

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF SAUGHALL AND SHOTWICK PARK PARISH
COUNCIL held on 3 November 2008 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
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)

PCSO Mike Butler
Mr H Dobson, Internal Auditor
County Councillor D Rowlands

239 APOLOGIES FOR AUTHORISED ABSENCE

All Members were in attendance.

240 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Mrs J Knox, RK Shukla, and RA and Mrs JE Storrar declared personal interests in respect of the item on the agenda – The New School and the Future of the Thomas Wedge CE (Controlled) Junior School Building (Minute No 252/2008 refers) because of their association with the local schools.

241 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 6 October 2008 be confirmed as a correct record.

242 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Planning Committee held on 6 October 2008 be received.

243 REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS

RESOLVED: That

(1) the draft Standing Orders be amended as follows:

Standing Order No 5 – Proper Officer
second line - /she be added after the word he

Standing Order No 6 – Quorum of the Council
The quorum be amended from four Members to five; and

(2) subject to the amendments at (1) above the Standing Orders be adopted forthwith.

244 THE MAKING AND ENFORCEMENT OF BYELAWS – A CONSULTATION BY THE DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT (DCLG)

RESOLVED:

That the drawing up of a response to the DCLG's consultation be referred to the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee scheduled for 6 November 2008 and the Chairman of the Committee (Councillor DF Holman) be requested to feed any comments agreed to the relevant officer at the DCLG.

245 REVIEW OF THE STREET CLEANING CONTRACT

Councillors RA Storrar and B Kerr reported on the proceedings of a recent meeting held with the street cleaning contractor, Mr Hipkiss, to review litter picking arrangements.

It was reported that Mr Hipkiss took great pride in his work, was very conscientious and provided good value for money. There was a problem with litter left behind in the Golden Jubilee Park after football matches and this would need to be addressed.

It was recommended that Mr Hipkiss' contract be revised to 22 hours a week (from 20 hours a week) from 1 November 2008 in order to provide additional time for him to keep the recreational ground tidy. This meant that, if Mr Hipkiss was agreeable to the increase in hours, his annual payment would increase from £10,992.80 to £12,092.08 (an additional £91.61 per month).

It was also recommended that a named Councillor be Mr Hipkiss' first point of contact and liaise between him and the Council on any issues raised or problems encountered.

RESOLVED: That

(1) Mr Hipkiss' contracted litter picking hours be increased from 20 to 22 per week so that he can spend more time on and pay extra attention to the Council's recreational land on Fiddlers Lane;

(2) Councillor B Kerr be requested to act as Mr Hipkiss' first point of contact;

- (3) the sporting organisations who use the recreational land be requested to remove all litter dropped after their matches; and
- (4) the Finance and General Purposes Committee be requested to take this increase into account when it considers the Council's budget at its next meeting scheduled for 6 November 2008.

246 GOLDEN JUBILEE PARK DEVELOPMENT

(a) Car Park

It was reported that the car park was constantly flooding because of the rain that had fallen recently. Paul Edwards, a contractor, had advised on how the problem could be addressed and it involved lifting as least half of the mesh. No price had been quoted for the work.

It was noted that vehicles continued to park on the flooded car park and were exacerbating the problem but it was agreed that it would not be sensible to prohibit their use because they would then park dangerously on Fiddlers Lane on kerbs and corners and on Kingston Court, causing congestion.

RESOLVED:

That the situation in respect of the car park be monitored.

(b) Cheshire Railings

It was reported that the hedge had been grubbed out and that there were now two lots of Cheshire Railings but it was disappointing that they had not been welded together. The posts were firmly in the ground and did not move.

RESOLVED:

That the Cheshire Railings be monitored and spot welded at a later date if need be.

(c) New Tree

It was noted that the tree donated by Councillor RA Storrar had been removed because it had died.

RESOLVED:

That the removal of the tree be noted.

(d) Installation of the Stepping Stones and Balancing Beam

The stepping stones and balancing beam were now in place.

RESOLVED:

That the installation of the new play equipment be noted.

(e) 4m High Playnet

The Clerk reported that she had obtained two quotations from Monsterplay Systems Ltd for a 4m high playnet. One quote included a matta rubber mesh surface at £10,921.20+VAT of £1,911.23 in total £12,832.53 and the other quotation included a natural environmulch bark safety surface at £11,348.00+VAT of £1,985.90 in total £13,333.90.

The Clerk recommended the Council consider the quote for the rubber mesh surface as she was worried about what would happen if broken glass ended up in the environmulch bark surface.

RESOLVED:

That the quotation in the total sum of £12,832.53 for a 4m high playnet and a matta rubber mesh surface be accepted and the Clerk be requested to place the order as soon as possible.

247 BUS SHELTER ON CHURCH ROAD AT JUNCTION WITH SAUGHALL HEY

The Council had received a letter dated 14 October 2008 from Mr K Southall of Church Road complaining about the nuisance use activity that centred around the bus shelter. He requested that the same action be taken as was taken at the bus terminus sometime ago – the removal of the shelter.

Members were not without sympathy for the residents who lived near to this bus shelter and were disturbed by the anti-social behaviour that it attracted. They were also concerned about the welfare of bus users who needed to shelter from the elements whilst waiting for a bus.

The bus shelter was in the ownership of Cheshire County Council, the Parish Council made a financial contribution to its installation and paid £500 per annum towards its maintenance costs. It was vandalised on a regular basis and consequently must cost a significant amount of money to maintain. Members wondered if the County Council had concerns over the cost of its repairs.

The shelter was fitted with a CCTV camera but despite trying it didn't appear possible to get any feedback from it.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Clerk be requested to write to Cheshire County Council's Operations Manager – Infrastructure, Andy Nickson, to ask if he could give consideration to replacing the shelter with a one less suitable for youths to use; and
- (2) PCSO Mike Butler be requested to speak to his Inspector about the problem with the CCTV footage.

(a) Police

PCSO Mike Butler presented his monthly report on incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour that had occurred in the village over the last month. Set out in the report were details of fuel thefts, a boat theft, criminal damage to the Ridings Community Infant School and incidents of anti-social behaviour.

PCSO Butler also reported on the use of the speed indicator device (SID) that had been used in the village between 13 and 20 October 2008. The SID would be used again in Saughall during December 2008. The speed gun was to be used soon and Members who were able to take a turn with it were asked to contact Councillor WI Humphrey.

PCSO Butler informed that he had been attending the Youth Club on Tuesday evenings and the attendees were being well behaved.

PCSO Butler's October report was appended to the agenda for Members' information.

RESOLVED:

That the reports be noted.

(b) Homewatch

Councillor WI Humphrey, in his capacity as Homewatch Coordinator, detailed low level crime and anti-social activity that had taken place over the last month in the village including vandalism to the bus shelter on Church Road where a side panel had been set on fire.

Councillor Humphrey also reported that on the evening of 31 October 2008 – Halloween – the children of the village had been well behaved and there had been no complaints.

Councillor Mrs D Whitton informed of a postal scam that had been widely reported in the press.

RESOLVED:

That the Homewatch Co-ordinator's report be received.

(c) Saughall Neighbourhood Management Team

The Chairman reported that there had only been two applications for the football coaching sessions planned during the half term holiday, so due to lack of interest they had been cancelled.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

249 CO-OP STORE, CHURCH ROAD, SAUGHALL

Members considered a number of complaints from Mr G Boydie, a resident of Saughall, about the Co-op Store. The complaints were in respect of drainage problems, the burglar alarm, litter, the state of the Store's boundaries, traffic noise and pollution and aesthetics. The complaints were now with Chester City Council's Technical Officer, Paul Blackburn a member of the Environmental Protection team. He was dealing with them and was in contact with the Co-op's Head Office.

RESOLVED:

That the situation be monitored.

250 YOUTH ISSUES

Councillor Mrs P Humphrey reported that the Youth Club had held a Halloween Party that had been very well organised and the children had thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

The children would be packing bags at Morrisons on Friday, 7 November 2008 to boost the Youth Club's funds.

The Youth Leader had been requested to give adequate notice and put in writing any request for funding for future Youth Club outings.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

251 PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT OF WAIN HOUSE

The Council considered the detail of a letter dated 7 October 2008 sent to residents involved in the Wain House redevelopment from Danielle Harrison, Chester and District Housing Trust's Development Officer. It informed that the community consultation event held on 14 August 2008 had been well attended and the Trust had received a lot of feedback from residents on the proposal to develop a scheme consisting of 32 one and two bedroom apartments for the over 55s.

The Trust had given a commitment to keep residents informed of further developments with the proposal. Ms Harrison consequently informed that various options were still being reviewed, having regard to residents comments and the planning regulations, and once a finalised proposal had been agreed the Trust would ensure that a further community consultation event was held, prior to the submission of a planning application.

It was reported that there were now only two or three residents left living at Wain House as the rest of them had accepted the relocation package offered.

RESOLVED:

That the content of the letter dated 7 October 2008 from Ms Harrison be received and the redevelopment and subsequent proposals continue to be monitored.

252 THE NEW SCHOOL AND THE FUTURE OF THE THOMAS WEDGE CE (CONTROLLED) JUNIOR SCHOOL BUILDING

Councillor Mrs JM Young informed that the Thomas Wedge CE (Controlled) Junior School had applied to the Parochial Church Council (PCC) for permission to use “the willow beds” as a playing field in the interim period whilst the redevelopment works were underway.

Councillor B Kerr told the meeting that if permission was granted the land would have to be cleared and could mean less cost to the Parish Council if it decided to acquire the land for use as a car park at some stage in the future.

Councillor Mrs JM Young informed that she had spoken to the Vicar who had informed that there was now few burials in the village as most people these days preferred to be cremated. A Garden of Rest was now being proposed instead of more burial ground by the PCC and the Council had been requested to make a financial contribution to the scheme.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the reports be received;
- (2) Councillor D Rowlands be requested to ascertain what progress, if any, was being made in respect of the new school; and
- (3) consideration of the PCC’s request for a financial contribution towards the Garden of Rest Project be deferred to the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

253 HIGHWAY ISSUES

(a) Parked Cars on Pavements

PCSO Mike Butler informed that he had handed out 3 or 4 parking tickets in the last month.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and the Council continue to monitor the situation.

(b) A5117 Major Roadworks

The Parish Council Liaison Meeting had been held on Tuesday, 14 October 2008 and the Minutes of it were appended to the agenda. Members noted that the new road would open for use by 8 December 2008 and the official opening was planned for the New Year. There remained problems with traffic backing up and traffic missing the turn.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Minutes of the Parish Council Liaison Meeting and the report from Members who had attended it be received; and

(2) the Clerk be requested to enquire of Carillion whether the permanent traffic lights would include a right filter for traffic heading East from Chester.

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

The PCSO had covered this matter in his report (Minute No 248/(a)/2008 refers).

It was reported that there were rumours circulating regarding the new weighbridge and draw-in for large haulage vehicles.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(d) Fly Posting

There was nothing to report this month.

RESOLVED:

That fly posting be kept under review.

(e) The Current "Bus War"

Members continue to monitor the frequency of buses in the village and any damage caused to kerbs and grass verges.

RESOLVED:

That the issues associated with the increase in the number of buses continue to be monitored.

(f) Traffic Congestion – The Ridings Estate

RESOLVED:

That the situation continue to be monitored.

(g) Repairs to Footpath near No 47 Rakeway, Saughall

No-one had visited the site.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Mrs P Humphrey be requested to visit the site and bring a report to the next meeting.

(h) Hermitage Road Hedges

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Mrs JM Young be requested to report on the state of the hedges on Hermitage Road at the next meeting.

(i) Missing Gully Cover – Darlington Crescent

It was reported that Councillor WI Humphrey had purchased a replacement gully himself.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(j) Sewage Problem at 100 Hermitage Road, Saughall and the Bus Stop at the Peg

Cheshire County Council's Operations Manager – Infrastructure, Transport and Regeneration had informed that the Police Liaison Officer had ruled that the resurfacing and marking of the bus stop work on Hermitage Road could only be undertaken during a main school holiday. Therefore, the next available opportunity to do the work would be during week commencing 16 February 2009 as the contractors did not work during the Christmas School holiday.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(k) Tree at 72 Darlington Crescent

It was reported that the work had commenced on the tree.

RESOLVED:

That the work involving the tree be monitored.

(l) Crab Apple Tree at 34 Meadows Lane

Further to Minute No 228(1)/2008 it was noted that the Area Maintenance Engineer had decided not to remove the crab apple tree but monitor it and maybe remove a couple of branches.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(m) Community Speed Check Area – Road Signs

No progress was being made on this initiative.

Concerns were raised that a Cheshire County Council Officer appeared to be dictating policy. Members believed that the wishes of the local community should prevail.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor D Rowlands be requested to make some enquiries and report back any progress.

(n) Copper Beach, Church Road, Saughall – Sewage Problems

It was noted that little progress was being made and the gullies were full of water.

RESOLVED: That

(1) Councillor D Rowlands be requested to speak to the Area Maintenance Engineer and ascertain the position; and

(2) the Saughall Neighbourhood Management Team's Co-ordinator, Mr Tony Summers, be requested to provide a report on the problems with sewage and the gullies on Church Road for Councillor RA Storrar who agreed to meet with the Area Maintenance Engineer in an attempt to find a solution to the problems being experienced on Church Road.

(o) Park Avenue – Parking Chaos

RESOLVED:

That Councillor D Rowlands be requested to look into this matter and bring a report to the next meeting.

(p) Gridlock on Church Road, Saughall

This problem was expected to be remedied once the A5117 roadworks were completed. There had been problems recently because of new roadworks on Church Road and extra traffic had come down off Parkgate Road.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(a) Payments made since the meeting of the Council held on 6 October 2008:

RESOLVED:

That the following payments be approved:

<u>Financial Year 2008/2009</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>Cheque No</u>
Homebase (Insulation for Vernon Institute)	971.42	102184
Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council (Franked mail)	40.41	102185
Bell Stone Masonry (Installation of time capsule)	564.00	102186
Bell Stone Masonry (Plaque for Millennium Stone)	235.00	102187
Morrall Play Solutions (Quarterly play equipment inspection) (the cheque signed at the last meeting was lost in the post and had not been cashed)	73.43	102188
All Cheshire Garden Services (4 cuts)	560.00	102189
Mrs S Hudspeth (Salary)	622.69	102190
Mr R Hipkiss (September 2008 Street Cleaning)	910.23	102191
Mrs S Hudspeth (Expenses)	38.00	102192

(b) Receipts

RESOLVED:

That the following receipts be noted:

	<u>£</u>
Interest on 14 Day Interest Account to 21 September 2008	39.07
Saughall Millennium Committee (Contribution towards cost of Time capsule and associated installation work)	480.00
Councillor RK Shukla (Parish Path booklets sold at Saughall Pharmacy)	30.00

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

RESOLVED:

That the contents be noted.

(d) 2008/2009 Local Government Pay Negotiations

The Council received a National Association of Local Councils (NALC) briefing document that informed that it had been agreed by both sides that the failure to agree the 2008/2009 pay award be referred to arbitration. The employers side had offered 2.45% and given the time elapsed since the award was due, and the likelihood of further delays arising from the arbitration process, the two sides on the NJC had now decided that the employers' final offer should be implemented in the interim, with effect from 1 April 2008.

The new pay scales were awaited.

RESOLVED:

That the position regarding the Clerk's pay award be noted.

(e) Honoraria

The Council was asked to consider making payments to the six ladies who helped in the Library and the gentleman who wound the Vernon Institute Clock. This work was carried out on a purely voluntary basis.

The Clerk also informed that the Friday Club usually expected the Council to make a financial contribution to the cost of its Christmas Dinner but had not made a formal approach yet.

Councillor Mrs H Thorniley-Jones queried the practise of making these payments and asked why the Youth Leader was not considered for a honorarium for her voluntary work with the Youth Club.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Mrs M Abrams be made the same payment as last year (£150) and be asked to distribute it equally between the ladies who help in the library;
- (2) Mr B Abrams be made the same payment as last year (£25) for his efforts in winding the Vernon Institute Clock;
- (3) a request from the Saughall Friday Club for a financial contribution to the cost of the Christmas Diner be awaited; and
- (4) the Finance and General Purposes Committee be requested to review the Council's policy/custom and practice on the payment of honoraria.

255 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IN CHESHIRE

The Chief Executive of Cheshire West and Chester Council, Mr Steve Robinson, had announced his new Interim Management Team. It comprised a talented and committed mix of appointed directors, consultants and a member of the previous Joint Implementation Team. It was meeting once a week and its focus was to provide the strategic leadership required to help progress all aspects of the work to put in place a highly effective and fully operational organisation on vesting day.

The transition to the new Cheshire West and Chester Council was now moving forward much more quickly and the recruitment of a strong team of heads of service was now imperative to provide expert support to elected Members and the corporate management team. The heads of service posts were advertised and required exceptional leadership skills, specialist knowledge and a commitment to driving through the major changes that were ahead.

The first proposals for the fourth and fifth tiers were well advanced and it was hoped that these structures would be shared with all principal authority staff soon.

The new Council was in the process of putting together its 2009/10 budget. For critical decisions around this and service design a "Star Chamber" comprising the Leader, Chief Executive, Section 151 Officer and Executive Member for Finance and Performance had now stated to meet.

Proposals have been approved for Area and Neighbourhood Programme Boards and a series of local forums.

On 23 October 2008 the Shadow Council also agreed to petition for Borough status for Cheshire West and Chester.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

256 COMMUNITY EVENTS - CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SWITCH-ON CEREMONY ON THURSDAY, 27 NOVEMBER 2008

Councillor Mrs J Johnson, in her capacity as Chairman of the Steering Committee, informed the Council of arrangements made for the Christmas Lights switch-on event. Members were reminded to let her have their raffle prizes one week before the event.

Councillor Mrs Johnson also informed that she had judged the pictures the children in the two schools had painted and had chosen winners from each school. These children would help switch on the Christmas Lights.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

257 PARISH COUNCIL SURGERIES

(a) Issues Raised at the Surgery held on 4 October 2008

It was reported that approximately 90% of Councillor RK Shukla's issues list had been addressed and the rest were in-hand.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(b) Surgery held on 1 November 2008

Councillor DF Holman had presided over the last Parish Council Surgery and he presented a list of issues that had been raised during it. They were as follows:

- Disappointment over the loss of the Thomas Wedge CE (Controlled) Junior School
- Problems associated with the bus shelter at the junction of Church Road/Saughall Hey (Already discussed at the meeting – Minute No 247/2008 refers)

- There was no bus service from Saughall to Chester Railway Station as there was no service from the Town Hall to the Station. Bus users had to walk from the Town Hall to Frodsham Street to catch the link bus. Councillor D Rowlands agreed to make representations for an appropriate service
- Grass cutting – grass left to blow about
- The Greyhound Pub’s change of name to “The Horned Woman”

Councillor Holman told the Council that he had found holding the Surgery outside the Co-op Store extremely useful and a good way to meet parishioners. It had gone down well and had generated good interaction.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(c) Next Surgery

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Mrs JM Young be requested to preside over the next Parish Council Surgery between 10:00am and 10:45am on Saturday, 29 November 2008 on the forecourt of the Co-op Stores, Church Road, Saughall and bring a report on its proceedings to the next meeting of the Council.

258 ODD JOBS

RESOLVED:

That Mr Wilkinson be requested to remove the rusty litter bin on the Ridings Estate and replace it with one from the Golden Jubilee Park.

259 VERNON INSTITUTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (VIMC)

Councillor Mrs JM Young reported on the proceedings of the last meeting of the VIMC. The discussions had centred around Cottage No 1.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

260 ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

(a) Outside Body Meeting Coming Up

- (i) Cheshire Community Action Annual General Meeting
7:00pm on 19 November 2008 at Middlewich Community Church, 34-36 Brooks Lane, Middlewich, Cheshire, CW10 0JG

No representation.

(b) Reports on Proceedings at recent Outside Body Meetings/Events

- (i) Cheshire Association of Local Councils' 2008 Annual Meeting
6:30pm on Thursday, 23 October 2008 at Middlewich Civic Hall

Councillors B Kerr and WI Humphrey had attended this meeting and informed on its proceedings. Members were told that the Association had a five year plan in operation to make itself financially independent and not reliant on principal authorities. Consequently, affiliation fees would increase and this year the Council could be expected to pay an additional £75 on top of last year's fee.

A discussion had been held regarding the Cheshire Constabulary and improved policing in parished areas and it was noted that there would be an increase in the number of PCSOs.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

- (ii) Chester City Council's Parish Partnership Reception
Wednesday, 29 October 2008 at the Guildhall, Watergate Street, Chester

Councillors RA and Mrs JE Storrar had attended this event and reported on its proceedings. The Lord Mayor had spoken at length about the importance of parish councils and parish councillors. The event had provided an opportunity to meet the new Chief Executive and the Directors of Cheshire West and Chester Council.

Councillor RA Storrar informed that Saughall's population had risen to over 3,000 and consequently, businesses in the village no longer qualified for rate relief.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

- (iii) Cheshire Association of Local Councils Chester Area Meeting
7:30pm on Wednesday, 15 October 2008 at County Hall, Chester

Councillors RA and Mrs JE Storrar attended this event and reported on its proceedings. They informed that the Chief Planning Officer had been invited to talk about new planning law and guidance at the next meeting scheduled for 14 January 2009.

(iv)Cheshire Police Authority – Have Your Say

Councillor A Warrington informed that he had attended this event and had had his say. He informed that there were currently 360 Special Constables in Cheshire and that a number of questions had been asked about PCSOs.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

261 CIRCULARS

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

Cheshire County Council's Chester Matters – September and October 2008

Chester City Council's The Past Uncovered – October 2008

What's On Chester and Cheshire – October 2008

Chester City Council's Exhibitions and Events in Chester – October 2008 to January 2009

Chester City Council's Ethics and Standards Committee Annual Report 2007/08