

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SAUGHALL AND SHOTWICK PARK PARISH  
COUNCIL held on 9 January 2012 at the Vernon Institute, Saughall

In attendance: Councillor Mrs K Ford  
Councillor WI Humphrey, (Homewatch Chairman)  
Councillor DF Holman  
Councillor Mrs J Johnson  
Councillor B Kerr  
Councillor Mrs J Knox  
Councillor RK Shukla  
Councillor Mrs JE Storrar  
Councillor RA Storrar  
Councillor Mrs D Whitton  
Councillor Mrs JM Young (in the Chair)  
Councillor PP Young

CWAC Councillor B Crowe

1. APOLOGIES FOR AUTHORISED ABSENCE

Apologies for authorised absence were received from:

Councillor A Warrington  
PCSO Wendy Leason  
PC Rhys Matthews

2. MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 7 November 2011 be confirmed as a correct record.

4. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

(a) Planning held on 7 November and 5 December 2011

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on 7 November and 5 December 2011 be received.

(b) General Purposes held on 5 December 2011

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 5 December 2011 be received and the recommendations contained therein be agreed; and
- (2) the next meeting of the Committee and that of the Planning Committee be rescheduled from 6 February 2012 to 7 February 2012 to accommodate the Clerk.

(c) Finance and Business Development held on 10 October 2011

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Business Development Committee held on 6 December 2011 be received and the recommendation contained therein be agreed; and
- (2) the Members' mileage rate be agreed as 25p per mile and the Members' Mileage Claim Form prepared by Councillor DF Holman be used herewith.

5. POLICE/HOMEWATCH

(a) PCSO Report

PCSO had apologised for not being able to attend the meeting as she was on a rest day. She had sent a written report which was read out as follows:

"May I firstly take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy and healthy New Year and that Saughall remains the tranquil and pleasant place to live and work.

My report is very positive for December with Anti Social Behaviour being at an all time low. There were no issues with youths during the Christmas Holidays.

There has only been one Burglary where the youths were caught and charged.

The issue that remains in the village is **Parking on the Pavements**, may I take this opportunity to advise residents that by obstructing the pavement they are likely to receive a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Also, can I advise Dog Owners of the responsibility they have to clean up after their dogs, dog fouling in the village is unacceptable and those responsible could receive a fine."

RESOLVED: That

(1) PCSO Leason be thanked for her report; and

(2) Councillor Mrs JM Young be requested to discuss the possibility of focussing on parking on pavements and issuing fixed penalties to those motorists who cause an obstruction.

(b) Homewatch Report

Councillor WI Humphrey in his capacity as Homewatch Chairman presented an oral report informing that apart from two requests to check residents' property over the Christmas period no problems had arisen due to the efforts of PC Rhys Matthews and PCSO Wendy Leason.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(c) Saughall Neighbourhood Management Team Report

Councillor Mrs JM Young reported that the Quiz Night organised by the Saughall Neighbourhood Management Team had raised £515. This would go to help fund the Summer Play Scheme. The Team would be advertising for Play Leaders.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

6. MEMBERS' TRAINING

It was noted that Councillor Mrs K Ford intended to attend the Chairmanship 1 training to be provided by the Cheshire Association of Local Councils on 7 February 2012 at Wyvern House, Winsford.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be asked to book Councillor Mrs K Ford a place on the above training course.

7. CHAIRMAN'S BI-MONTHLY REPORT

The Chairman presented her bi-monthly report informing as follows:

- She had attended Cheshire West and Chester Council's meeting about the Local Development Framework and the Green Belt and had spoken about the protection of the green belt in Saughall and about urban sprawl.
- She had attended a meeting in Blacon regarding the proposed Student Village.
- She had attended a meeting at Wain court with a view to promoting village activities.

- She had dealt with a query about sewage from Barra Kennels.
- She had dealt with a dog nuisance problem on Hermitage Road.
- She had met with Cheshire West and Chester Council's Rural Team.
- She had spoken to the PCSO about the possibility of loaning the ramp rider in the Summer Holidays.
- Saughall Neighbourhood Management team had requested a driver awareness day.

## 8. PARISH COUNCIL SURGERIES

### (a) Surgery held on Saturday, 7 January 2012

Councillor Mrs JM Young reported on the following matters raised at her Surgery:

- The grass verges at the bottom of the Ridings/Hermitage Road.
- Dog bags being thrown into people's gardens.
- Parking in Church Road when children were going to and from school.
- Rubbish in the Golden Jubilee Park by the Aerial Runway.
- Parking on pavements.
- Bus issues on Church Road.
- The Twenty's Plenty initiative.
- Queries about the proposed Oakwood Farm auction.
- Does the Council still employ a street cleaner?
- Comments about road re-surfacing in various places in the village.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Mrs JM Young be thanked for her informative report.

### (b) Surgeries on Saturday, 4 February and 3 March 2012.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Mrs K Ford be requested to preside over the Surgery on 4 February 2012 at both the Co-op Store and the Farmers' Market between 10:00am and 10:45am, Councillor DF Holman be requested to preside over the Surgery on 3 March 2012 to be held at both the Co-op Store and the Farmers' Market between 10:00am and 10:45am and Cheshire West and Chester Councillor Brian Crowe be invited to join them.

## 9. CHESHIRE WEST AND CHESTER (CWAC) COUNCIL - LOCAL MEMBERS' REPORT

Councillor B Crowe reported on the following issues of interest to the Council:

- He had provided the Vernon Institute with a bag of grit.
- Grit Bins
- Oakwood Farm – update.
- The Student Village planning application had not been submitted yet.
- The Double Taxation Consultation.

Councillor Crowe was informed that PCSO Wendy Leason would be asking him for some funding from his ward fund to assist her community activity.

RESOLVED:

That CWAC Councillor Crowe be thanked for his assistance and for his report.

#### 10. LITTER PICKING ARRANGEMENTS AFTER 31 MARCH 2012

It was reported that no tenders had been received by the due date of 9 December 2011 to carry out litter picking in Saughall, from 1 April 2012. The Council referred to Minute No. 33 (e) – Budget 2012/13 and expressed empathy with the Committee's view that if no tenders were to be received the Council could leave litter picking to the Principal Authority, Cheshire West and Chester Council, as other villages were inclined to do. The subsequent state of tidiness of the village could then be monitored and problem areas reported with a request that they were attended to.

Budgetary provision would need to be made to keep the Golden Jubilee Park, in the ownership of the Council, as free of litter as possible but this would mean allocating less of the Council's resources to litter picking than in previous years.

Members discussed the possibility of arranging for a group of volunteers together, on a regular basis, to carry out scavenges when it was considered necessary. It was noted that responsible residents did not drop litter.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the report be received;

(2) the Clerk be asked to include a reminder not to drop litter in the next Parish Council Newsletter and include the telephone number of Cheshire west and Chester Council's Streetscene Section that parishioners can use to report litter problems; and

(3) Councillor Mrs JM Young be requested to sound out a litter picker employed in a neighbouring parish to see if he is interested in providing two/three hours litter picking work a week to keep the Golden Jubilee Park as litter free as possible.

#### 11. ELIMINATION OF DOUBLE TAXATION

A letter dated 22 December 2011 from Mike Jones, Leader of Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWaC) informed that the issue of double taxation had been repeatedly raised by parish councils across the Borough since the creation of the new (CWaC) in 2009. Following a scrutiny review of the Council's relationship with its parishes, its Executive agreed to explore the adoption of Special Expenses as a potential solution.

Double taxation related to the provision of local services and the way in which those services were funded and subsequently charged to the taxpayer. It

existed in areas where a parish council was delivering a function or service and charging local taxpayers for this through the parish precept, whilst elsewhere the service was being delivered by the principal council and funded through its element of the council tax. Where this happened, local taxpayers in the parish experienced 'double taxation' as they were effectively paying twice for the delivery of the local service – once through their parish precept and again through the principal authority's element of the council tax. Government guidance recommended that principal councils took steps to alleviate or eliminate the impact of double taxation. One suggested approach was the determination and application of 'Special Expenses' to such concurrent functions.

A Special Expense was an expense incurred by a billing authority in performing, in a part of its area, a function performed elsewhere in its area by a parish council. The adoption of Special Expenses was provided for under the Local Government Finance Act 1992. It allowed for different amounts of council tax to be calculated for different parts of an area depending on what, if any, special items related to those parts. The detailed identification of concurrent functions was therefore essential for using this Special Expenses provision. In exploring options to eliminate double taxation, a key factor was to ensure that the identified solution could be introduced within existing budgets and would have no impact on the overall level of income raised through council tax across the Borough. Treating expenses as Special Expenses did not affect the overall amount that the billing authority needed to raise through council tax and did not, therefore, affect the average amount of council tax across the whole of the area. It simply meant that the council tax was:

- relatively lower for areas where the parish council performs the concurrent function, as it included the parish's costs but not the council's costs of performing that function elsewhere; and
- relatively higher, for areas where the council performed the concurrent function, as all of the council's costs of performing the concurrent function were met by taxpayers in the areas where the council performed it.

Three potential concurrent functions had been identified at this stage. They were based on available delivery and costing information – open access play spaces, Christmas lights and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). These were all functions performed by CWaC in some parts of the Borough and parish councils in others.

For open access play spaces, the average cost calculated per site was £6,682 per annum. This covered all costs relating to repair, inspections, insurance and routine site maintenance, such as grass cutting and bin emptying. For Christmas lights, the actual costs of provision had been identified and included testing, repair, installation/removal and energy consumption. For PCSOs, the actual individual charge per officer (£11,800) had been used.

In setting the council tax for Special Expenses, CWaC must ensure the tax was levied only on the areas to which those expenses referred. As such, the total expenditure incurred by CWaC for each of the three concurrent functions

had been deducted from its base budget and then reapplied only to those areas where the Council was performing the function.

The position would vary across the Borough, with taxpayers either seeing a reduction on their council tax or an increase depending on what, if any, Special Expenses were applied. Generally, those living in the unparished areas of Chester and Ellesmere Port (covered by the Charter Trust) or those living in small parished areas where CWaC was funding open access play spaces or Christmas lights would see an increase.

The Leader of CWaC had written to all parish councils and known residents/community groups informing them of the proposals and seeking their views on implementation. The results of this consultation would be considered at the meeting of its Executive on 8 February 2012, prior to any subsequent recommendation on adoption being made to CWaC on 23 February 2012.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be asked to reply to Mr Jones' letter informing him that this Council was pleased to receive his letter and sees the exploration of options to eliminate double taxation as a very welcome development. The Council fully supports this initiative and would like to see it in place by 1 April 2012. However, it does consider that those parish councils that do not spend anything on the functions identified should not be included in the scheme and that its preference is for the calculation to be made, on a parish by parish basis, and not on the average across the Borough.

12. CHESHIRE WEST AND CHESTER COUNCIL – COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Councillor Ann Wright Chairman of Cheshire West and Chester Council's (CWaC) Community Governance Review Committee had written to the Clerk on 9 December 2011 about the piece of work carried out by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee during the previous year.

One of the first considerations of the CWaC Community Governance Review Committee was the phasing of individual reviews on a small area basis. The letter set out the detail of how the reviews were to be conducted. A questionnaire was attached for completion and return by 27 January 2012.

RESOLVED:

That the questionnaire be completed by the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman, and returned to CwaC within the timescale laid down.

13. VERNON INSTUTUTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (VIMC)

(a) Vernon Institute

Councillor P Young reported that the VIMC had a massive rebuilding project underway. A village consultation event had been held on 12 December 2011 and fifty people had been in attendance. It had been

interesting to see the model of the proposed development. It was expected that such a project would cost within the region of £350,000. It was hoped that grant aid opportunities could be exploited to help fund half the cost. The Vernon Institute Management Committee did have some investments but was unsure if it could use the money invested to help fund the project or if only the interest accrued from the investments could be used. The Council was of the opinion that the Vernon Institute, was a charitable trust, and as such, could only spend the interest on its investments.

Documentation was being drawn up. The Business Plan would be considered in detail before it was ready to be submitted with funding applications. A letter from the Council, confirming support for the project, would be required by the Vernon Institute Management Committee, in due course.

It was also reported that the Christmas Lights' Switch on event had been a great success and approximately £800 had been raised.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the report be received; and

(2) both the Finance and Business Development and General Purposes Committees consider the project that the Vernon Institute Management Committee wants to move forward alongside the Council's own aspirations for a sports pavilion/community centre to replace the Uniformed Groups' Headquarters, and the possibilities of both projects being able to secure grants to help fund them.

(b) Request for Funding

The Council considered an email dated 16 December 2011 which contained a request from the Treasurer of the Vernon Institute Management Committee, Harry Dobson to provide a grant to help fund half the cost of a fire alarm system that had cost it £3,226.80 and fire doors/hatch that had cost it £4,923.22.

Members were of the view that, as the work had already been commissioned and carried out, it was unable to support the funding request at this stage.

RESOLVED:

That the Vernon Institute Management Committee be informed that the Council is unable to provide funding for work already carried out and paid for but if it would like to request funding in advance for specific projects, the Council will give them its consideration.



#### 14. ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

(a) The Council noted the following outside body meetings coming up and agree representation where required:

- Cheshire West and Chester Council's Local Council Assembly at 7:00pm (light refreshments from 6pm) on Thursday, 1 March 2012 at the Forest Hills Hotel (Overton Hill, Frodsham, WA6 6HH). Letter dated 16 December 2011 from Councillor Mike Jones, Leader of the Council

Councillors B Kerr, Mrs K Ford and Mrs JM Young agreed to attend.

- Cheshire Association of Local Councils' Chester Area Meeting at 7:30pm on Wednesday, 15 February 2012 at HQ in Chester.

Councillors B Kerr and WI Humphrey agreed to attend.

(b) The Council received reports from Members on proceedings at outside meetings attended as follows:

- Bell Developments Consultation Day on Tuesday, 8 November 2011 at the Dee Point Centre, Blacon

Councillors A Warrington, Mrs D Whitton, Mrs JM Young and P Young had attended this event and reported on its proceedings.

The Council was told that the impact of such a development would be "horrendous". The proposal was for a new village of up to 4,000 people. It was considered as inappropriate development in the green belt.

The Council agreed to support Mollington Parish Council in its objection to the proposal.

- Public Meeting to consider the Proposal for a North Wales Waste Treatment Plant at 6:00pm on Tuesday, 22 November 2011 at the Civic Hall, Connah's Quay.

Councillor Mrs JM Young reported on proceedings. It had been a disorganised meeting and the turn out had been poor.

- Cheshire West and Chester Council's Quality Parish Council Forum on Wednesday, 23 November 2011.

This meeting had been cancelled.

- Cheshire Community Action Annual General Meeting 2011 at 6.30pm for a 7.00pm start on Wednesday, 23 November 2011 at Philip Leverhulme Centre, Reaseheath College, Nantwich, CW5 6DF

No one had attended this event to represent the Council.

## 15. COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED

To following communications had been received:

- Email dated 14 December 2011 from Gaynor Harris, Secretary to the Friday Club thanking the Council for its financial contribution to the Christmas lunch.

## 16. CIRCULARS

The following circulars had been received and were available at the meeting for Members' information:

- CPRE's Field Worker, Winter 2011
- Cheshire Community Action's Newsletter, December 2011.
- Cheshire Community Action's Annual Review 2010-11
- Cheshire Archives & Local Studies Newsletter, Autumn 2011.
- Cheshire West and Chester Council's Local Transport Plan 2011 - 2026 Summary.