accreditation as a Quality Parish Council the Clerk to the Council must hold one of the following qualifications:

- Certificate in Local Council Administration awarded by the Assessment and Qualification Alliance; or
- Certificate of Higher Education in Local Policy or Local Council Administration awarded by the University of Gloucestershire

Test 3: Council Meetings

- The Council must meet on at least six occasions every year.
- Notices of the meeting must be publicly displayed at least three days before each meeting.
- Minutes of meetings must be available for inspection by electors.
- Time must be allowed at each meeting for public participation.

Test 4: Effective Communication

There were mandatory and discretionary elements to this test.

The mandatory requirements were as follows:

- Publication of regular information, perhaps in the form of a newsletter at least four times a year.
- Information on Councillors and how they could be contacted; and
- A synopsis of the Annual Report
- Information must be readily available at public sites across the parish.

In addition, Councils must meet at least nine of the discretionary requirements. The list comprised activities such as sending newsletters/annual reports to each household, maintenance of a parish council website, email facilities, Councillor's Surgeries and consultation exercises.

Test 5: Annual Report

- Publication of an Annual Report, including certain information, within a prescribed timescale and made readily available at sites across the parish.

Test 6: Accountability

- Accounts prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations
- Unqualified Accounts
- Adequate systems of internal control

Test 7: Ethical Framework

- Adoption of a local Code of Conduct.

The requirements of these Tests concentrated on the accountability and openness of the Council. All requirements of the Tests were mandatory.

The Council noted that it was currently meeting all but Test 2 and the Newsletter element of test 4.

RESOLVED:

That further consideration be given to Quality Parish Council accreditation at the next meeting of the Council under a Part 2 agenda item.

111 REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS
- NALC (2002) MODEL STANDING ORDERS

The Clerk had circulated copies of the Model Standing Orders. It was noted that some Members of the Council did not have a copy of the Council's current Standing Orders.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Clerk be requested to provide all Members with a copy of the Council's current Standing Orders; and

- (2) the Finance and General Purposes Committee be requested to give initial consideration to revising the Council's Standing Orders at its next meeting scheduled for 7:30pm on 14 August 2006.

112 GOLDEN JUBILEE PARK DEVELOPMENT

(a) Terms of Agreement with the Cricket Club and Greyhound Football Team

The Council gave initial consideration to what it would like to see included in a joint agreement between itself, the Saughall Cricket Club and the Greyhound Pub Football team on the use and maintenance of the Golden Jubilee Park.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to prepare a draft agreement for discussion and revision at the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee scheduled for 7:30pm on 14 August 2006.

(b) Car Parking

The Council discussed the parking arrangements for those using the sporting and recreational facilities in the Golden Jubilee Park.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to write to the Council's contractor for the development work, Mr DJ Francis, asking him to provide an indicative quotation in respect of the work required on the grassed area to the front of the Uniform Groups' Headquarters on Fiddlers Lane to make it into a car park.

(c) Awards for All

A decision on whether the Council had been successful with its funding application was still awaited.

RESOLVED:

That the position be noted.

(d) Gowy North Area Committee Grants

It was reported that the Saughall Cricket Club and Greyhound Pub Football Team had been jointly successful in attracting £5,000 from Chester City Council's Gowy North Area Committee. These resources would be used to assist the purchase of equipment required to maintain the grounds, etc.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(e) Overhead Electrical Cables

The Clerk and Mr Edwin Davies, Wayleave Officer, Powersystems, had continued to correspond over the removal of the overhead electrical cables. Mr Davies did not appear to be in a position to provide a timescale for the cables' removal despite numerous requests for this information. Work could not begin on the land until the cables had been taken down.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to seek advice on the way forward from Cheshire County Council's Trading Standards Officers.

(f) Fiddlers Lane Play Area

(i) Monitoring Report

It was noted that the condition of the play area and the equipment within it was satisfactory.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(ii) Compensation Claim

Mr Gavin Butler of 51 Hermitage Road had made a claim against the Council for £15 in respect of children's clothing. His children had been covered in yellow paint when they had climbed onto the igloo. The painter had put out "Wet Paint" signs but older children had removed them.

RESOLVED:

That the Council regrets this incident and Mr Butler be made a payment of £15 in respect of his children's clothes.

113 ACCOUNTS

(a) Payments made since the meeting of the Council held on 15 May 2006:

RESOLVED:

That the following payments be approved:

<u>Financial Year 2006/2007</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>Cheque No</u>
Cheshire County Playing Fields Association (Affiliation Fees)	14.00	101888
Cancelled	-.-	101889
All Cheshire Garden Services (Grass Cutting)	120.00	101890
Aquatic Management Services (Copy of Environmental Report)	51.50	101891
Mrs S Hudspeth (Expenses)	41.99	101892

<u>Financial Year 2006/2007</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>Cheque No</u>
Mrs S Hudspeth (Salary)	589.04	101893
Mrs J Young (Travelling Expenses)	13.40	101894
Britannia Adelphi Hotel (NALC Conference accommodation)	160.00	101895
Mr H Wilkinson (Odd Jobs)	294.36	101896
Mr G Butler (Compensation Claim)	15.00	101897
NALC Conference Fees	265.00	101898
Chester City Council (Newsletter Printing)	406.00	101899
Cheshire Association of Local Councils (Local Council Review for Members)	200.00	101900
Mr C Moss (Reimbursement for cost of football goal net)	66.98	101901
North Wales Newspapers Ltd (Newsletter Distribution)	27.08	101902
Mr C Moss (Parish Room Rental – July-September 2006)	312.50	101903
Saughall Rangers (Newsletter Distribution in hard to reach areas)	20.00	101904
Mrs S Hudspeth (Expenses)	77.64	101905
HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC)	813.18	101906
Mrs S Hudspeth (Salary)	589.04	101907
Mr Ray Hipkiss (Street Cleaning – 22 May-21 June 2006)	910.23	101908
Mr C Moss (Reimbursement for cost of goalpost fittings)	31.13	101909
Mr H Wilkinson (Painting gates and fencing)	199.99	101910

(b) Receipts

RESOLVED:

That the following receipts be noted:

Interest to 21 May 2006 (14 Day Account)	109.81
Interest to 21 June 2006 (14 Day Account)	145.38
Interest to 23 May 2006 (Treasurer Account)	0.30
Interest to 23 June 2006 (Treasurer Account)	0.16
Street Cleaning Grant 1 April – 30 September 2006	2,412.80

(c) Cash to Bank Reconciliation

RESOLVED:

That the content of the cash to Bank Reconciliation be noted but future reports are to itemise Income and Expenditure in respect of Designated Funds.

(d) Reconstituted Golden Link Club

Councillor Mrs JE Storrar informed that the Golden Link Club was up and running again with a good attendance. It met on a Thursday afternoon. It was requesting a pump priming grant of £50 from the Council.

RESOLVED:

That a pump priming grant of £50 be made to the Golden Link Club.

(e) Accounts 2005/2006

The Internal Auditor had carried out the internal audit for the financial year 2005-2006 as required by the Parish Council and had made the following comments. The Council responded accordingly:

"1. Insurance Policy states that Sports Grounds surfaces are not covered. In light of your investment in the Jubilee Field, you will need to consider this when renewing the Insurance Policy. The Council should consider if different Insurance quotes should be obtained. The Clerk informs me that this has not happened for some time. The Council does keep under review and obtain quotes for grounds maintenance and street cleaning."

[Referred to the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee]

"2. The Accounts presented show the balance of funds held in the General Fund and Earmarked Reserves. The Clerk should consider showing a more detailed summary showing how movements of the funds (receipts and expense) were arrived at. Movements in the Golden Jubilee Park Fund in future for instance, may require transparency."

[To be implemented]

"3. The Accounts are prepared using a computer that is not in the ownership of the Council. While this should not be a problem, it is advisable that agreement on procedures for access to, methods for backup of data, and storage of previous years Accounts data should be agreed between the Clerk and the Council."

[Noted but no action required]

"4. The Clerk informs me that there is no Petty Cash system as such. The Council does not usually deal in Cash transactions, certainly for receipts. Cash expenditure needs to be recorded and presented for approval by the appointed Parish Council officers."

[The Clerk already keeps a receipt book and claims her expenses]

"5. Minutes record that the Homewatch would return all cash left to the Parish Council. I know this has not happened. Are they going to give you an account of their expenditure? Do they need to? Is all their money from the Parish Council?"

[Homewatch has not disbanded after all]

"6. HMRC will give cash for online filing of employee year end tax returns. This will have to be done by 2010 anyway."

[Clerk to look into this method]

RESOLVED:

That the Internal Auditor be thanked for his report and the actions identified be taken.

114 MILLENNIUM FUND

RESOLVED:

That this item of business be deferred to the next meeting of the Council scheduled for 7:30pm on Monday, 4 September 2006 when hopefully Councillor Mrs D Whitton will be in attendance and provide an oral report.

115 STREET CLEANING CONTRACT – ANNUAL REVIEW

RESOLVED:

That the Street Cleaner's hourly rate be reviewed in April 2007.

116 HIGHWAY ISSUES

(a) Parked Cars on Pavements

It was noted that parked cars on pavements were still causing problems in the village.

RESOLVED:

That the situation continue to be monitored.

(b) Site Visits with the District Engineer

The Chairman had met with Mr Graham Anderton, the District Engineer, and toured the village where a number of problems were raised and inspected. Mr Anderton had agreed to carry out remedial work in order to bring about improvements.

Mr Anderton had confirmed that the Cheshire railings by the roundabout at the junction of the A540 and the A5117 would be given to the Council by the Highways Authority when the major improvement work commenced.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

(c) Church Road – Speeding Traffic

RESOLVED:

That this item be deferred until the next meeting of the Council scheduled for 7:30pm on Monday, 4 September 2006.

(d) Bus Terminus

The Council had recently consulted the local community, via its newsletter, on whether or not to replace the bus shelter at the Terminus. The brick bus shelter had been vandalised some time ago and as it was rendered dangerous it had been demolished. Since then bus users had managed without a shelter. The general feeling locally had been that if a new shelter was provided it would encourage youths to congregate and cause a nuisance.

RESOLVED:

That the result of the recent consultation be considered by the Finance and General Purposes Committee at its next meeting scheduled for 7:30pm on Thursday, 10 August, 2006.

(e) Other Highway Issues

Members discussed problems associated with overhanging foliage on Church Road. Of particular note was that the hedge at Sea Hill Farm was masking the 30 mph sign.

RESOLVED:

That the District Engineer, Mr Graham Anderton, be alerted to the problems in the village created by overhanging foliage.

117 CHESTER AND DISTRICT HOUSING TRUST – WALKABOUT IN SAUGHALL

Councillors RA Storrar, Mrs JE Storrar and Mrs P Humphrey had taken part in a walkabout with representatives of the Chester and District Housing Trust on 15 June 2006. The Council was informed of issues raised concerning Saughall Hey, Parkway, Fieldway and Park Avenue.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

118 PARISH COUNCIL SURGERIES

(a) Surgery on 1 July 2006

No parishioners attended.

(b) Surgery on 5 August 2006

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Mrs JE Storrar be requested to preside over the next Parish Council Surgery scheduled for Saturday, 5 August 2006 between 10:00am and 10:45am in the Parish Room on Fiddlers Lane.

119 COMMITTEE MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Planning Committee held on 15 May 2006 be received.

120 VERNON INSTITUTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Councillor Mrs J Young informed that she had attended the last meeting and that nothing that specifically concerned the Council had been discussed.

121 ODD JOBS

Councillor C Moss reported that Mr H Wilkinson had now painted all of the children's play equipment in the Fiddlers Lane Playing Field and the Cheshire Railings.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

122 ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

(a) Representation at meetings of Outside Bodies

RESOLVED:

That representation be agreed as follows:

- (i) Driving Expertise: Empowering Local Councils
22-24 September 2006 at the Adelphi Britannia Hotel, Liverpool

Councillor WI Humphrey to attend and Councillor Mrs P Humphrey to accompany him in her role as spouse.

- (ii) Cheshire Association of Local Councils' Annual Meeting 2006
Thursday, 12 October 2006, 7:00-9:30pm at the Middlewich Civic Hall

Councillors A Warrington and Mrs J Young to attend.

- (iii) Chester City Council's The Chester District Debate
Wednesday, 12 July 2006, 6:30-9:00pm at the Malloy Hall, University of Chester, Parkgate Road, Chester

Councillors RA Storrar, Mrs JE Storrar and DF Holman to attend.

(b) Reports of those who attended meetings of Outside Bodies:

- (i) Gowy North Area Committee
Thursday, 8 June 2006, 7:00-9:00pm at Elton Church Hall, Ince Lane, Elton

The Council was informed that the following issues had been discussed at the Gowy North Area Committee on 8 June 2006:

- Local Development Framework Workshop and the Local Plan
- Fire Service - update
- Community Safety Wardens - update
- Grounds Maintenance/Public Space update
- Saughall Community IT Course – certificates
- Waste Management in Chester – the future
- Area Committee Payments 2006/2007

123 COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED

The following communications had been received, anyone requiring a copy would contact the Clerk.

- letter dated 30 May 2006 from the Chief Executive of Cheshire & Merseyside NHS Strategic Health Authority plus a briefing paper outlining the changes to Strategic Health Authorities, Primary Care Trusts and Ambulance Services in the North West of England

Noted.

- letter dated 26 May 2006 from Mr Jeremy Taylor, Chief Executive, Cheshire County Council regarding local working

Noted.

- letter dated 9 June 2006 from the Highway Agency and copies of the following Orders that have been made:

- The A550 and A5117 Trunk Roads (improvement between M56 and A548) and connecting Roads Order 2006
- The A550 and A5117 Trunk Roads (improvement between M56 and A548) and connecting Roads (Side Roads) Order 2006
- The A550 and A5117 Trunk Roads (improvement between M56 and A548) and connecting Roads Compulsory Purchase Order (No. MP26) Order 2006

Noted.

- Chester City Council – Notice of Intention to make a Dog Control Order – in respect of various streets in the Chester District (Copy attached)

AGREED:

That the Clerk would inform Mr Tim Braithwaite of Chester City Council's Environmental Services that this Council wants a Dog Control Order on the Fiddlers Lane recreational land that requires dogs to be kept on a lead at all times.

124 CIRCULARS

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

The Mid-Cheshire Line – Connecting Communities – Hourly Service
 DEFRA – Building Community Life – Calor Village of the Year

Cheshire County Council's Cheshire Matters
Chester City Council's Ethics and Standards Committee agenda for meeting on 22
June 2006 at 4:30pm in the Town Hall, Chester
Chester City Council's The Past Uncovered – June 2006
Chester City Council's The Key Spring 2006
Chester Voluntary Action – Voluntary Voice – May 2006
Cheshire County Council – The Cheshire Community Funding Guide – Second
Edition