

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE held on 13 June 2011 in the Uniform Groups' Headquarters, Fiddlers Lane, Saughall

In attendance: Councillor DF Holman
Councillor RK Shukla
Councillor A Warrington
Councillor Mrs JM Young
Councillor PP Young

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED:

That Councillor DF Holman be elected Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED:

That Councillor B Kerr be elected Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year.

3. APOLOGIES FOR AUTHORISED ABSENCE

Apologies for authorised absence were received from Councillors Mrs K Ford and B Kerr.

4. CODE OF CONDUCT – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

5. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

RESOLVED:

That the Membership of the Committee be noted as follows:

Councillors Mrs K Ford, DF Holman, B Kerr, RK Shukla, A Warrington, Mrs JM Young and PP Young.

6. DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee considered its draft Terms of Reference drawn up by the Clerk.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee's Terms of Reference be **recommended** to the Council for adoption.

7. ACCOUNTS

(a) Audit of Accounts 2010/11

The 2010/11 Accounts had been sent to the External Auditor. The Clerk had not had any response from her yet.

RESOLVED:

That the External Auditor's report and opinion be awaited.

(b) Payments made since the meeting of the Council held on 21 April 2011:

RESOLVED:

That the following payments be approved:

<u>Financial Year 2010/2011</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>Cheque No</u>
Cheshire County Playing Fields Association (Affiliation Fee)	20.00	102492
Morral Play Solutions (Annual Play Equipment Inspection)	51.00	102493
National Association of Local Councils (Cost of two Members going to the Annual Conference and Exhibition)	234.00	102494
Saughall Neighbourhood Management Team (Grant for Summer Play Scheme)	1,700.00	102495
Mrs S Hudspeth (Expenses)	35.00	102496
Mrs S Hudspeth (Salary)	486.00	102497
Mr R Hipkiss (Litter Picking)	541.67	102498
Uniform Groups' Grant	500.00	102499

(c) Receipts

There were no new receipts to report at this meeting.

(d) Cash to Bank Reconciliation

RESOLVED:

That the contents be noted.

8. PARISH COUNCIL BUSINESS PLAN

The Council had agreed that a Business Plan would be drawn up with the aid of a Members' Panel set up for the purpose. This Plan could include the vision and priorities of the Council for the next five years or so. It could detail the Council's objectives and plans, acknowledging the important role of the community groups in the village who had a common vision with the Council. Such a Plan could help the Council fulfil its role within the community, communicate its vision and plans to local people and provide a basis for the community to become involved in shaping the future of their village.

The Clerk informed that a Business Plan was different from a Parish Plan and would give focus on how the Council delivered its services and ensure effective future planning. She offered to work up a first draft for Members consideration and help them mould it to suit their vision for the future.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk's offer be accepted and she provide a first draft of the Business Plan, as soon as practicable, for Members via email, so that they are able to spend time on it themselves and set out their ideas in respect of it at the next meeting of the Committee.

9. IMPROVING COMMUNICATIONS – PRESENTATION ON SOCIAL NETWORKING

Councillor DF Holman made a presentation on ways to create and publish on the internet (social media). Members noted that the importance of social media was that it incorporated different online technology which enabled people to share content, opinions, boost business and exchange different perspectives and insights.

Members considered and discussed social networking sites – Facebook, Blogger, Twitter and YouTube along with the benefits to the Council of it having an interactive website. Councillor Holman also provided each Member of the Committee with a copy of the Improvement and Development Agency's publication Connect Councillors – a guide to using social media to support local leadership which had been put together with the support of the Leadership Centre for local government, the Standards Board for England and the National Association of Local Councils.

It was agreed that people expected to be able to comment and contribute online and expected local government to provide its services online with the same level of interactivity that they found everywhere else. The guide was basically a brief introduction to social media for Councillors and outlined how it could be used to:

- support Councillors' leadership roles;
- create a space for community conversation;
- keep a finger on the pulse of local needs; and
- campaign for political office and on important local issues.

Members agreed that the Council should begin to embrace the social networking concept and the first step would be to provide an interactive Parish Council Website. It was proposed that this be achieved with the help of volunteers, possibly students although Councillor Holman did not rule out a future role for himself in assisting this initiative to come to fruition.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the handouts provided at the meeting be made available to those Members who were unable to attend this meeting;
- (2) Councillor DF be requested to look at how the Council's website can be improved; and

- (3) Improving Communications and Social Networking be considered again at the next meeting of the Committee when social media ideas will be further explored.

10. FUTURE PRIORITIES

The Committee noted and endorsed its current priorities as follows:

- **At the end of the year a new litter picking contract must be drawn up**
This new contract will run from 1 April 2012 to a date to be agreed.
- **Fundraising for Community Projects**
Members need to know how to research grants and secure funding for projects. This **must** be a team effort. External funding can solve financial predicament, but it may also provide the Council with new challenges. Projects with adequate funding do get off the ground, finished and used. The setting up of a Panel to work on this could be considered a priority.
- **Funding for Play** – A copy had been sent to each Member of the Committee.
- **Community Action Projects (CAP)**
The Council has kick started the CAP Fund with £2000 from its precept for 2011/12 and if this initiative is successful it hopes to continue to provide financial assistance annually thereafter. It also wants to encourage, by any means it can, private individuals, businesses, developers etc to make donations to the CAP Fund which will be used to finance Saughall community projects and initiatives, on a match funding basis.
- **CAP Team**
The Council wants to establish, build and motivate a winning CAP Team to engage partners and work within an agreed remit, to successfully shape its community by driving forward social enterprises and to administer the CAP Fund that will be used to assist and match fund worthwhile projects and initiatives.

Members discussed whether to build up the CAP fund before allocating any grants along with the need to show prospective donators examples of what could be accomplished to encourage them to donate. Also considered was the role of the CAP Team and how to recruit to it.

The Finance and General Purposes Committee at its meeting on 22 April 2010 had drawn up a priority list of possible projects and initiatives it would like to embark upon, if funding was to become available in the short and longer terms. This list was to be used as a proactive approach to funding opportunities rather than the reactive approach the Council had adopted in the past. It was agreed that this list would be considered at the next meeting.

The Clerk reported that Cheshire Voluntary Action was holding a “Recruiting and Retaining Volunteers” Workshop on Thursday, 14 July 2011 at the Uniformed Groups’ Headquarters, Fiddlers Lane, Saughall from 6.00pm. It was agreed that it would be useful for some Members to attend and use what was learnt there to inform the recruitment and retention of the CAP Team.

It was agreed that investment in the Golden Jubilee Park and in sporting and recreational equipment and facilities for all ages was a high priority for the Council and it would be necessary to “think big” if the Council was going to improve what was currently available in the village. Members also discussed the future possibility of obtaining two particular parcels of land in the village for sporting and recreational purposes financed by a further loan from the Public Works Loans Board.

It was also agreed that the ability to put successful funding applications together in order to finance the Council’s projects and initiatives was imperative if the Committee was going to succeed in its endeavours. Councillor DF Holman informed that the Clerk had lent him a book entitled Funding for a Community Project by Simon Whaley which informed how to research and secure financing for local groups and projects in the UK. He had read the book and found it very informative. He passed this book to Councillor Mrs JM Young who had indicated that she would read it next.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Committee’s current priorities be noted as set out above;
- (2) the Clerk be requested to ask Councillors RA and Mrs JE Storrar if they would like to attend the above workshop and report back to the Committee on its proceedings and what they had learnt;
- (3) the Council’s priority list of projects and initiatives be considered at the next meeting of the Committee; and
- (4) further consideration be given to the Committee’s list of future priorities with a view to moving some forward at its next meeting.

11. URGENT BUSINESS - REFERRAL FROM THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

The General Purposes Committee had given consideration to the Council’s role in respect of Community Events and had resolved:

“That the Council (via the Finance and Business Committee) consider whether it wishes to take a stall in the Golden Jubilee Park on Village Sports Day – Saturday, 16 July 2011.”

The Committee was also aware that the Rose Queen Parade would take place on Saturday, 25 July 2011 and it was possible to take a stall at this event too.

The Committee gave consideration to what could be included on a Council stall, what equipment would be necessary and whether there was enough time to ensure its success in raising the profile of the Council.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor DF Holman be requested to consider what future initiatives the Council could take and be involved in to raise its profile e.g. stalls and posters.