

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE held on 6 December 2011 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
Councillor PP Young

30. APOLOGIES FOR AUTHORISED ABSENCE

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

31. CODE OF CONDUCT – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

32. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 10 October 2011 be confirmed as a correct record.

33. ACCOUNTS

(a) Mid -Year Review of the 2011/12 Budget

Further to Minute No. 24(a) the Committee considered its budget and estimated expenditure to 31 March 2012 as revised by the Responsible Financial officer. It was noted that the Clerk's salary was slightly more than expected.

Members also noted that the Vernon Institute Management Committee had not yet cashed a cheque for £225.

RESOLVED:

(1) the six monthly budget position be noted;

(2) the Responsible Financial Officer be requested to check the Clerk's salary calculation;

{Following the meeting the Responsible Financial Officer reported that his calculation in respect of the Clerk's salary was correct but that it also included the Clerk's expenses and payments to HM Revenue and Customs}

(3) the Clerk be requested to check back through her records to ascertain what works the un-presented cheque for £225 made out to the Vernon Institute Management Committee was to assist; and

(4) in future the Clerk's expenses be included in the accounts under the heading of consumables.

{Following the meeting the Clerk identified that the payment of £225 to the Vernon Institute Management Committee was the Council's contribution to work undertaken on the boiler. Council Minute 93(c) refers – 10 May 2010}

(b) Payments made since the meeting of the Committee held on 10 October 2011:

RESOLVED:

That the following payments be approved:

<u>Financial Year 2010/2011</u>	<u>£</u>	<u>Cheque No</u>
CPRE (Membership fee)	29.00	102558
Just a Mow (October cut and seeding in the Park)	595.00	102559
Morral Play Solutions (Quarterly Play equipment inspection)	81.00	102560
NWN Ltd (Newsletter distribution)	39.19	102561
Mr R Hipkiss (Litter Picking)	541.67	102562
Mrs S Hudspeth (Expenses)	36.00	102563
Mrs S Hudspeth (Salary)	486.00	102564
Saughall Uniformed Groups (Newsletter delivery)	20.00	102565
Massey and Harris (Engineering) Ltd (Repairs to Aerial Runway)	108.00	102566
Mr R Hipkiss (Litter Picking)	541.67	102567
Mrs S Hudspeth (Expenses)	31.79	102568
Mrs S Hudspeth (Salary)	486.00	102569
Mrs JM Young (Refreshments on Remembrance Sunday)	47.10	102570
Mrs M Abrams (Honoraria for the three ladies who run the library)	60.00	102571
Mr B Abrams (Honorarium – clock winding)	20.00	102572
Saughall Friday Club (Contribution towards the Christmas Lunch)	25.00	102573
Public Works Loan Board on 14 November	£2,771.22	

(c) Receipts

No receipts had been received.

(d) Cash to Bank Reconciliation

RESOLVED:

That the contents be noted.

(e) Budget 2012/13

The Committee gave initial consideration to the Council's budgetary requirements for 2012/13 and agreed that the budget for 2011/12 (£62,796) should be rolled forward for the Council's consideration at its Budget meeting scheduled for 16 January 2012 with the following additions:

	£
New Roll of Honour	1,000
Car Park Drainage	2,000
Parish Plan - Refresh	2,500
Website Development	1,500

The Committee was aware that tenders had been invited for Saughall litter picking work from 1 April 2012, including that in the Golden Jubilee Park. Members discussed the possibility that no tenders would be received by the due date of 9 December 2011. It was considered that, if this was to be the case, the Council could leave litter picking to the Principal Authority, Cheshire West and Chester Council, as other villages did, and monitor the situation. However, it was accepted that an arrangement would need to be made in respect of the Golden Jubilee Park which was in the ownership of the Parish Council.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Council be **RECOMMENDED** to consider a draft Budget of £69,796 for 2012/13 at its Budget meeting on 16 January 2012 (Appendix A); and
- (2) the funding earmarked to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee be put into a designated fund for the purpose.

(f) Members' Expenses

Councillor DF Holman reported that at the request of some Members he had drawn up an expenses claim form which he would send to the Clerk and which would be considered at the next meeting.

34. THE LOCALISM ACT 2011

(a) A Plain English Guide to the Localism Act – Update

The Clerk had recently circulated this document electronically to Members. It described the main measures of the Localism Act under four headings and was designed to provide an overview of the Act only:

- new freedoms and flexibilities for local government
- new rights and powers for communities and individuals
- reform to make the planning system more democratic and more effective
- reform to ensure that decisions about housing are taken locally

RESOLVED:

That the content of A Plain English Guide to the Localism Act – Update be noted.

(b) The Five Key Measures in the Localism Act

Members considered a briefing note entitled The Five Key Measures in the Localism Act circulated with the agenda. They were:

- Community Rights
- Neighbourhood Planning
- Housing
- Empowering Cities and other Local Areas
- General Power of Competence

It was noted that different parts of the Act would come into effect at different times.

RESOLVED:

That the content of The Five Key Measures in the Localism Act be noted.

(c) Ethical Standards and the Localism Act 2011

The Clerk had recently circulated this document electronically to Members. It set out arrangements for a new Standards regime under the Localism Act 2011.

RESOLVED:

That the content of Ethical Standards and the Localism Act 2011 be noted.

35. PARISH COUNCIL'S BUSINESS PLAN

(a) Business Plan Consultation

The Council had adopted its Business Plan, as a living document, at its meeting held on 7 November 2011 (Council Minute No. 172 refers). The latest edition was available on the Parish Council's website to download.

Consultation on the Plan remained ongoing and comments from Rev Brian Harris, Vicar at All Saints Church were provided for the Committee's consideration. Rev Harris informed that he considered that the Business Plan was comprehensive in its scope and description of the Council's priorities and policies. In some areas it included a number of specific commitments and targets, but in others it simply listed aspirations, without being specific about how these might be achieved. He was aware that there was obviously a limit to people's time and many Councillors were hard-working and committed in what they did, but he felt that listing aspirations without details of how these were to be achieved could be misleading. Rev Harris suggested that policy aspirations should be separated from specific plans to help point out the differences.

Rev Harris had also commented that the Business Plan needed to be related to specifics about allocation of resources, including money.

Rev Harris had also suggested that it may be worth including the Farmers' Market as something that contributed to conservation and the well being of the environment.

Rev Harris asked the Council to consider facilitating some 'joined up' discussions about the provision of halls and meeting places in the village. He considered that there may be value in different providers talking to one another and seeking co-operation rather than being in competition. He believed that the Parish Council, as an independent body with care, oversight and responsibility for the life of the community could facilitate such discussion.

RESOLVED:

That Rev Brian Harris' comments be taken into account when the Business Plan is next revised.

(b) Action Plan.

The Clerk reminded the Committee that the Action Plan, that she had started to populate and which she had attached to the Business Plan, had been detached but no further work had been undertaken on it.

RESOLVED:

That the Business Planning Group be requested to meet in the New Year to draw up the Action Plan and that the draft be presented to the next meeting of the Committee for its comments.

36. IMPROVING COMMUNICATIONS – SOCIAL NETWORKING

(a) Website Improvements

Councillor DF Holman reported that Callie O'Farrell (Councillor Mrs K Ford's sister-in-law) was not now able to develop the Council's website. Therefore, other options would be explored and a further report would be brought to the next meeting.

(b) Vertical Display Board

Councillor DF Holman had recommended that the Council procure a Zap3 Stand, the same as the ones the University of Chester used, at an estimated cost of £245. The Clerk had placed the order. However, wording was required to go on the Display Board. Councillor DF Holman proposed the wording to go on the board. Members also proposed that the Council's vision statement, as set out in the Business Plan, be included.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the proposed wording be agreed; and
- (2) the Zap3 Stand be procured from Teme Display as soon as possible with the wording as detailed above.

37. CONSULTATION ON THE TECHNICAL REFORM OF COUNCIL TAX

This consultation paper discussed options in relation to the council tax liabilities of second home owners, and of the owners of empty properties, in England, including proposals which would require primary legislation.

It also covered potential reforms of several details of the council tax system including modernising arrangements for payment of council tax by instalments, for delivering the information to be supplied with demand notices, and the treatment of annexes to dwellings; and some broadly administrative matters.

This consultation exercise ended in late December 2011 and the Chief Executive of the Cheshire Association of Local Councils, Jackie Weaver had informed that her organisation would be formally responding.

RESOLVED:

That as it is not considered particularly relevant to the Parish Council the consultation exercise be noted.

38. FUTURE PROJECTS/IDEAS

The Committee was requested to:

- (a) keep the Council's future priorities that fell within its remit, as listed below, under review;
- (b) identify any new priorities; and
- (c) take any action considered appropriate.

- **At the end of the year a new litter picking contract must be drawn up**
A new contract may run from 1 April 2012 to a date to be agreed. The tender specification has been revised to include a daily litter pick from the bus terminus on Church Road to the Vernon Institute. Tenders have been requested by 5:00pm on Friday, 9 December 2011 and any received will be considered by the Council at its meeting on 9 January 2012. This Committee will draw up the Litter Picking Contract for signature if tenders are received.
- **Miscellaneous Minor Repairs**
No further miscellaneous minor repairs are to be carried out during the 2011/12 Financial Year without the agreement of this Committee or the Council.
- **Tarmac path beside the Uniform Groups' Headquarters**
Quotations for the work required are being sought.

- **Fundraising for Community Projects**
A Panel to oversee this fundraising initiative is to be established.
- **Community Action Projects (CAP)**
 - (a) A Participatory Budget Scheme (as a pump primer) is to be drawn up to launch the CAP. There is £1,000 in the Council's budget for this purpose.
 - (b) To increase what is in the fund by investigate alternative funding sources and prepare funding applications to exploit external funding opportunities that may arise.
 - (c) An advert is to be prepared to go in the January 2012 edition of the Parish Newsletter inviting interested organised groups in the village to make proposals on how it would spend up to £500 max on a project, which must benefit the local community, to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. A Panel will be established to judge any entries in this competition.
 - (d) Arrangements for the proposed Social Evening when the funding will be distributed to the successful applicants must be discussed and agreed.
- **Community Action Projects (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.
- **Golden Jubilee Park**
 - (a) Possible Land Purchase
The land in question is not for sale at the present time.
 - (b) Proposed Sports Pavilion
Some Members visited Neston Cricket Club at Parkgate on 28 November 2011 and were very impressed with the facilities available there.
The deeds must be obtained from the bank and checked to see if the development can go ahead without any hidden costs.
 - (c) Skate Park/Folding Ramp
- **The Queen's Diamond Jubilee**
The Council has put £2,000 a side out of its contingencies to help support the planned community event, Music in the Park on Monday, 4 June 2012 in the Golden Jubilee Park, being organised to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. A designated fund has now been established for this purpose.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee's current list of Future Projects/Ideas along with the Actions agreed and progress being made as set out above be noted and further reviewed at the next meeting.

Appendix A

Saughall and Shotwick Park Parish Council Draft Budget 2012/2013

Budget Head	Draft Budget 2012/2013
Environment Matters	
Car Park Drainage	2,000
Miscellaneous Minor Repairs	1,000
Street Cleaning	7,500
Litter Bins	550
Grass Cutting (Golden Jubilee Park Recreational Area)	3,500
Play Equipment (rolling replacement programme)	3,816
Play Equipment Inspections (4No)	250
Map Boards and Footpath Leaflets	250
Sub Total	18,866
Finance and General Purposes	
(a) Administration	
Principal Officer to the Parish Council	10,100
Chairman's Allowance	1,000
Stationary/Postage/Computer Consumables	1,500
Parish Councillor's Expenses	100
Computer, Printer and Website Support	360
Newsletter publication costs	1,200
Training/Seminars	1,000
Parish Plan Refresh	2,500
Website Development	1,500
Sub Total	19,260
(b) Annual Payments	
Audit Fees	450
Golden Jubilee Park Loan Repayment	5,545
Donations/Honorarium	250
Insurance	2,200
Subscriptions	925
VI Clock Service	250
Village Events including Remembrance Sunday	250
Sub Total	9,870
(c) Community Facilities Fund	1,000
Police Community Support Officers	11,800
Neighbourhood Management Team including Summer Play Scheme	1,000
Uniform Groups' HQ Rental	500
Local Community Fund (Participatory budgeting)	1,000
Community Action Projects	2,000
War Memorial Fund/New Roll of Honour	1,500
Contingencies	3,000
Grand Total	69,796