

MINUTES OF SAUGHALL AND SHOTWICK PARK'S ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held on 8 April 2019 at the Vernon Institute, Church Road, Saughall

In attendance: Councillor A Bailey  
Councillor DF Holman  
Councillor H Jennings  
Councillor M Johnson  
Councillor B Kerr  
Councillor Mrs JE storrar  
Councillor A Warrington  
Councillor Mrs JM Young  
Councillor PP Young (in the Chair)

and 15 parishioners as listed in the attendance register.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs J Knox and Ms A Manning.

**2. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:**

That subject to the following amendments, the Minutes of Saughall and Shotwick Park's Parish Meeting held on 23 April 2018 be confirmed as a correct record:

Councillor Ms A Manning's name be removed from the list of those in attendance as she had sent her apologies for absence; and

Minute No. 3 under heading Village Amenities, Fairholme Close be included alongside Willow Hey.

**3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to their Annual Assembly and then presented his Annual Report setting out the Council's achievements and successes over the last twelve months. He detailed ongoing initiatives, progress made and the Council's aims and aspirations for the future. The Chairman informed that he believed that the Council continued to provide value for money in respect of the work it did on behalf of the community.

Various issues were highlighted and considered in detail. The report was presented as follows:

'It was with sadness, in November, that we learned of the death of Peter Bond who lived in the village all his life. He was on the Parish Council for over thirty years, serving as Chairman for much of this time.

He also chaired the Cheshire Association of Parish Councils in the 1980s. Peter will be very much missed and we give thanks for his generosity of spirit.

### **Planning**

One of the Councils aims is to encourage the planning authority Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWaC) to support sensible development while maintaining the openness of the green belt. The Parish Council is a statutory consultee on all planning applications. We have, this year, considered and submitted observations on over twenty applications. We have expressed concerns over a number of planning applications from properties on Parkgate Road and offered suggestions over the development of the Pear Tree Farm site.

### **Policing**

At our Council meetings we receive monthly crime reports. PC Rob Brown and the PCSO are often in attendance. We are pleased to see PCSO Wendy Leason back on duty after an extended period of absence. We are grateful to the Police for their valuable contribution to the reduction of crime and disorder and the promotion of public reassurance.

### **Golden Jubilee Park**

It is very encouraging to see how much use is being made of the upgraded children's play area. It was opened by the Lord Mayor of Chester last March. We have just signed a contract with WE Parsons & Co Ltd for the construction of a BMX cycle and scooter track on the Park. Work on this development should be completed during May. A Grounds Maintenance contract is currently being drawn up with the Cricket Club for their continued excellent work on the maintenance of all the grassed areas.

### **Remembrance Sunday**

2018 was a commemorative year marking a hundred years since the ending of WW1. Two services were held at the village War Memorial one at 11am and then the main one in the afternoon. Thanks to all those who helped organise these important village events. The Parish Council purchased a special commissioned commemorative bench which has now been placed near the War Memorial. A commemorative tree has been planted in the children's play area. This has been paid for by the local Co-op Store. The manager of the Co-op and some of the local Brownies were involved in the simple ceremony, helped by Helen Cakebread, the Parish Tree and Environmental Warden.

## **Bus Services**

The Council is very concerned about the proposed cancellation of the school buses to the Bishops' and Upton High Schools. This will make life so much more difficult for families in the village. We are currently in discussion with CWaC and Stagecoach over this matter. It would seem that the 15/15a bus service is now a regular and reliable service. We must emphasize the old adage 'Use it or lose it'.

## **Saughall Medical Centre**

A Council representative recently met with the Centre manager, along with some patient representatives to air complaints that the Parish Council had received. It was felt that these complaints were not being addressed by the standard complaints procedure. The meeting was helpful and productive and hopefully will result in a number of improvements. Though it was emphasised that the surgery was a branch surgery not a village surgery and as such its services will be limited.

## **New Public Footpaths for Saughall**

Over the past few years the footpaths around Saughall, have been converted, with the help of the Council from 'Permissive Paths', ones which required the owner's continued permission to use them to 'Public Rights of Way' (PROW) where they will remain protected by law and open to the public. Recently we were in discussions with the Shotwick House Management Committee to convert the last path alongside their driveway into a PROW. These discussions have now been completed by the signing of a legal document. The Council is now improving this new PROW alongside Shotwick House by cutting back vegetation and installing a new 200 metre field side fence. A new revised updated map of all the Parish Footpaths has recently been completed thanks to the hard work of a number of Parish Councillors. The Council has decided to hand-deliver, a free copy, to every household in the Parish. We urge you to get your walking boots on and enjoy the magnificent Saughall scenery!

## **Traffic Management**

As a Council we continue to be concerned about the volume and speed of traffic travelling through the village. We have been actively involved in discussions with CWaC over this issue. The Council would like to purchase and install speed detection equipment which would both collect data and send an appropriate message to speeding motorists. There is talk of altering the speed limit down Long Lane. We are pleased to note that there has been an increase in speed checks along Hermitage Road from the permanent Police Bay at the Peg.

## **Affordable Housing Scheme**

The Council has agreed to work with CWaC to obtain funding to build some affordable houses on a site opposite Thomas Wedge Close. For this to happen we need to demonstrate the need for such housing. A Housing Survey will be circulated to all properties in Saughall. I would encourage all residents to complete the survey and return it. The funding from Central Government is dependent on it.

## **Village Organisations**

We are fortunate in Saughall that there are a large number of clubs, societies and organisations that very much enrich village life. The Council, this year, has set up an Award Scheme encouraging local groups to apply for funding for a special project that they wish to start or continue. A special fund of £4,000 has been established to encourage and support such groups.

We have financially supported the Vernon Institute as its Management Committee has undertaken a large refurbishment of this important village landmark. We continue to support the work of the Neighbourhood Management Team that works to improve the local environment and quality of life. It arranges and runs the Summer Play Scheme and last summer organised the Scarecrow Competition.

## **Village Amenities**

An extra set of Christmas lights was put in place over the festive period and have been appreciated by residents. We have been asked to consider for next Christmas another set being placed on a short stretch of Hermitage Road from Church Road. This will need to be costed before a decision is made. Two extra flower tubs have been purchased for the village and we are looking for further sites for additional ones. Mobile phone reception continues to be poor in the village. We have offered a site at the far end of the Golden Jubilee Park as a possible site for a mast. This will be advertised nationally and we shall wait and see if any interest is expressed.

## **Fairholme Close and Willow Hey Drainage Issues**

Unfortunately little progress has been made in sorting out the flooding that is affecting a number of residents. This is despite the involvement of the local MP, Ward Councillor and the Parish Council. Another meeting has been called for April.

## **Finance**

At the budget meeting in January the Council agreed a budget for the year 2019/20 of £80,297. This means that the Council will require from CWaC, a precept of £63,057. This also means that for another year there has been no increase in the Parish tax requirement. The resulting precept on each Band D equivalent property was £56.20 per annum. Using these figures the following has been calculated:

- To fulfil responsibility under the Local Government Act – Administration = £13,798 which equated to £8.39 per year, per household.
- To fund the activities on the Golden Jubilee Park = £11,946 = £7.17 per year, per household.
- To refurbish the Vernon Institute Clock and Tower (in the ownership of the Parish Council) = £11,939 = £7.19 per year, per household.
- Rental of Christmas Lights = £3,129 = £1.82 per year, per household.
- Purchase and maintenance of Planters = £1,728 = £1.04 per year, per household.
- Distribution of quarterly Parish Council Newsletter = £1.312 = 78 pence per year, per household.

We consider this to be great value for money!

## **In Conclusion**

I would like to thank the Parish Councillors for their input, hard work and advice to ensure the Council does the best it can for Parishioners. We have successfully completed and discharged all our duties while remaining financially sound. As you can see from the Report the Council has had a busy year. Members do this on a purely voluntary basis. Thank you to Brian Crowe our CWaC ward Councillor for all his hard work, keeping us up to date with what is happening at Borough. As he retires after many years of 'active service' we wish him well for the future. Thanks to Helen Cakebread for her work as our Tree and Environmental Warden, also our internal auditor David Glavin and our Responsible Financial Officer Graham Hudspeth for their work on the accounts. Last but not least thank you to our Parish Clerk, Shirley Hudspeth for her work and support during the year.'

## **4. VOTE OF THANKS**

A vote of thanks was proposed by Councillor A Bailey to the Chairman for the way he had conducted business on behalf of the Parish Council over the last year for which everyone was grateful.

## **5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

Those in attendance put forward the following questions and comments that were answered as appropriate:

- The Council remained supportive over the Bells' plans to redevelop Pear Tree Farm. Members and local residents

welcomed the site being re-developed as it was rusty and derelict with a serious rodent problem. Rats could be seen coming from the site on a regular basis. The work would hopefully commence in the summer and residents voiced their concerns that when the buildings were removed the infestation of rats would disperse to all properties in the locality.

The Council agreed to contact Bells and request that they employ a pest control company to deal with the rats, prior to work beginning on site.

- Councillor Dennis Holman, in his role as Digital Champion for the Council, briefly updated the Annual Meeting with progress as regards mobile telephone coverage, recent improvements by BT Openreach in the installation of cabinet equipment for enhanced broadband speed, and the proposed return of Virgin to the village at the end of April 2019 to continue the installation of fttp (fibre to the property) in readiness for offering their enhanced broadband facilities at some later date.
- Only two sites had been identified in Saughall for affordable housing. They were Pear Tree Farm and potentially, one at the end of Lodge Lane.
- There were concerns raised about appointments being cancelled at the Saughall Medical Centre because of staffing issues. This was a problem for less mobile patients as this meant that they had to go to the City Walls Surgery for appointments as it always had cover. The Council had made a number of complaints about the Surgery and there had been improvements but it must be remembered that Saughall Surgery was a Branch Surgery which the village was lucky to have, as some villages e.g. Guilden Sutton didn't have a village Surgery and always had to travel to Chester for medical appointments.

Residents who needed Doppler ultrasound tests had to go to the City Walls Surgery as it was deemed more efficient to carry them out there. Alternatively, an appointment could be made for this test at the Countess of Chester Hospital.

Saughall Medical Centre had appointed a reception supervisor from 1 April 2019 and she was keen to address patient's problems.

There had been problems with the telephones at the Surgery and residents had not been able to get through but the fault was now resolved.

## **6. CHAIRMAN'S AWARDS 2019**

The Chairman reported that a Panel of Members had been given delegated authority by the Council to make community awards up to a

total of £4,000 in each Municipal Year. The Panel was made up of Members of the Council who were not involved in other village organisations to avoid any conflict of interests.

The Chairman provided the detail in respect of each community award that had been agreed by the Panel as follows and a cheque presentation ensued:

<b>Village Organisation</b>	<b>Purpose of the Grant</b>	<b>Amount (£)</b>
Art Club	Exhibition Stands	159
W.I	DVD and materials	95
History Society	Repair & Reframe Historic Photographs	400
Golden Link	Automatic Bingo Caller	45
Gardening Club	Website Development	175
Table Tennis Club	Score Board	50
Uniformed Groups	Replace Lighting	300
Indoor Bowling Club	Purchase of Bowling Mats	250
All Saints Primary School	Contribution towards a Running Track	1000
Cricket Club	Drying Machine	500
Neighbourhood Management Team	Contribution towards a defibrillator	750
Snooker Club	Running Costs	150