

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE held on 25 February 2010 in the Uniform Groups' Headquarters, Fiddlers Lane, Saughall

In attendance: Councillor DF Holman (in the Chair)  
Councillor RK Shukla  
Councillor A Warrington  
Councillor Mrs JM Young

Mr B Salisbury – Internal Auditor

Also in attendance: Councillor Mrs K Ford  
Councillor WI Humphrey  
Councillor B Kerr (Part)  
Councillor Mrs JE Storrar

1 APOLOGIES FOR AUTHORISED ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor Mrs J Johnson  
Councillor RA Storrar

2 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

3 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 19 November 2009 be confirmed as a correct record.

4 TENDERING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE LITTER PICKING CONTRACT

The Council had agreed to tender for a new Litter Picking Contract as the current one was due to expire in May 2010. The Clerk was making arrangements to begin the process. However, Councillor B Kerr reported that he, as an Executive Member of the Cheshire Association of Local Councils, had been invited to a meeting with Alison Armstrong, Cheshire West and Chester (CWAC) Council's Lead Officer for Engagement with Communities. At this meeting he had been informed that CWAC Council was working towards putting in place Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with Parish Councils.

CWAC Council had consulted local councils during 2009 on working arrangements between them and itself. Most local councils who had responded and had held discussions with Mrs Armstrong were interested in Street Scene Services. Mrs Armstrong was working to a timetable to produce a policy and proposals. Decisions would be made in respect of financial contributions to be paid to parish councils who agree to provide certain

services within their local communities and SLAs would be drawn up and agreed.

Following this meeting Councillor Kerr had spoken to Simon Lammond, CWAC Council's Senior Manager, Street Scene, who had informed that the current Parish Street Orderly Scheme, that continues to operate within the old Chester City Council's administrative area, was currently under a wider review within CWAC Council on the way it delivered services at the local level. It was not yet clear what schemes/agreements CWAC Council may propose and how these were to be resourced and managed. CWAC Council had written to local councils within the old Chester District to tell them that the Parish Street Orderly Scheme would be funded for at least a further year from 1 April 2010. Therefore, in the light of this Mr Lammond considered that it may be prudent for the Parish Council not to proceed with a tender process in respect of Litter Picking but to extend the existing agreement, if it was possible, for a further year.

There was no guarantee that CWAC Council would have a new policy in place by 1 April 2011 but it was known that its political leadership had issued a direction to officers to sort out a process of working with local councils because the grants being made available for such services as litter picking would not be available after 31 March 2011.

It was noted that CWAC Council might wish to discuss with local councils the possibility of them taking on a wider level of service provision.

Councillor Kerr informed that he had spoken to My Ray Hipkiss, who currently carried out the litter picking required in the village under contract, and he was willing to continue after the contract's expiry, for a further year to 31 March 2011.

RESOLVED:

That the Council be **RECOMMENDED** to:

- (1) rescind its decision to go out to tender in respect of its Litter Picking Contract; and
- (2) extend its Litter Picking Contract currently awarded to Mr Hipkiss for a further year ending 31 March 2011.

## 5 POLICING ARRANGEMENTS IN SAUGHALL

Prior to the meeting all Members of the Council had been invited to meet with Sergeant Darren Griffiths of the Cheshire Constabulary. Those who had attended this meeting had been informed of the restructuring that had taken place in the Chester and Ellesmere Port Policing Area following the appointment of the new Chief Constable.

Sergeant Griffiths had reported that instead of the three teams of officers there was now just one team with designated Beat Managers who knew where all the hot spots were. The Beat Managers would identify the issues and the

Team on duty would be tasked in the areas where there was a problem and they were most needed. PCSOs remained flexible and community based and PCSO Mike Butler would still be assigned to Saughall. It was noted that shift patterns had now also changed. The Police considered that this new approach would provide the policing required for the Chester and Ellesmere Port area.

Members discussed the new arrangements and noted that crimes were down in Saughall.

RESOLVED:

That the new policing arrangements for Saughall be noted, monitored by Members and discussed at future meetings of the Committee.

#### 6 RURAL PARISH COUNCIL INSURANCE SCHEME

The Committee received details of a Rural Parish Council Insurance Scheme underwritten by Zurich Insurance plc.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to send the Council's insurance details to Zurich Insurance plc and obtain a quote in respect of its current requirements.

#### 7 PROACTIVE APPROACH TO GRANT AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The Clerk requested the Committee to give consideration to exactly what it would like to provide in the village, in the period up to the all out elections in May 2011, if grant aid was to become available to help or totally fund it. Currently, the Council's approach to external funding opportunities was reactionary and piecemeal.

RESOLVED: That

(1) all Members of the Council be requested to consider what facilities/provision could be included in an interim plan to assist the funding application process and bring their ideas to the next meeting; and

(2) the Clerk be requested to include an item in the next Parish Council Newsletter asking parishioners what they would like to see provided/replaced in the village.

#### 8 GOLDEN JUBILEE PARK

(a) Moles

Councillor Mrs JM Young reported that she had been put in touch with a "mole catcher". The "mole catcher" had visited the Park, put traps down and caught five moles.

(b) Car Park

It was noted that the car park was waterlogged and the recent drainage work did not seem to be working.

(c) Perimeter Path

The perimeter path was in need of repair, a lot of the damage to it was caused by rabbits. Discussion ensued on how to solve the rabbit problem.

(d) 2010 Spring Clean

It was proposed to have a Park Spring Clean and the Cricket Club and Football Team would be consulted on dates.

(e) Litter

There was a lot of litter in the Park and it was noted that there were no litter bins. However, it was also considered that the problem would not be solved by installing bins.

(f) Tree Stump in Pond

There was an old tree stump in the pond which needed to be removed. It was agreed that the only way to do this would be by using a winch. The pond was also full of green algae.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the mole situation in the Golden Jubilee Park continue to be monitored;
- (2) the Field Committee be requested to meet in the Park on Sunday, 7 March 2010 to consider the issues raised and show the Cricket Club which areas of grass to cut;
- (3) the contractor who carried out the drainage work in the car park be requested to return to site and offer advice on how to rectify the problem; and
- (4) enquiries be made regarding possible solutions and further discussions on the rabbit infestation take place at the next meeting of the Committee with a view to identifying a course of action to be taken.

10 SAUGHALL AND SHOTWICK PARK RIGHTS OF WAY

The Mid-Cheshire Footpath Society's Inspector for Chester City, Mr A Harbottle, had written to the Clerk and to Cheshire West and Chester Council's Rights of Way Officer, Steve Hardwick, enclosing a relevant map. He informed that on footpath S2 (permissive path) where the kissing gate was in the hedgerow a fairly new wooden post had been installed with two green footpath signs pointing to Big Wood. The Ordnance Survey map did not show a footpath and there was no sign on one on the ground.

The Clerk had contacted Tony Leach, the Parish Council's Footpath Warden, who informed that the post and path were there and that it seemed that on this occasion the Ordnance Survey map was incorrect.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

#### 11 CHESHIRE TRAINING PARTNERSHIP

The Committee considered a list of Training Dates supplied by the Cheshire Association of Local Councils. Training sessions for member councils were provided by the Cheshire Training Partnership and cost £30 each session.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the Clerk be requested to contact Mr C Poynton to request dates when he would be able to provide training for the Planning Committee and other neighbouring Parish Council Members in Saughall; and

(2) the Council be **RECOMMENDED** to agree the following training requests:

Councillor Mrs JM Young – Chairmanship – 23 March 2010  
Mr B Salisbury – Finance – 23 June 2010  
Councillor Mrs K Ford – Law and Procedure – 20 April 2010  
Councillor Mrs K Ford – Basic Induction – 12 June 2010

#### 12 PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

The Clerk had prepared a draft Newsletter which she took Members through. It was noted that some items were awaited from Members and other interested parties but it was expected to run to at least 14 sides of A4. Members put forward some suggestions for inclusion if possible.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the position with the forthcoming Newsletter be noted; and

(2) Councillor Mrs K Ford be requested to provide an article for the June 2010 Newsletter on what it means to be a Councillor – “Kathy's First Year”.