

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF SAUGHALL AND SHOTWICK PARK PARISH COUNCIL held on 4 February 2008 at the Vernon Institute, Saughall

In attendance: Councillor DF Holman
Councillor Mrs P Humphrey
Councillor WI Humphrey (Homewatch Co-ordinator)
Councillor Mrs J Knox
Councillor RK Shukla
Councillor Mrs JE Storrar
Councillor RA Storrar
Councillor Mrs H Thorniley-Jones
Councillor A Warrington
Councillor Mrs D Whitton
Councillor Mrs JM Young (in the Chair)

County Councillor D Rowlands

19 APOLOGIES FOR AUTHORISED ABSENCE

Apologies for authorised absence were received from Councillors Mrs J and JG Johnson, and B Kerr and PCSO Mike Butler.

20 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of Interest were received as follows:

Councillors Mrs J Knox, RK Shukla, Mrs JE Storrar, RA Storrar and Mrs D Whitton declared personal interests in respect of the item on the agenda – The Future of the Thomas Wedge CE (Controlled) Junior School Building (Minute No. 34/2008 refers) because of their association with the local Schools.

Councillor RK Shukla also declared a personal interest in respect of the item on the agenda – Highway Issues, Damage to Grass verges (Minute No. 25(E)/2008 refers) because he owns property in Meadows Lane which was the street where the damaged grass verges were.

Councillor Mrs JE Storrar declared a personal interest in respect of the item on the agenda – Accounts, Payments (Minute No 27(a)/2008 refers) because the Friday Club had requested a donation towards the cost of the Christmas Lunch and she helped out at the Club.

21 MINUTES

Discussion ensued about what exactly had been requested at the last meeting in respect of the PCSO's report. There seemed to be some confusion over what had been requested and what had been intended.

The Chairman informed that arrangements could be made to vacate the Parish Room by 29 February 2009 following a request from the Landlord who was in the process of re-letting his property. Consequently, the rent already paid for the month of March 2008 could be refunded if the Council agreed to the Landlord's request.

RESOLVED: That

(1) subject to the following amendment, the Minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 7 and 21 January 2008 be confirmed as a correct record:

Minute No 17(b) third paragraph delete someone and replace with no one;

(2) in future the PCSO's written report be included with the agenda papers for the following month's Council meeting;

(3) the Landlord's request be conceded and the Council will vacate the Parish Room on 29 February 2008 to accommodate his new leasing arrangements on the understanding that it will receive a refund from him in respect of rent already paid for the month of March 2008; and

(4) the Clerk be requested to obtain quotations to relocate the existing CCTV equipment at the Uniform Groups Headquarters and to provide and install new CCTV equipment with a view to making a funding application to Chester City Council's Goway North Area Committee to finance the CCTV work required.

22 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of meetings of the Planning Committee held on 7 January 2008 be received.

23 POLICE/HOMEWATCH

(a) Police

PCSO Mike Butler had submitted a written report that the Chairman read out. It detailed incidents of criminal damage, thefts and burglaries which had taken place in the village during the previous month, along with incidents of anti-social behaviour.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(b) Homewatch

Councillor WI Humphrey, in his capacity as Homewatch Coordinator, detailed anti-social activity that had taken place over the last month. These included incidents of fly tipping and nuisance youth activity.

Councillor Humphrey informed that he had read an article in 'First' Local Government Magazine which had informed that:

"Youth crime was rarely far from the headlines. The UK had one of the highest rates of imprisonment for young people in Western Europe, with around 2,700 under-18s in custody at any one time.

A place in a young offenders institute cost some £53,000 a year.

The Local Government Association recently estimated that 4,000 non-violent youth offenders should be dealt with in the community rather than custody, saying this would cut re-offending rates and save around £70m a year.

Unfortunately, many young people leaving custody were being set up to fail as they returned to the same environment that led to their initial offending behaviour. What more could local authorities do, with the increasingly tight budget restraints?"

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

24 YOUTH ISSUES

It was reported that a meeting of the Youth Club's Management Committee had taken place earlier that evening. A decision to take the young people bowling on 4 March 2008 at a cost of £146 had been made. The Council had previously agreed to make a contribution to the Youth Club in respect of this outing.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be received; and
- (2) the Council will cover the entire cost of the Youth Club's outing of £146 this time and may agree to contribute financially to future outings dependant on how successful this first one is on 4 March 2008.

25 HIGHWAY ISSUES

(a) Parked Cars on Pavements

It was reported that parents continued to block the disabled access beside the Ridings Community Infant School.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to alert PCSO Butler to the regularly blocked access beside the Ridings Community Infant School and ask him to take necessary action to deter parents from doing this.

(b) A5117 Major Roadworks

The five kilometre A5117 improvement scheme had begun in October 2006 and would cost £55m. Its key aim was to ease congestion at three junctions - Woodbank, the A540 and the M56 as well as improve safety for drivers, equestrians and walkers.

It was reported that traffic would start using short sections of the A5117 now under construction at Deeside Park when a key stage of the work started on Thursday, 7 February 2008.

The existing westbound slip road from the A5117 to the A550/A548 roundabout - the Deeside Park junction - would close. This would be done to connect the new road and slip roads to the existing road network.

Traffic travelling from the east along the A5117 and from the north along the A550 would be diverted onto new sections of the road.

Traffic travelling west along the A5117 from Parkgate Road roundabout to the A548 or Deeside Park would be diverted onto the new road before reaching the traffic lights at the Woodbank junction.

Traffic approaching the A548 or Deeside Park approaching from the Wirral would be diverted onto a new link road at traffic lights at Woodbank bridge.

Traffic signals would control traffic merging near the Deeside Park roundabout and the new layout would be clearly signed.

The next Carillion Liaison Meeting was being held at 10:30am the following day and as requested by the Council (Minute No. 8(a)/2008 refers) the rodent problem was on the agenda.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(c) Speeding Traffic and the use of the Speed Indicator Device (SID)

It was reported that the Council would be able to use the SID on 12 February 2008 and again on 11 March 2008.

It was also reported that the proposed new site on Hermitage Road adjacent to No. 183 could not be used as Chester City Council had determined that the footway was too narrow to move nearer to Aspen Grove.

The speed gun had been booked for the Council's use from 7 April 2008 for a period of one week.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(d) Fly Posting

RESOLVED:

That the situation regarding fly posting in the village continue to be monitored.

(e) Damage to Grass Verges

The Clerk had received an email from Mr Graham Argyle of Meadows Lane concerning the damage to grassed verges as a result of motorists driving and parking on them. Members agreed that it was important to obtain proof of who was causing the damage. If photographs could be taken as evidence and sent to the County Highways Department, officers would be able to take appropriate action.

Councillor RA Storrar reported on the detail of a conversation he had had with Arriva's Operations Manager regarding recent damage caused by buses. It was accepted that not all of the damage caused to the verges had been done by Arriva and that the bus company had taken steps to rectify the actual damage that it had caused.

The situation at the bus terminus had also been discussed because it was not possible to accommodate two buses at the same time. The Operations Manager had agreed to discuss the possibility of introducing a one-way bus system. He was also looking at a smaller bus option.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be received;
- (2) the Clerk be requested to write back to Mr Argyle asking him to try to obtain photographic evidence of who damages the grass verges;
- (3) the Clerk be requested to include an item in the next newsletter about the damage caused to grass verges and the need to obtain photographic evidence so that appropriate action can be taken; and
- (4) Arriva be thanked for the actions taken to remedy the damage it has caused to the grass verges.

(f) Flooding on Long Lane

Mr David Job, Cheshire County Council's Land Agent, had informed that he had no objections to tenant farmers maintaining their ditches and that he had not expressed an opinion to the contrary to the tenant concerned (Minute No. 8(e)(ii)/2008 refers). He considered that the drainage on the other side of the Lane required improvement to alleviate the flooding problem.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to write to Mr Vic McCrea, the tenant farmer, to ask him to clean out his ditch.

(g) Church Road Bus Shelters

It was noted that Mr Wilkinson had carried out repairs to the bus shelter at the bottom of Church Road even though the letter the Clerk had sent him had asked him only to provide a quote for the work.

Officers of Cheshire County Council had informed that it was not possible to paint its bus shelters' roofs with anti-vandal paint as the Council's policy provided for complete cleaning of shelters on a regular basis. Also, there was a standard that all shelters complied to which would be affected if agreement was given. If vandalism was reported Cheshire County Council was able to backtrack through the CCTV footage even if an accurate time of the incident was not known.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

26 GOLDEN JUBILEE PARK DEVELOPMENT

(a) Report of the Field Committee

The Chairman reported on proceedings of the Field Committee that had been held recently. The Tree Warden and Mr Gordon Dutton had also been in attendance. The meeting had concentrated on the flooding at the back of Long Lane and Mr Dutton had agreed to ask Mr Will Mason to provide a quote to try to alleviate it. The Tree Warden had provided some advice on how to look after the trees.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(b) Funding application for an Aerial Runway

Councillor A Warrington informed that quotations had been received from suppliers for an aerial runway. The Clerk informed that the funding application for £5,000 in respect of this play equipment had been submitted to Chester City Council.

Detailed consideration would need to be given to what provision would be included in the second phase of the development and residents opinion would be canvassed.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the report be received; and

(2) the survey work required in order to canvas opinions on what to include in the next phase of the Park's development be undertaken via the next Parish Council Newsletter and at the Family Fun Day to be held on Monday, 5 May 2008.

(c) Multi-Court

A quotation had been received in respect of a multi-court. It would be a big project and require considerable grant aid if it was to be included in the next phase of development.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(d) Quotation to Secure the Gates

The Chairman informed that the field gates would be made secure sometime during this week.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(e) Golden Jubilee Park Official Opening – ‘Family Fun Day’ – Monday, 5 May 2008

The Council gave consideration to arrangements that would need to be put in place if the forthcoming Family Fun Day was to be a success. Members agreed that this community event would need to be planned and co-ordinated.

Members hoped that all Groups, Organisations, Businesses and the Schools in the village would make a contribution and be involved in some way.

It was proposed that Councillor RA Storrar in his capacity as Sheriff of Chester would open the Golden Jubilee Park at 2:30pm on Monday, 5 May 2008. Councillor RA Storrar indicated his agreement but informed that arrangements would need to be made via the Lord Mayor’s Office at the Town Hall, Chester.

During the bank holiday event it had been agreed that a time capsule would be buried and each Group, Organisation, Business and School would be invited to provide an object to go in the capsule. A plinth would be placed on top and the Millennium Stone would be positioned on top of it. It was noted that there was sufficient money in the Millennium Fund to cover the costs of moving the Stone, etc.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be received;
- (2) Councillor WI Humphrey be requested to head-up a Committee that will be responsible for planning and co-ordinating the arrangements for the Family Fun Day;
- (3) the Clerk be requested to draft a letter for Members’ consideration, to all the Groups, Organisations, Businesses and the two Schools asking them to support the event in a variety of ways, put forward nominations to serve on the Committee and provide an object to go in the time capsule;
- (4) the Clerk be requested to write to the Lord Mayor’s Office to request that the Sheriff of Chester open the Golden Jubilee Park; and
- (5) Councillor Mrs D Whitton be requested to try to obtain the time capsule.

(f) Moles

RESOLVED:

That the contents of a letter dated 8 January 2008 from Mr John Young of Tenax UK regarding the moles be noted.

(g) Fiddlers Lane Playing Field – Quarterly Inspection Report

The Council considered the quarterly report and noted that the Finance and General Purposes Committee would examine the Annual Independent Inspection Report provided by Chester City Council's Gowy North Area Committee at its next meeting on 21 February 2008.

It was noted that the gate fastening needed to be adjusted. Councillor Mrs H Thorniley-Jones explained how this could be done and the Chairman undertook to request the garage to make the adaptation.

It was noted that recently one gate to the car park had been left open and the other had been left closed. As cars had to enter by one gate and leave by the other this was not acceptable and would be addressed.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

27 ACCOUNTS

(a) Payments made since the meeting of the Council held on 7 January 2008 including a request for a donation of £25 towards the cost of the Friday Club's Christmas Lunch:

RESOLVED:

That the following payments be approved:

<u>Financial Year 2007/2008</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>Cheque No</u>
Bewcroft Signs Ltd (In and Out signs for the Golden Jubilee Park)	82.25	102021
Morrall Play Solutions (Quarterly Play Equipment Inspection)	70.44	102022
Timberline Play Equipment (Deposit re: order for stepping stones & balancing beam)	138.06	102023
Mrs S Hudspeth (Expenses)	69.92	102024
Mrs S Hudspeth (Salary)	604.11	102025
Mr R Hipkiss (January 2008 Street Cleaning)	910.23	102076
Mr DJ Francis (Work on the Golden Jubilee Park)	14,487.75	102077
Mr H Wilkinson (Bus Shelter maintenance)	146.94	102078
Saughall Friday Club (Donation towards Christmas Lunch)	25.00	102079

(b) Receipts

RESOLVED:

That the following receipts be noted:

	£
Interest on 14 Day Interest Account to 21 January 2008	126.88
VAT Repayment	867.53
Uniform Groups' (Rent re: Headquarters for 4 years)	48.00

(c) Cash to Bank Reconciliation and Golden Jubilee Park Development Fund Reconciliation

RESOLVED:

That the content of the Cash to Bank Reconciliation and the Golden Jubilee Park Development Fund Reconciliation be noted.

28 LOCAL GOVERNMENT RE-ORGANISATION (LGR) IN CHESHIRE

The Council received an update on progress in respect of Local Government Reorganisation. It was reported that the Government would put the Cheshire Structure Changes Order, which set out the new arrangements, before Parliament for approval mid to end of February 2008. The Order was now finalised and required all Councils in Cheshire to co-operate in implementing the changes. There was still the possibility of Councils challenging the process leading to the decision but this was unlikely to delay the implementation.

The Order provided for Parish Council elections that would otherwise have been held in May 2010 to be put back to 2011. This was to avoid the waste of public resources of holding parish elections on a day when no other local government elections were being held. Parish Council elections were usually combined with local government elections. To avoid unnecessary disruption to parishes and to bring their election cycles into step with those of the new unitary authorities, parish elections would be held in May 2011 and every four years after that.

The Joint Implementation Teams had been set up for each of the new authorities and Vale Royal Borough Council was leading in respect of the Chester and Cheshire West.

Officers from all affected authorities were now attending Joint Implementation Team Meetings and Officer and Member structures to achieve implementation, based on programme management principles, had been prepared.

A prospectus for potential candidates for Cheshire East and Chester and Cheshire West had been published and were being distributed to interested parties and prospective candidates by the six District Council and the County Council.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

29 CONSULTATION ON ORDERS AND REGULATIONS RELATING TO THE CONDUCT OF LOCAL AUTHORITY MEMBERS IN ENGLAND

Members had each received a copy of the consultation document published by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and noted that the consultation period ended on 15 February 2008.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the consultation document be noted; and
- (2) the Cheshire Association of Local Councils' Chief Officer be requested to respond to the consultation on behalf of the Council and all other Parish Councils in Cheshire and provide the Clerk with a copy of her response.

30 SAUGHALL FOOTPATHS

The Council received a copy of a letter dated 9 November 2007 from Mr Keith Stinton of 4 Hermitage Court, Saughall about disability access to public and permissive footpaths in Saughall and Shotwick Park and heard the Parish Paths Warden's response as reported by the Clerk.

Councillor Mrs H Thorniley-Jones reported a missing sign and that the electric fence to the side of Pigeon Wood was causing concern as people had to turn sideways to get past it.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the response supplied by Mr Tony Leach, the Parish Paths Warden, regarding public and permissive footpaths, stiles and the recent kissing gate project be conveyed by the Clerk to Mr Stinton as soon as possible; and
- (2) the Clerk be requested to report the faults identified and request that they are attended to as soon as possible.

31 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SWITCH-ON CEREMONY

Members discussed how appropriate arrangements would be put in hand to ensure that this year there was a Christmas Lights Switch-On Ceremony in the village.

It was agreed that Councillor Mrs J Johnson would be invited to sit on a Committee to take this initiative forward. Local people would be co-opted onto the Committee and it was proposed that Jackie Alley, Peg Smith and Carl Jones be invited to take up seats. It was noted that Mrs Evans had agreed to be a member of the Committee.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) a Committee be established to arrange the village's Christmas Lights festivities and that those detailed above be invited to sit on it; and
- (2) Mrs Evans be invited to sit on the Committee that will steer the Family Fun Day arrangements for 5 May 2008.

32 PARISH COUNCIL SURGERIES

(a) Parish Council Surgery on 2 February 2008

Councillor Mrs J Knox informed that Mr Garner of 47 The Ridings had attended the last Surgery to complain about the current 'bus war' and the congestion buses were causing on the Ridings Estate.

(b) Parish Council Surgery at the Vernon Institute (Library) on Saturday, 1 March 2008 through to 29 November 2008.

Members were informed of the dates of all proposed Surgeries to the end of the calendar year.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the report at (a) be received;

(2) Councillor DF Holman be requested to preside at the next Parish Council Surgery from 10:00am to 10:45am on Saturday, 1 March 2008 and bring a report on its proceedings to the next meeting of the Council; and

(3) the dates of Parish Council Surgeries for the rest of the year be noted.

33 VERNON INSTITUTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (VIMC)

The Chairman informed that she was unable to report on the proceedings of the last meeting of the VIMC because she had not attended it.

34 THE FUTURE OF THE THOMAS WEDGE CE (CONTROLLED) JUNIOR SCHOOL BUILDING

The Council noted the contents of letters from the Clerk to Mrs Carol Lewis, Chairman of the Governing Body of the new Saughall Primary School, dated 8 January 2008 and her response of 21 January 2008.

Mrs Lewis informed that the decision regarding the retention of the existing Thomas Wedge CE (Controlled) Junior School building rested with the Diocese and she had therefore passed a copy of the Clerk's letter to Mr Geoff Turnbull, the Diocesan Director, for consideration.

The siting of the new building was a matter for the Project Team, led by Mr David Caldwell of Cheshire County Council's Property Management Service. The Governing Body had expressed its view that the new school needed to be an integral part of the community and therefore visible from the main road and not tucked away behind other buildings. There were many more factors that had been taken into account in determining where the building should be sited including security of the site and access for emergency vehicles. At the moment Mrs Lewis' understanding was that no final decision on the exact siting of the building could be made until a decision about the existing Thomas Wedge CE (Controlled) Junior School building was confirmed. She intended to pass the Clerk's letter to Mr Caldwell.

Mrs Lewis had noted the Parish Council's point about retaining Thomas Wedge in the new school name. There was a full Governing Body meeting later in the week and the School's name was an item on the agenda. The Governors would be taking advice from the County Council about the process for deciding school names and she was happy to inform the Council of the outcome following that meeting.

Mrs Lewis signed off her letter by acknowledging that the Thomas Wedge CE (Controlled) Junior and the Ridings Community Infant Schools valued the close links that existed with the community. She hoped that those links could continue to be built upon in the future.

County Councillor David Rowlands provided the Council with a progress report on the new school project and agreed to arrange a presentation for the Council and/or a 'drop-in' event for the local community during the 21 day consultation period before the plans were validated.

Councillor Mrs D Whitton enquired about the sustainability of the new school and the Clerk informed that the design of the school and development of the site would incorporate a high degree of sustainability and ecological enhancement. Apart from the protection of the existing features such as trees and hedgerows, the design would also create a new wildlife habitat as well as a new pond which would act as a flood attenuation system.

The design would be submitted to the Building Research Establishment to be judged on its merits to meet its strict criteria on sustainability. At present it was hoped to achieve an 'excellent score'. If this happened it would be the first school in the country to achieve such recognition.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the reports be received; and
- (2) details from County Councillor David Rowlands regarding the arrangements for a presentation and/or 'drop-in' event about the new school project and plans be awaited and a special meeting of the Council be arranged if necessary for to receive presentation.

35 ODD JOBS

RESOLVED:

That Mr Wilkinson be requested to:

- Remove the Saughall Parish Council sign above the window of the Parish Room for safekeeping
- Remove the mud from the pavements at the bottom of Saughall Hey
- Put up the four newly acquired signs on the gates to the Golden Jubilee Park

36 ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

(a) Representation at Meetings of Outside Bodies

NALC Conference 2008 – Eastbourne Winter Gardens on 20-22 May 2008 on ‘Making Local Connections’

It was agreed not to send a representative to this event this year.

(b) Reports of Meetings of Outside Bodies attended in the last month

(i) Cheshire Police Authority - Have your Say Meetings

7:00pm on Tuesday, 15 January 2008 at St Mary’s Centre, St Mary’s Hill, Chester

(ii) Chester District Housing Trust Estate Walk

10:30am on Thursday, 17 January 2008 from Wain House.

Cancelled due to inclement weather.

(iii) Chester City Council’s Goway North Area Committee meeting

7:00pm on Thursday, 10 January 2008 at St Oswald’s Primary School, Grove Road, Mollington

Items discussed included: Area Committee Payments – Round 2 and an update on Round 1

37 COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED

The following communications were received.

(a) letter dated 10 January 2008 from Chester City Council’s Policy Advisor re: Vision – Plan – Achieve: Chester City Council’s Corporate Plan (2008-11)

Noted.

(b) letter dated 17 January 2008 from Cheshire County Council’s Principal Environmental Planning Officer re: Validation of planning applications: Local List Consultation

Noted.

(c) letter dated 27 December 2007 from Chester City Council’s Member and Services Support Officer and a DVD from the Standards Board for England titled ‘The Code of Conduct – The Code Uncovered’

Noted.

38 CIRCULARS

The following circulars had been received anyone wishing to see them would contact the Clerk:

Cheshire County Council's Council Agenda – Meeting on 23 January 2008
Chester City Council's Area Autumn 2007 Gowy North Edition
Chester City Council's Highways and Transportation Local Joint Committee Agenda
24 January 2008. (There were no items relating specifically to Saughall)