

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF SAUGHALL AND SHOTWICK PARK PARISH COUNCIL held on Monday, 11 January 2016 at the Vernon Institute, Church Road, Saughall.

In attendance: Councillor A Bailey
Councillor Ms M Collins
Councillor Mrs K Ford
Councillor H Jennings
Councillor Mrs J O'Malley
Councillor Ms A Manning
Councillor Mrs JE Storrar
Councillor A Warrington
Councillor Mrs D Whitton
Councillor PP Young

Cheshire West and Chester Councillor Brian Crowe

28. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs J Knox and Mrs JM Young.

29. MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

All Members had completed an appropriate request form and had been granted a dispensation (which would expire on 2 May 2019) to approve the Budget and the Annual Precept for the parish on the grounds that without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited from participating in the consideration of that item of business would be so great a proportion of the body transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business, and the dispensation was in the interests of persons living in the Council's area. (Minute No. 82(b) refers.)

30. URGENT BUSINESS – APPOINTMENT OF PARISH REPRESENTATIVES TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Chairman reminded the Council that this item of business had been included on the agenda for the Council meeting held on 4 January 2016, at the request of the Chief Officer of the Cheshire Association of Local Councils, Jackie Weaver but unfortunately the details of those nominated to sit on the Standards Committee had not been received in time. (Minute No. 7 refers.)

The Clerk had now received the nomination details which she had circulated to Members for their information. The Chairman informed that as the Cheshire Association of Local Councils had requested details of the Council's votes by 18 January 2016, she intended to consider this item at this meeting under Urgent Business.

Consequently, each Member was asked to vote on which two of the following five nominations they would like to see elected as members of Cheshire West and Chester Council's Standards Committee:

Fiona Crane
Peter Duffy
Howard Timothy Jennings
Edward James Lush
Peter Stuart McAndrew

Members each cast their votes. There were six votes for HT Jennings, five for F Crane and two for P Duffy. The rest were abstentions.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be requested to inform the Chief Officer of the Cheshire Association of Local Councils of the results of the votes cast, in respect of the nominations received for Parish Council Representatives on the Standards Committee, by 18 January 2016.

31. DETERMINATION OF THE PARISH COUNCIL'S BUDGET FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2016/2017 AND THE PARISH PRECEPT

The Council noted the content of a letter dated 22 December 2015 from Cheshire West and Chester Council's Head of Finance, Mark Winn formally requesting the Parish Precept information for 2016/2017.

The money needed for the Parish's budgetary requirements was, through the Council's power of precept, added to the Council Tax for the area. The Parish Council Tax was calculated by dividing the Precept a Parish Council requested by the estimated tax base for the area. Saughall and Shotwick Park Council's tax base for 2016/2017 was 1107. This had been calculated by taking the number of 'Band D' equivalent properties in the Parish from information supplied by the Valuation Officer, and then making allowances for discounts, exemptions, appeals, Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) costs, non-collection and housing growth estimates. Band D equivalents were calculated by scaling properties in other bands either up or down to convert them to Band D levels.

The Council was informed that Cheshire West and Chester Council had, again, decided to maintain the voluntary CTRS grant support to local Councils in 2016/2017. The source of this funding was now part of Cheshire West and Chester Council's overall grant settlement from central government which would be reduced again significantly for 2016/2017. In view of that, the amount of funding available to be passed on had been reduced by 11% and the grant payable to Saughall and Shotwick Park Parish Council for 2016/2017 was £4,252. It was anticipated that the Council's annual grant settlement would continue to reduce over future years, so it was advised to plan for further reductions in the level of this grant support.

In order that the Principal Authority could include the Parish Precept and set the Council Tax for next year, the Clerk was requested to complete and return a form enclosed for the purpose.

The Council also referred to the following documentation which had been included with the agenda for the meeting:

- (a) Draft Budget 2016/2017
- (b) Parish Council Payments 1 April 2015 – 24 December 2015
- (c) Precept calculation 2015/2016
- (d) Estimated income to year-end 31 March 2016
- (e) Estimated expenditure to year-end 31 March 2016
- (f) Proposed Precept calculation 2016/2017
- (g) Explanatory Notes

Councillor A Warrington reported that the Draft Budget Setting Group (Councillors A Bailey, Mrs K Ford and A Warrington, the Clerk and the Responsible Financial Officer) had met on 6 January 2016 to consider issues relating to and proposals in respect of the Council's 2016/2017 Budget. A copy of the Group's report with recommendations was circulated at the meeting for Members' consideration and decision.

The Council noted that the Draft Budget Setting Group had reviewed the format of the Budget and concluded that an update was necessary as it had referred to Committees that the Council no longer had in existence. Members received a copy of the proposed new and updated format which was considered to be much more transparent and easier to understand than previous Budgets. It was pointed out that the Group had reviewed and proposed a revised Budget in the light of the £122,951 that was currently in 'Designated Funds'.

The Group recommended that the Council should introduce a Budget Head for all outlay in respect of the Golden Jubilee Park and that a new Budget Head for Room Rentals should include rental of other village venues, including the Uniform Group's Headquarters and not just the Vernon Institute. Also, it was proposed to delete Street Cleaning and replace this Budget Head with Litter Removal to include periodic pond clearance.

The Group also proposed that Community Action and Facilities Fund (total of £40,750) should be combined to support projects or funding requests from village organisations, including the Vernon Institute.

Councillor A Bailey led Members through the Group's revised draft Budget (with Budget Heads now in alphabetical order for ease of reference) in detail informing of the reasoning for increases, decreases and consolidations. He was very thorough and drew particular attention to the following, explaining the Group's thinking, why there were additions or deletions and asked Members to consider whether there needed to be any further revisions and/or new arrangements made or long standing arrangements terminated:

- The Saughall Cricket Club and the Saughall Uniform Groups paid a peppercorn rent for the use of the Golden Jubilee Park for their activities.
- It may be necessary for the Council to apply for a loan from the Public Works Loan Board to help fund the proposed new Community and Sports Pavilion building.
- Provision for Christmas Lights.
- There was £941 in designated funds for Map Boards and Footpath Leaflets and £1,421 for Village Events so the Budget Heads could be deleted.

- There would be no budget required for Elections until 2019. Any casual vacancy that arose could be funded via contingencies so the Election Charges Budget head could be deleted.
- The Clerk now claimed postage so the amount put aside for her expenses should increase.
- The cost of the grass cutting which was carried out by the Cricket Club. Less frequent cuts would save the Council money and it did not require the number of cuts that were actually carried out. Obviously, the Cricket Club required a higher level specification to play cricket. Renegotiation was an option as was going out to tender.
- The Council had agreed to Webcast some of its meetings so there needed to be Budget provision for this.
- Budget provision was required in respect of the Clerk's pension because of new regulations coming into force this year.
- A Budget head for Neighbourhood Planning was required.
- Budget provision needed to be made to try to resolve the flooding in the Car Park in the Golden Jubilee Park.
- Work was required in respect of the Cheshire Railings and a new gate was needed for the Swing Park.

The Council noted that quotations had been obtained to purchase new Cheshire Railings (£6,100) to replace the existing ones, to repair and restore the existing ones and to provide a much needed new gate (£3,117 approximately). It also noted that repairing and restoring Cheshire Railings was specialist work and it was very difficult to find anyone to provide quotations for it.

Councillor PP Young reminded the Council that the Clock Tower was its asset and that it should be included in the Budget Head. He also reported that the lightning conductor may require remedial work as it did not conduct as much as it should but it conducted sufficiently for insurance purposes. Consequently, it was agreed to amend the VI Clock Service Budget Head to VI Clock and Tower.

Councillor Ms A Manning informed that she had obtained a quotation for flower displays. To provide, fix and water ten hanging baskets on lamp posts or buildings would cost £2,000+. Members thanked Councillor Ms Manning for the research she had carried out to establish the costs. However, it was considered that the best way forward with this project would be to approach the Gardening Club. Councillor Mrs J O'Malley proposed that wild flower seeds be obtained and sewn on verges.

Members reviewed the Draft Budget Setting Group's revised and recommended Budget giving consideration to each proposed Budget Head in turn. They had regard to the Council's savings funds and increased the Golden Jubilee Park – Equipment – Maintenance/Replacement Budget Head by £1,000. The level of funding required over the next year was then confirmed against the Budget Heads in order to carry out the Council's activities and provide an acceptable level of service both effectively and efficiently.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Clerk be requested to ask Modern Iron Age Designs to repair and restore 100m of existing traditional Cheshire Railings (to include the additional protection of cold galvanizing primer and two top coats) and provide and install an entrance gate (to be galvanised prior to painting) with a self-closing lock mechanism (between £120 and £350 dependent on the design) as per its quotation (total cost - £3,117 approximately) as soon as possible in the current financial year;
- (2) the Parish Council's budget for the Municipal Year 2016/2017 be agreed as £81,653 as set out in Appendix A which means the Band D Council Tax will increase by 2%; and
- (3) the Clerk be requested to inform Cheshire West and Chester Council that this Council requires a parish precept of £62,214 for the Municipal Year 2016/2017, along with the CTRS grant funding of £4,252 (in total £66,466) in accordance with the precept calculation set out in Appendix B.

Saughall and Shotwick Park Parish Council Budget 2016/17

Budget Head	Budget 2015/2016	Budget 2016/2017
Finance & General Purposes		
Principal Officer to the Council - Salary	£ 11,250	£ 12,000
Principal Officer to the Council - Expenses/ Stationary/ Postage/ Computer consumables	£ 2,100	£ 2,500
Principal Officer to the Council - Pension	£ -	£ 600
Chairman's Allowance	£ 1,000	£ 1,000
Councillors Expenses	£ 200	£ 200
Audit Fees	£ 450	£ 500
Christmas Lighting	£ -	£ 5,000
Computer, Printer & Website support	£ 600	£ 600
Donations/ Honoraria / Section 137	£ 250	£ 250
Election Charges	£ 1,169	£ -
Insurances	£ 2,000	£ 2,000
Map Boards & Footpath leaflets	£ 250	£ -
Miscellaneous Minor Repairs	£ 1,500	£ 1,500
Newletter publication costs	£ 2,000	£ 2,000
Room Rentals	£ 500	£ 750
Subscriptions	£ 880	£ 1,000
Training Seminars	£ 1,000	£ 1,000
Trees/ Plants & Bulbs	£ 100	£ 500
VI Clock & Tower	£ 250	£ 250
Village Events	£ 250	£ -
Webcasting	£ -	£ 1,000
Sub Total	£ 25,749	£ 32,650
Golden Jubilee Park		
Drainage	£ -	£ 2,000
Equipment - Inspection	£ 60	£ 135
Equipment - Maintenance/ Replacement	£ 23,345	£ 15,000
Gate/ Fencing - repair/ replacement	£ -	£ 2,000
GJP Loan Repayment	£ 1,888	£ 1,888
Grass Cutting/Hedge Cutting/ Repairs	£ 4,000	£ 4,000
Litter Removal	£ 1,250	£ 1,000
Nieghbourhood Plan	£ -	£ 2,000
Sub Total	£ 30,543	£ 28,023
Community Action/ Facilities Fund	£ 6,000	£ 6,000
Police Community Support Officer	£ 11,800	£ 11,980
Neighbourhood Management Team	£ 500	£ -
Uniform Groups HQ Rental	£ 500	£ -
Contingencies	£ 3,000	£ 3,000
Grand Total	£ 78,092	£ 81,653

Saughall and Shotwick Park Parish Council Precept Calculation 2016/2017

2015/2016			
Budget	£78,092		
Precept	£59,433		
Council Tax (Band D)	£54.98		
		£	
	Estimated Income	185,408	
	Estimated Expenditure	-48,590	
	Surplus	<u>136,818</u>	136,818
Less money in Designated Funds			
	Community Facilities	33,750	
	Footpaths	941	
	Play Equipment	39,289	
	Community Safety/PCSO	11,800	
	ICT	1,000	
	Village Events	1,421	
	Community Action Projects	7,000	
	Sports & Community Pavilion	27,750	
			<u>-122,951</u>
Balance Carried Forward			13,867
2016/2017		Proposed	To keep same Tax
Budget		81,653	80,302
Less Other Income			
	Powersystems Wayleave Payment	-5	-5
	VAT Refund	-1,315	-1,315
Less Balance C/Fwd		<u>-13,867</u>	<u>-13,867</u>
	Required Precept	66,466	65,115
Less CW&C Council Tax Reduction Grant		<u>-4,252</u>	<u>-4,252</u>
	Council Tax	62,214	60,863
	Tax Base (Band D)	1,107.0	1,107.0
	Tax	<u>£56.20</u>	54.98
	Increase/Decrease	2%	