MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF SAUGHALL AND SHOTWICK PARK PARISH COUNCIL held on 15 May 2012 at the Vernon Institute, Saughall

In attendance: Councillor WI Humphrey, (Homewatch Chairman)
Councillor DF Holman
Councillor Mrs J Johnson
Councillor B Kerr
Councillor Mrs J Knox
Councillor Mrs JE Storrar
Councillor RA Storrar
Councillor A Warrington
Councillor Mrs JM Young (in the Chair)
Councillor PP Young

Graham Hudspeth, Responsible Financial Officer
PC Rhys Matthews
Sergeant Iain Wedge
Bob Salisbury, Internal Auditor
Cheshire West and Chester Councillor Brian Crowe

1. POLICE REPORT

PC Rhys Matthews introduced the new Sergeant, Iain Wedge who was now responsible for Saughall and Upton. He also informed that Inspector Kevin Chambers had replaced Inspector Steve Beddows.

PC Matthews presented the Police Report informing that:

- There had been 16 crimes reported in March, 14 in April and in May, to date, there had been four.
- There had been 7 incidents of anti social behaviour reported in March, 8 in April and in May, to date, there had been two.
- There were no crime trends to report at the current time.
- Panna football had been arranged for Wednesday, 6 June 2012 in the Golden Jubilee Park.
- Mountain Monkeys had been arranged for Thursday, 7 June 2012 in the Golden Jubilee Park. This event will involve activities such as a climbing wall, archery and bush tucker tasks.
- The smiley SID was being regularly deployed in Saughall and it was no longer necessary to stand by it when it was operational.
- A driver engagement day was planned for Saughall concentrating on the arterial routes, including Parkgate Road.

RESOLVED: That

(1) PC Rhys Matthews be thanked for his informative report; and

(2) Inspector Kevin Chambers be invited to the next meeting of the Council scheduled for 11 June 2012.
2. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Mrs JM Young be elected Chairman of the Council for the ensuing Municipal Year.

3. CHAIRMAN’S DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

The Chairman signed her declaration of office, witnessed by the Clerk.

4. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED:

That Councillor DF Holman be elected Vice-Chairman of the Council for the ensuing Municipal Year.

5. APOLOGIES FOR AUTHORISED ABSENCE

Apologies for authorised absence were received from:

   Councillor Mrs K Ford
   Councillor RK Shukla

Councillor Mrs D Whitton was not in attendance at the meeting. Members considered that she was not fulfilling her commitment to the local community because of her regular absences and it was

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Mrs D Whitton be recorded, in the Minutes, as being absent from the meeting.

6. MEMBERS’ CODE OF CONDUCT

(a) Declarations of Interest

   No declarations of interest were received.

(b) Adoption of a New Code of Conduct

   The Council considered a bulletin for Parish Councils published by Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWaC) about adopting a new Code of Conduct.

   Members noted that under the new provisions on Standards in Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011, parish councils must adopt a code of conduct dealing with the standards of conduct expected of their Members and co-opted Members. Councils were free to decide their own code locally and could revise their existing code of conduct or adopt a new replacement code. To comply with the new law, parish councils within the CWaC
administrative area could prepare their own or adopt the code adopted by the principal authority.

Any new code must be consistent with the Nolan principles of public life – selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. The new provisions were expected to come into force on 1 July 2012 and CWaC was considering what form its new code should take. This had not yet been finalised as regulations were awaited from the Secretary of State prescribing the pecuniary interests which would need to be registered and disclosed and in respect of which there would be new criminal offences.

CWaC and the Cheshire Association of Local Councils (ChALC) was working together on the new conduct regime as they considered it important that parish councils were given as much support as possible and that the two organisations should work together to develop a model code of conduct. This should cut out unnecessary time being spent by individual councils developing their own codes and the public and councillors would benefit from consistency across the borough rather than there being many different codes.

Members were told that the Local Government Association had recently issued a template code and guidance note to assist authorities in thinking about their code and the Local Government Minister, Bob Neill, had published an illustrative text which could be used as a basis for a code. The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) had produced a Legal Topic Note which was available to its members (through ChALC) and had said it would produce a template code of conduct for parish councils that did not want to either (i) draw up their own code or (ii) adopt their principal authority’s code. NALC’s code could not be finalised until the regulations on pecuniary interests had been made.

As the implementation date was fast approaching and enquiries had been received from a number of councils about how best to proceed, CWaC’s Standards Committee had asked that parish councils be provided with a draft resolution for their Members to consider if appropriate, should they wish to adopt CWaC’s code under the new arrangements. The Council considered this and agreed to move it.

RESOLVED:

That with effect from the date of the coming into force of section 27 of the Localism Act 2011, this Council resolves that the code of conduct adopted by Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council be adopted as its code of conduct, on the basis that references in the code to Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council’s register are to this Council’s register."
7. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 5 March 2012 be confirmed as a correct record.

8. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

(a) Planning held on 5 March and 2 April 2012

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on 5 March and 2 April 2012 be received.

(b) General Purposes held on 2 April 2012

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on 2 April 2012 be received.

(c) Finance and Business Development held on 12 March and 2 April 2012

The Council considered the Minutes of the last two meetings of the Finance and Business Development Committee and noted the recommendations therein. One recommendation was that the Council should discuss how it conducted its business and decide whether any improvements could be made to deliver satisfactory outputs. It was noted that an item had been included on the agenda for this purpose (Minute No. 13 refers).

The Council then turned its attention to the recommendations in respect of proposed projects to commemorate the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee. Community Groups had been invited to submit their project ideas by 31 March 2012. Two organisations had submitted their project ideas within the timescale laid down as follows:

(i) The Vernon Institute Management Committee had applied for £500 to provide Diamond Jubilee Planters and flowers outside the entrance to the Vernon Institute.

(ii) All Saints Parochial Church Council had applied for £500 to provide a gateway into ‘The Willow beds.’

However, a third organisation had submitted its project ideas just before the Committee meeting on 23 April 2012 as follows:

(iii) Saughall Youth Club had applied for £500 to provide something to benefit the young people of the village. This could be either the purchase of a new pool table or a couple of bench seats.
The Committee was recommending that the Council award each of the three organisations detailed above £300 each to help them to bring their ideas to fruition in order to commemorate the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee.

The Council considered the Committee’s recommendations and came to the view that the Youth Club’s application should not have been considered because it had been submitted after the closing date. Also, it was not a Diamond Jubilee commemorative bid.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the Minutes of the meetings of the Finance and Business Development Committee held on 12 March and 2 April 2012 be received;

(2) the Vernon Institute Management Committee and All Saints Parochial Church Council be each awarded £500 to carry out their projects to commemorate the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee; and

(3) the Youth Club’s application be refused for the reasons set out above; and

(4) cheques be presented to the successful applicants at the beginning of the next meeting of the Council scheduled for Monday, 11 June 2012.

(d) Community Investment Champion Proposal

The Council agreed that this was a worthy idea but the right person would have to be identified to lead on it. It would also be helpful to have specific ideas in mind to champion.

RESOLVED:

That further to Minute No. 23(c), no decision on Councillor Mrs K Ford’s proposal be made at the present time.

9. ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

The Council discussed the proceedings of the Annual Parish Assembly which had been well attended. It also noted the success of the Cheese and Wine event that had been held at the close of the meeting. The opportunity had been taken to find out what parishioners would like to see in Saughall over the next five to ten years. This information would help with the refresh of the Parish Plan, a project the Council aimed to undertake in the 2012/13 Municipal Year.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on 30 April 2012 be received; and

(2) another Cheese and Wine event be held on the rise of the next Annual Parish Meeting.
10. REVIEW OF THE CONDUCT OF COUNCIL BUSINESS

The Council had implemented a new decision making process from the beginning of the 2011/12 Municipal Year. The aim of new process was to make the Council more efficient and effective in the way it conducted its business.

This process was reviewed at the Council meeting on 7 November 2011 when some minor changes were made. It was then agreed that the process would be reviewed again in six months time or sooner if deemed necessary. (Minute No. 171 refers.)

The Finance and Business Development Committee had given some consideration to the way the Council conducted its business at its last meeting on 23 April 2012. The Clerk had reminded Members that one of the aims of modernising the way the Council operated was to free up time to spend on special projects such as attracting external funding, putting together a new Parish Plan and taking the lead on community events. This would involve Panel or Working Party meetings which were informal in nature and not subject to Access to Information regulations. Formal Minutes would not be required but there would be time spent in producing noticeable outputs in the form of documents, actions etc.

However, what the Council now had in place were more formal Committee meetings that tended to be long, drawn out and very time consuming. Some Members were confused over what matter would be considered by which Committee. There had also been some duplication e.g. green belt issues and some Members felt they were missing out and were not being kept up to speed with Council business.

Consequently, the Council had been recommended to discuss how the Council conducts its business and decide whether any improvements can be made to deliver satisfactory outputs (Minute No. 23 of the Finance and Business Development Committee refers).

Councillor D Holman told the Council that the new arrangements meant that there had been a lot of duplication of work between the Committees and the Council. There had also been significant time delays as work was transferred between Committees and the Council. A lot of time had been spent on paperwork and there had been some confusion amongst the public over the new ways of working. There was also a disincentive to be a Member of the Planning Committee if a Member was not also a Member of the General Purposes Committee as they met on the same evening. He was aware that some Members had felt disconnected from Council business.

The Council discussed this matter at length and it was

RESOLVED: That

(1) the Council will no longer operate a committee system, with the exception of the Field Committee;
(2) the Council will meet on a monthly basis at 7pm to deal with all of its business, including planning applications;

(3) small Working Groups be established to progress important matters and projects e.g. Budget, Parish Planning, attracting Grant Aid, proposed new Sports Pavilion etc. and make recommendations to the Council.

11. MEETING SCHEDULE – 2012/13

RESOLVED:

That the meeting schedule as set out in Appendix A to these Minutes be agreed.

12. PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATION

RESOLVED:

That the Council be represented as follows:

(a) Chester Area Meetings of the Cheshire Association of Local Councils (ChALC)

Councillors B Kerr, Mrs JE Storrar, RA Storrar and Mrs JM Young.

(b) ChALC’s Quality Parish Council Forum

Councillors B Kerr and WI Humphrey/Mrs JM Young

(c) Vernon Institute Management Committee

Councillor PP Young

(d) Chester Police Forum

Councillors A Warrington and WI Humphreys

(e) Saughall Youth Club Management Committee

Councillors WI Humphrey and Mrs K Ford (subject to her agreement).

(f) Responsible Financial Officer

Mr G Hudspeth

(g) Internal Auditor

Mr B Salisbury

(h) Tree Warden and Environmental Warden

Mrs H Cakebread
13. HOMEWATCH/SAUGHALL NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT TEAM

(a) Homewatch Report

Councillor WI Humphrey in his capacity as Homewatch Chairman presented an oral report informing that:

- Homewatch had been active within the village since his last report.
- Youths had been playing football on the cricket square.
- Horses had broken through the fence into the Golden Jubilee Park and had been returned to their field unharmed.
- Out of hours activity in the snooker room at the Vernon Institute and fire exit had been found on the latch.
- Youngsters playing football on grassed amenity area near older people’s bungalows in Rakeway.
- The number of incidents of anti social behaviour had decreased due to police initiatives e.g. panna football, ramp riders which had been enjoyed.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

(b) Saughall Neighbourhood Management Team Report

Councillor Mrs JM Young reported that the Neighbourhood Management Team was involved with the Chester Half Marathon that would take place on Sunday. The Team had received vests and goody bags to hand out.

A Cheese and Wine event was scheduled for 15 June 2012 at the Vernon Institute to raise funds to assist the Summer Play Scheme. Arrangements for this Scheme were progressing well.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

14. MEMBERS’ TRAINING

No Members’ training requirements had been identified.
15. CHAIRMAN’S BI-MONTHLY REPORT

The Chairman presented her bi-monthly report informing of issues she had been involved in during the month as follows:

- The Clerk had obtained a quotation from Smith of Derby, bespoke clock makers to fully automate the clock in the clock tower at the Vernon Institute.
- Concerns were being raised that the relatively new All Saints Primary School was now oversubscribed in some school years and did not have the capacity to accommodate Saughall children whose parents, within the timescale laid down, had stated their first preference for a place for them in Reception from September 2012. Two Saughall children had been refused places, using the oversubscription criteria, on distance and were consequently lodging appeals.
- Residents of Hermitage Road (Blacon end) had informed of litter. This had been reported to Cheshire West and Chester Council’s Streetscene Team along with a request to empty the bin at the Egerton Arms.
- Estate agents had nailed a sign on a tree.
- Drainage contractors had been out to look at the Golden Jubilee Park’s car park.
- Football and ramp rider events held in the Easter holidays had gone well.
- The Hedgerow Seminar at Reaseheath College had been informative.
- She had attended the auction of Oakwood Farm.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the Chairman be thanked for her report;

(2) the Clerk be requested to obtain an application form with a view to applying for a loan from the Public Works Loan Board to finance the works required to automate the clock at the Vernon Institute (a project to commemorate the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee), now that one of the two existing loans would be paid off shortly; and

(3) the Clerk be requested to write to Steve Robinson, Chief Executive, Cheshire West and Chester Council to make strong representations about the size of the above new School and the need for it to be able to accommodate all children who live in the village who want to attend the local primary school.

16. PARISH COUNCIL SURGERIES

(a) Surgery held on Saturday, 5 May 2012

Councillor DF Holman reported on the various issues raised at his Surgery as follows:

- A parishioner had informed that she thought that Saughall was perfect in every way and a lovely village to live in. She had thanked the Parish Council for its efforts.
• the dog bin at the end of the path by the garage on Church Road was not being emptied.
• Parking on the pavement in Church Road left no room for mobility scooters to get by
• The dilapidated state of K’s Nurseries was causing concern and was not in keeping with the rest of Saughall.
• PCSO was doing a terrific job and there were no nuisance youth problems. She was providing value for money.
• The hedge at the Vicarage was overgrown.
• There had been no lights at the bus stops at The Ridings and the Egerton Arms for eight months.
• State of the footpaths and queries over improvements to the footpath on Long Lane which is rarely used, why had the work taken eight weeks and the road diversions were considered to be ridiculous.

RESOLVED: That

(1) Councillor DF Holman be thanked for his report;

(2) the Clerk be requested to write to Gordale to ascertain if it has any plans to carry out most needed improvements to K’s Nurseries; and

(3) Councillor Brian Crowe be requested to alert Cheshire West and Chester Council’s Officers to the problems identified above that fall under their remit so that they are addressed.

(b) Surgeries on Saturday, 2 June 2012.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Mrs JM Young be requested to preside over the Surgery on 2 June at both the Co-op Store and the Farmers’ Market between 10:00am and 10:45am.

17. CHESHIRE WEST AND CHESTER (CWAC) COUNCIL - LOCAL MEMBERS’ REPORT

Councillor B Crowe reported that:

• the planning application for a student village near Mollington had been withdrawn but it was expected that amended plans would be submitted.
• Oakwood Farm had been sold at auction.

Members raised concerns over the number of houses Morris Homes were proposing to build on the site of the former The Ridings Infant School.

Councillor RA Storrar drew Councillor Crowe’s attention to work required on Fiddlers Lane and requested he speak to Cheshire West and Chester Council’s Highway Engineers as it was quite dangerous.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor B Crowe be thanked for his report.
The Internal Auditor, Bob Salisbury had carried out his audit of the 2011/12 Accounts and presented his report as follows:

“I attended the Audit Commission’s course in Tarvin on 5 April 2012 which was an update session. The main change is that from next year the external auditing will be given to private firms of accountants, who I think will be allocated by the Audit Commission to each council.

Congratulations to Graham and Shirley Hudspeth for keeping the finances in a regulated and orderly fashion. As usual they were well set out and easy to follow.

There was no new capital spending in 2011-12. Environmental cost spending should fall in the current year due to the litter picking function being transferred to CWAC. The general Administration costs were up by roughly £2000 which can be explained by increases in wages and general costs of services rising during that period. The overall balance/surplus increased by nearly £2,500.

There was an under spend on the budgeted total of £8,797.66 which is about 14% of the budget. The AC recommended maximum is 15%. The Council should keep check of this figure in view of the fact that street cleaning has been transferred to CWAC.

Various outstanding cheques were cancelled or written off so did not impinge on the 2011-12 accounts.

I investigated the wages/PAYE for employees (basically Shirley’s salary) and Graham explained this to me. I feel all the adjustments are correct in relation to this. The VAT from last year will not be as big as the previous years as there were large asset purchases from the year before.

I have not seen/checked the ‘Asset Register’ but this has not changed significantly since last year so there is not a problem with this, as no assets were bought or sold of great value.

Some of the Minutes of Meetings held were not signed by the Chairman but this is an oversight and will only take a few minutes to correct. “

It was noted that the Clerk had not had a pay increase for three years and the increased administration costs were the result of printing and postage charges.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the Internal Auditor be thanked for carrying out the internal audit of accounts and for his report on his subsequent findings;

(2) the accounts be signed; and
(3) the Clerk be requested to send the 2011/12 Accounts to the External Auditor.

19. ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

The Council noted that there were no outside body meetings coming up. It received reports from Members on proceedings at outside meetings attended as follows:

- Cheshire Community Action’s Connecting Communities on Wednesday, 7 March 2012 at Crewe Alexandra Conference Suite.
  
  Councillor WI Humphrey reported that the event on community led planning had been interesting. Appropriate funding needed to be identified, grant applications made and volunteers engaged for community planning to be successful.

- Cheshire West and Chester Council’s Event’s Workshop from 3pm to 7pm on Thursday, 22 March 2012 at St Mary’s Centre Chester.
  
  Councillor Mrs JM Young congratulated Cheshire West and Chester Council on a very well organised event. She had gained a lot of Knowledge by attending.

- Chester and District Housing Trust’s Neighbourhood Walkabout at 1:30pm on Thursday, 26 April 2012.
  Councillor Mrs JE Storrar informed that it had been raining. Vandals had lifted up the cobble stones in Chapel Close.

- 2012 Hedgerow Seminar at 10am on Wednesday, 11 April 2012.
  
  Councillor Mrs JM Young informed that the Seminar had been informative and there had been a talk by a representative from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. This had been a free event and she recommended that another Member should attend next year.

20. COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED

To following communications that had been received were noted:

- Emails between the Clerk and Mr M Johnson about the PCSO and Double Taxation.

The Council agreed that the PCSO initiative was value for money. Also, the special expenses arrangements introduced by Cheshire West and Chester Council meant that Saughall Council tax payers were being reimbursed.
21. CIRCULARS

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

- Cheshire County Playing Fields Association Magazine - The Playing Field.
- Landscape and Amenity Product Update, April 2012.
- CPRE’s Countryside Voice, spring 2012.
### MEETINGS SCHEDULE 2012/13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>May</th>
<th>Jun</th>
<th>Jul</th>
<th>Aug</th>
<th>Sep</th>
<th>Oct</th>
<th>Nov</th>
<th>Dec</th>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Feb</th>
<th>Mar</th>
<th>Apr</th>
<th>May</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Council (meets at the Vernon Institute)</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>28</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>*14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parish Meeting (at the Vernon Institute)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Annual Meeting.
** Budget Meeting.

All meetings begin at 7pm.