

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF SAUGHALL AND SHOTWICK PARK PARISH
COUNCIL held on 2 March 2009 at the Vernon Institute, Saughall

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

Mr H Dobson, Internal Auditor

49 APOLOGIES FOR AUTHORISED ABSENCE

Apologies for authorised absence were received from Councillors B Kerr and Mrs H Thorniley-Jones.

50 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Mrs J Knox, RK Shukla, RA Storrar 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 57/2009 refers) because of their association with the local schools.

51 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Council meetings held on 2 February 2009 be confirmed as a correct record.

52 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the following Committees be received and the recommendations therein be endorsed:

Planning Committee held on 2 February 2009; and
Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 26 February 2009.

53 CASUAL VACANCY ON THE PARISH COUNCIL

The Returning Officer had reported that the vacancy in the Saughall Ward had been called. Ten electors had advised that they wished the vacancy to be filled by a By-election. The date had been provisionally agreed as 23 April 2009. Any election would need to be held within 60 days of the Notice of the vacancy being displayed, which was 30 January 2009.

A decision was required on whether to provide polling cards if an election went ahead. An estimated cost of an election with cards was £1,540 and £940 without.

It was noted that the cost of hiring the Vernon Institute for the election was approximately £180.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be received;
- (2) the Returning Officer be informed that poll cards will not be required if the election goes ahead as notices will be posted around the village
- (3) David Norbury, local journalist be requested to report on the election, if it is to be held, in the local papers; and
- (4) the Vernon Institute Management Committee be requested to waive the letting charge as its hire is for a Parish Council election.

54 GOLDEN JUBILEE PARK DEVELOPMENT

(a) Fiddlers Lane Car Park – Drainage

Further to Minute No 31(b)/2009 Cheshire County Council's Area Maintenance Engineer, Graham Anderton, had advised that "if the drain outside number 2 Fiddlers Lane is a highway drain, we cannot permit anything other than road water. If it were not a highway drain, we would have no objections, from a highway point of view. The only concern would be that the work would have to be carried out in a safe manner."

Councillor Mrs D Whitton referred to Minute No 41/2009 of the last meeting of the Council and informed that the money currently held in the Millennium Fund would not be made available to help fund the drainage work required.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to contact Bell Developments and enquire if they have any information on Fiddlers Lane drainage from when they built Kingswood Court.

(b) Perimeter Path

The Area Maintenance Engineer had provided a contact name and telephone number for a contractor who undertook weed-spraying work for the County Council and the Clerk intended to speak to him and request a quotation to spray the perimeter path.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(c) Roadside Hedge

The Clerk had obtained two quotations from Gordon Dutton. One quote was to cut the roadside hedge at a cost of £200 and the other for £60 was to cut the inside hedge. This work had to be done urgently, before the birds started to nest.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the Clerk be requested to ask Gordon Dutton to carry out the work needed as a matter of urgency at the prices quoted; and

(2) the Council explore as many avenues as possible with regard to hedge cutting before similar work is required next year.

(d) Pond

It was reported that a date had not been agreed when the sporting organisations would clean out the pond. The Chairman informed that she would discuss this with the sporting organisations as soon as possible.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(e) Park Benches

It was reported that the four park benches had not been fitted properly. One had been thrown into the pond and one of the others was very loose. The Chairman would ask the contractor to carry out the work needed to install the benches properly in the Park and move one bench further away from the pond.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(f) Field Gate

The field gate behind the Uniform Groups' Headquarters needed some attention.

RESOLVED:

That arrangements be made with the original contractor to repair the gate.

(a) Police

PCSO Sue Morrison presented her monthly report that set out details of crimes, anti-social behaviour, parking issues and concerns about speeding traffic. She informed that she had been getting out and about the village meeting people and introducing herself to the various businesses that operate in the locality and groups that met in Saughall. She had also met staff at both schools. She would continue with her high visibility campaign throughout March 2009.

Members were also informed of a burglary at Oaktree Nurseries that had occurred the previous evening. PCSO Morrison told the Council that she was unaware of the burglary.

PCSO Morrison agreed to ask her Sergeant to contact Cheshire West and Chester Council and ask that its traffic wardens visit Saughall and ticket vehicles causing an obstruction.

PCSO Mike Butler's February 2009 report was appended to the agenda for Members' reference.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(b) Cheshire Constabulary, Police Community Support Officer –Partner Service Level Agreement

Members had considered the Service Level Agreement (SLA) at its last meeting (Minute No 32(b)/2009 refers). The agreement ran until 31 March 2010 and it was expected that negotiations would commence prior to that in respect of a new SLA. In the meantime, Members would monitor the working of the SLA at its Council meetings and this would be a determining factor on whether to sign up to a new one when the time came.

(c) 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. Matters reported included:

- Rubbish tipped in Park Avenue
- Under age youths in possession of alcohol
- Vandalism in the Golden Jubilee Park
- Footballs kicked against garages causing a nuisance
- Attempted break-in – 30 Hermitage Road
- Oaktree Nurseries burglary

RESOLVED:

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

(d) Saughall Neighbourhood Management Team

A meeting of the Team was arranged for Wednesday and provision of defibrulators was on the agenda.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

56 YOUTH ISSUES

Jane Clarke, the Youth Leader, had written to the Chairman requesting a financial contribution to assist a trip for Youth Club members to Alton Towers. It would cost approximately £700 for entry into Alton Towers and the coach would cost approximately £275.

Members were informed that the Youth Club had been busily raising funds by bag packing at the Morrisons Store and through a jumble sale. What they had raised was being used to pay for the outside of the Club to be repainted.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Youth Club be congratulated on its fund raising activities; and
- (2) the Youth Club be given a contribution of £150 towards the cost of their day out at Alton Towers.

57 THE NEW SCHOOL AND THE FUTURE OF THE INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOL BUILDINGS

Councillor RA Storrar reported that the builders had now caught up and the scheme was on target for completion on the original date set. The pedestrian crossing was being installed sooner than first indicated. Members wanted to know if it would be possible to connect a speed warning sign to it.

The Ridings Infant School would be put up for sale by sealed bids and the Thomas Wedge CE (Controlled) Junior School would be demolished. It was hoped that their names could continue somehow within the new building.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be received; and
- (2) the Clerk be requested to ascertain, from Officers of Cheshire County Council's Highways Department, whether a speed warning sign could be allied to the new pedestrian crossing.

58 WAIN HOUSE

It was reported that Wain House had become 'unfit for purpose', as defined by Government guidelines and as a consequence the Chester District Housing Trust was devising an alternative use for the site.

The Trust was now in the final stages of this decision, making progress and hoped to be able to let residents know about the finalised proposals in March 2009.

Residents had drawn up a petition against the proposal and were collecting signatures.

It was reported that the walnut tree planted to commemorate the Queen's Silver Jubilee might have a Tree Preservation Order on it.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

59 LAND AT LODGE LANE FOR RURAL AFFORDABLE HOMES

Further to Minute No 36/2009 of the last meeting the Clerk had written to officers at the two principal authorities and the Chester District Housing Trust stating that this Council wished to encourage them to do all in their power to get the affordable housing scheme off the ground and was eagerly awaiting the results of their negotiations.

Chester District Housing Trust's Development Officer, Danielle Harrison, had reported that she had received relevant information from the County Land Agent, David Job. The Trust was now working up a feasibility study to assess how viable the proposed scheme was.

RESOLVED:

That this Council is happy to support the development of this proposed low cost housing scheme.

60 HIGHWAY ISSUES

(a) Parked Cars on Pavements

PCSO Sue Morrison would continue to issue tickets where vehicles were parked causing an obstruction. She had agreed to request Traffic Wardens to come to the village and issue tickets to offending motorists (Minute No 55/2009 refers).

RESOLVED:

That parked vehicles causing an obstruction in Saughall continue to be monitored.

(b) A5117/A550 Deeside Park Junction Improvement

The Completion of Works Ceremony was being held at 10:00am on 3 March 2009 at the Mollington Banastre Hotel and Spa. The Council had been invited to send three representatives to the ceremony.

RESOLVED:

That Councillors Mrs JM Young and Mrs D Whitton and Mr T Summers, Saughall Neighbourhood Management Team's Co-ordinator, be requested to represent the Council at the Completion of Works Ceremony.

(c) Speeding Traffic and the Proposal for Community Speed Watch Signage

Councillor WI Humphrey reported that arrangements had been made with Derek Bowker of Cheshire Community Action to have two sessions using the Speed Indicator Device and three using the speed gun. After that the village should get Community Speed Watch Signage, as it would fulfil the criteria laid down.

(d) The Current "Bus War"

It was noted that First Group had given notice to withdraw their 'daytime' service from Saughall in its entirety from 29 March 2009. They would continue to operate the evening service for the time being on contract to the County Council. This would leave Arriva as the only company serving Saughall during the day.

As far as the verges were concerned, the withdrawal of bus 'competition' in Saughall would remove the temptation for bus drivers to squeeze past each other at the terminus and damage the grass 'circle'. With regard to the Ridings, Arriva insisted that it was not necessarily their vehicles that actually drove over the verges. They would reconsider their route through Saughall in the light of First Bus's imminent withdrawal.

Cheshire County Council's Highway Engineers were insistent that they would not spend taxpayers' money repairing verges until they could have some guarantee that they would not be almost immediately damaged again. The reduction of bus movements in the area may result in less damage to the verges and have a positive effect on the village.

It was noted that First Bus did have some slimmer buses than Arriva but they operated mainly in Upton and Kingsway. Vehicles used in Saughall were Scania/Wright vehicles and although a little longer were the same width.

Members also noted an email from Alan Bailey of Hermitage Road concerning the current bus timetable operating in Saughall.

RESOLVED:

That it be noted that First Bus is withdrawing its service from 29 March 2009 and the new bus timetable be awaited.

(f) Area Maintenance Engineer's Annual Village Inspection

Following the site inspection (Minute No 39(f)/2009 refers) the Area Maintenance Engineer reported on progress as follows:

- “The road markings throughout the village have been measured and are to be restored in the near future.
- The footways on Hermitage Road have been sided out between the Egerton Arms and 'Blodwyn' + between 'The Peg' and Aspen Grove.
- I have contacted Transport Co-ordination, regarding the overrunning of grass verges by Arriva.
- Kay Parry is dealing with the proposed crossing, by the school.
- I have written to Mr. Warrington, about the hedge on Hermitage Road.
- I have checked the road markings on the A540 roundabout and could find nothing wrong.
- The path at the back of 72 Darlington Crescent is the responsibility of Chester and District Housing Trust.

The missing 'manhole cover' outside 46/48 Church Road must have been a Stop Tap cover, which has been replaced by the water company.”

It was noted that the Area Maintenance Engineer had agreed to make good the grass verges on Hermitage Road but the daffodils were now through. He had also agreed to carry out maintenance to the edges of Fiddlers Lane.

RESOLVED:

That the reports be received.

(g) Church Road to Park Avenue Footpath

Further to Minute No. 39(i)/2009 of the last meeting of the Council when it was reported that the footpath running from Church Road to Park Avenue needed attention and a tree near the path required trimming as it obscured a street light.

It was noted that the Area Maintenance Engineer had agreed to inspect the site.

(h) Bus Shelter Maintenance

It was reported that under the parish Shelter Scheme maintenance was payable for five years after the shelter was installed. Therefore, the cost of the maintenance of the shelter on Church Road had reverted to the County Council.

This was good news for the Council as it meant that the £2,500 budget for bus shelter maintenance could now be available for other projects.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(i) Bus Stop at The Peg on Hermitage Road

The Area Maintenance Engineer reported that the road lines/markings at the bus stop were now correct so anyone who parked there was committing an offence. Chester City Council (and from 1 April 2009 Cheshire West and Chester) was responsible for parking offences and would take action if motorists continued to offend.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

61 ACCOUNTS

(a) Payments made since the meeting of the Council held on 2 February 2009:

RESOLVED:

That the following payments be approved:

<u>Financial Year 2008/2009</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>Cheque No</u>
Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council (Printing)	49.40	102226
NWN Media Ltd (Newsletter Delivery)	28.18	102227
Saughall Rangers (Newsletter Delivery)	20.00	102228
Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council (Printing)	35.70	102229
Mrs S Hudspeth (Expenses)	35.00	102230
Mrs S Hudspeth (Salary)	632.69	102231
Mr R Hipkiss (Street Cleaning)	1,007.67	102232
Vernon Institute Management Committee (Refurbishment Of flat roof and library floor)(Minute No 64/2009 refers)	1,900.00	102233
Saughall Youth Club (Contribution towards trip to Alton Towers)	150.00	102234

(b) Receipts

RESOLVED:

That the following receipts be noted:

	<u>£</u>
Interest on 14 Day Interest Account to 21 February 2009	0.25
Chester City Council – Arrears of Street Cleaning Grant	174.72
Refund of VAT	5,393.32

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

RESOLVED:

That the contents be noted.

(d) Affiliation to the Mid-Cheshire Footpath Society

Parish Council's could support the work of the Society by affiliating to it for a fee of £8.00 per annum. A request had been received for it to do so.

RESOLVED:

That this Council will not affiliate to the Mid-Cheshire Footpath Society.

62 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION IN CHESHIRE

(a) Progress Report

It was noted that the recruitment process was well underway and only six managers at forth tier from Chester City Council had been able to obtain fourth tier posts with the new Council.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(b) Funding Streams to Town and Parish Councils

The Clerk and Councillor B Kerr had been in correspondence with the Leader and Deputy Leader of Cheshire West and Chester Council over the unfairness and injustice of the unitary Council's decision to not pay double taxation grant. It meant that parished areas of the Chester District were being disadvantaged in comparison with the rest of the area served by the new Council. The grant had not been reinstated but the Council had been told that the New Council was committed to reviewing grants and payments that had been made to Parish Council during the coming year and was looking forward to working with all Parish and Town Councils in a positive way during this process and was giving parish and Town Councils greater involvement in the delivery of services in their communities as it developed its thinking on Area Partnership Boards and Community Forums.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(c) Clarity on the Continuity of Funding Arrangements.

Steve Robinson, Chief Executive of Cheshire West and Chester Council, had written to the Clerk on 5 February 2009 to clarify the continuity of funding arrangements. He informed that his Council was proposing investment into the workings of the Community Forums in the form of delegated budgets to each Councillor to utilise, in consultation with the Forum, to invest in local schemes that would make a real difference to local communities. This investment was planned at £360,000 (subject to Council approval on 26 February 2009) across Cheshire West and Chester (based on £5,000 per Councillor) and represented a significant financial investment in local service delivery.

During 2009/10 the new Council recognised there was a need to undertake a fundamental review of the payments to local councils and the Third Sector. This would be based upon a move towards a “commissioning” based relationship with these organisations and less reliance on grant payments. It would also seek to move towards longer term commissioning arrangements based upon three year contracts to provide greater stability and certainty for parish councils. This work would be undertaken in consultation with local partners and in direct conversation with each of the organisations currently receiving funding from the local authorities. This process would be completed by October 2009 to allow significant time for organisations to develop their financial plans for 2010/11 and beyond.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(d) Playbuilder Project for Cheshire West and Chester Council

The Finance and General Purposes Committee had considered this matter as urgent business at its meeting on 26 February 2009 because the deadline for receipt of information on which to base a funding application was 27 February 2009. If successful the bid would be considered for inclusion as one of the 22 new or significantly improved play spaces. It was expected that each site would benefit from an approximate investment of £40,000.

The Committee had considered that a funding application should be made to provide another multi-play system to meet the needs of girls between 8-13 years of age as there was currently a distinct lack of provision for them in the village and this shortage must be addressed. The application would also be for another tarmac pad to be laid next to the one already in the Golden Jubilee Park thus doubling the size of the tarmac games surface/court.

An expression of interest and appropriate information had been sent to Cheshire West and Chester Council by the deadline and the Committee recommended that the Council note its actions, in light of the time period for receipt of funding applications, and endorse them.

RESOLVED:

That the actions of the Finance and General Purposes Committee be noted and endorsed.

(e) Cheshire West and Chester partnership Bulletin

A copy had been circulated with the agenda for Members' information.

63 PARISH COUNCIL SURGERIES

(a) Surgery held on Saturday, 28 February 2009

Councillor Mrs D Whitton had presided over the last Surgery and she proposed that in future this item be at the beginning of the agenda. She went on to report on issues raised at her Surgery, which included the following:

- Various views about the demolition of the Thomas Wedge CE (Controlled) Junior School building
- Incidents of dog fouling increasing and requests for appropriate receptacles in the Ridings and Maplewood Grove and on the corner of Hermitage Road and the Ridings where people were putting it in ordinary bins
- Problems with the buses and the state of verges
- Gentleman offering the Vernon Institute Management Committee assistance in painting the Vernon Institute
- Speeding traffic

RESOLVED: That

(1) Councillor Mrs D Whitton's report be noted; and

(2) and this standard item appear earlier on the agenda for future Council meetings.

(b) Surgery on Saturday, 4 April 2009 between 10:00am and 10:30am

Members present were all unavailable to preside at the next scheduled Surgery. Those Members not in attendance at the meeting would be asked if they were available. If they too were unable to preside it may be necessary to cancel the Surgery on this occasion

RESOLVED: That

(1) the situation be noted; and

(2) Councillor RA Storrar be requested to liaise with the dog warden over the location of dog waste bins that the Clerk will request.

64 ODD JOBS

It was reported that Bert Wilkinson and Roy Hipkiss had helped get the park bench out of the pond.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

65 VERNON INSTITUTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (VIMC)

It was reported that the VIMC was concerned with getting No 1 Cottage up to an acceptable standard and that room bookings at the VI were high.

Further to Minute No. 45/2009 of the last meeting of the Council when Harry Dobson, the VIMC's Treasurer, had informed of work carried out to the VI at a total cost of £3,800 in respect of floor repairs to the small hall and repairs to the flat roof over the entrance, a decision on a financial contribution was outstanding.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be received; and
- (2) the Council will make a contribution of £1,900 toward the recent refurbishment work at the VI.

66 ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

(a) Meetings Coming Up

(i) Calling All Women!

Free event to be held on Thursday, 12 March 2009, 6:00pm – 8:30pm at University of Chester, Binks Building, Parkgate Road, Chester

Councillors Mrs D Whitton and Mrs JM Young announced their intention to attend this event

(ii) Chester City Council's Goway North Area Committee

Thursday, 5 March 2009 between 7:00pm and 9:00pm at Burley Memorial Hall, Village Road, Waverton, CH3 7QN

Councillors RA and Mrs JE Storrar represented Chester City Council on this Committee.

(iii) Cheshire Crime stoppers "Fighting Business Crime"

Thursday, 26 March between 6:30pm and 8:30pm at the MacDonald Portal Hotel Golf and Spa, Cobblers Cross, Tarporley

Councillor Mrs JE Storrar and WI Humphrey agreed to attend to represent the Council.

67 QUALITY PARISH COUNCIL FORUMS

Councillor RA Storrar reported that the Cheshire Association of Local Councils (ChALC) was convening Quality Parish Council Forums and excluding other parish councils from attending by not letting them know they were on.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to speak to Jackie Weaver, the Chief Officer at ChALC, to let her know that as an aspiring Quality Parish Council, this Council would like to be invited to send representatives to these Forum meetings.

68 COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED

(a) An email had been received on 12 February 2009 from John Grain regarding the state of the roads in the village and about parking. Its content was noted that along with the Clerk's reply.

(b) A letter dated 21 February 2009 from the Rev Brian Harris had been received.

RESOLVED:

This letter be put on the agenda for consideration at the next meeting.

(c) a letter dated 24 February 2009 was received from Jessica Metheringham, Review Officer at the Boundary Committee, regarding the electoral review of Cheshire West and Chester to establish how many Councillors were needed to best represent the local community. She requested any submissions by 6 April 2009.

Councillor RA Storrar reported that there was pressure to move to single Member Wards and that such a move would make Councillors inaccessible and remote as far as electors were concerned.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to respond to the consultation as detailed above.

(d) A letter dated 15 February 2009 from Denis Jones of Church Road was sent to the Chairman objecting to the proposed puffin crossing on Church Road, Saughall. He considered that it would not be installed in the right place and that it would be an eyesore.

RESOLVED:

That Mr Jones's letter be noted.

69 CIRCULARS

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

Cheshire Police Authority 'Have Your Say' Meetings: Programme 2009/10
Chester City Council's Exhibitions and Events in Chester February to May 2009
Chester City Council's Ethics and Standards Committee agenda for the meeting scheduled for 12 February 2009
Chester City Council Fairtrade Guide
The Playing Field, Winter 2008/09
Arriva & Chester City Bus Services 1, 1A & 15 – Chester to Blacon and Saughall from Wednesday, 2 January 2008
Highways Agency – Improving the Junctions at Deeside Park A5117 – the Story of the Construction

70 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the item of business listed below on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act. The public interest test has been applied and favours exclusion of the information from the press and public:

Item	Paragraph(s)
Claim Against the Council's Third Party Liability Insurance	1 Information relating to any individual

PART 2- MATTERS CONSIDERED IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

71 CLAIM AGAINST THE COUNCIL'S THIRD PARTY LIABILITY INSURANCE

The Clerk brought Members up to date with the detail of recent correspondence received from the Scouting Movement.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.