

Saughall and Shotwick Park Parish Council



Business Plan

Revised October 2020

Executive Summary for Saughall & Shotwick Park Parish Council Business Plan

Foreword

Purpose of the Business Plan

- To set out the objectives and plans of the Council
- To help the Council fulfil its role within the community
- To communicate the Council's vision to local people
- To provide a basis for local people to become involved

Areas of responsibility

- The management of the Council's budget
- To develop and maintain the Golden Jubilee Park
- To inform and lobby Cheshire West and Chester Council
- To liaise with Cheshire Police regarding crime and anti-social behaviour
- To act as statutory consultee on all planning matters to Cheshire West and Chester Council

An effective, Transparent and Open Council

- **The Council will;**
 - Hold regular public surgeries
 - Publish a quarterly newsletter
 - Encourage residents to raise issues during Public Question time prior to each Council meetings
 - Invite outside agencies to address the Council to improve knowledge, best practice
 - Continue to improve the Council's website for the dissemination of information

Sense of Community

- **The Council will;**
 - Participate in initiatives that address anti-social behaviour
 - Support all local organisations whenever possible
 - Encourage Social Inclusion throughout the village
 - Educate all to 'Kill their Speed' through our village
 - Encourage CWAC to deal promptly with all problems of litter, dog fouling, graffiti and noise pollution raised by residents

Village Aesthetics

- **The Council will**
 - Improve the appearance of our village and open spaces
 - Discourage parking on grass verges
 - Continue the continued improvement of the Village Christmas Lights
 - Encourage residents to report any complaints to Cheshire West and Chester Council via their web site or by using the new 'App' launched in Sept. 2020

- In partnership with CWAC to maintain all Public Rights of Way and bridleway's in the Parish

Housing & Development Strategy

- **The Council will**

- Develop the village for the benefit of the local community
- Make sure that it is fully consulted on any proposed development in the Parish
- Protect the Green Belt
- Encourage suitable residential development, especially affordable housing to meet local housing needs
- Continue to liaise with CWAC regarding the 2019 Saughall Housing survey completed in conjunction with Cheshire Community Action

Transport Strategy

- **The Council will**

- Promote an increased usage of public transport in the village
- Liaise with Cheshire West and Chester Council and the bus companies to enhance the public transport serving the village
- Continue to lobby Cheshire West and Chester Council and the Police for appropriate traffic calming measures and controls to be put in place for the safety of all residents

Economic Activity

- **The Council will**

- Maximise appropriate employment opportunities
- Support regeneration of redundant sites in the village
- Encourage the level of entrepreneurship within the local community

Financial Strategy

- **The Council will**

- Ensure there are sufficient reserves to cover contingencies
- Review, and where appropriate, reduce expenditure
- Provide grants for worthwhile community action projects

(Revised October 2020)

Saughall & Shotwick Park Parish Council Business Plan

The Parish Council launched the first **Saughall Parish Plan** in 2005, undertook a full Refresh in 2012 and reviewed annually. The Business Plan was a direct result of this planning process.

The aim of the Business Plan is to give Saughall and Shotwick Park's residents a clear understanding of what the Parish Council does and what it is trying to achieve. It details what the Parish Council intends to focus on over the next five years.

The Business Plan is a 'living' document that we will review annually.

We will use it to drive the budgeting process, plan activities for the coming year, monitor progress against key priorities and it will help the Council to take a planned and consistent approach to the:

- Design and delivery of the services it provides;
- Prioritisation and allocation of its resources; and
- Achievement of real value for money.

Our Business Plan will continue to be the main way of telling you what we are doing to meet the needs of the community. Please tell us what you think about it. We welcome your comments and would particularly appreciate your views on its content and format. If you require any further information that would help you understand what we are trying to achieve, please let us know. We can also provide additional information on the issues raised in the Plan.

Having met the required standards the Parish Council has taken on the powers of 'General Competence'. This allows the Council to do anything outside its statutory powers which is considered to benefit the community. This will enable it to promote or improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the area.

Please respond to:

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Saughall and Shotwick Park Parish Council's Business Plan

CONTENTS	Page Numbers
Foreword	2
Introduction	7
Vision	
Good Governance Objectives	
Business Plan	
Parish Council	
An Effective, Transparent and Open Council	10
A Sense of Community	12
Sporting and Leisure Facilities	
Golden Jubilee Park	
Community and Social Centres	
The Uniformed Groups' Headquarters	
The Vernon Institute (Village Hall)	
War Memorial	
All Saints Church	
Saughall Methodist Church	
Saughall All Saints C of E Primary School	
A Safe Community	
Village Events	
Democratic Representation	
Creating a Better Environment	16
Conservation Area	
Allotments	
Street Planting and Street Scene	
Public/Permissive Footpaths and Bridleways	
Super-Fast Broadband for our Future	
Housing and Development Strategy	18
Planning	
Affordable Housing Schemes	
Redundant land sites within the Parish	
Transport Strategy	20
Public Transport	
Traffic Control	
Pedestrians and Cycling	

Economic Activity 21

Financial Strategy 21

- Income
- Capital Budget
- Best Value
- Accounts

INTRODUCTION

In 2011, as a Parish Council we modernised our ways of working and took the decision to be more proactive and less reactive. We decided that to achieve this we needed to have a long term strategy; this was to be in the form of a Business Plan. The Plan is designed to form a long-term vision for the Council to follow; many of the issues identified may take several years to come to fruition and significant amounts of money will be required. Where dates have been set out in the accompanying Business Plan Action List they are provisional. Targets will be agreed as resources become available and external grant making bodies will be targeted in this regard. We hope that this Business Plan assists in attracting external funding over a number of years and helps us achieve our aims.

This Plan is our blueprint for how we will work in a co-ordinated way, in the best interests of all who live, work and benefit from our actions and endeavours locally. It sets out our mission, values, objectives and key priorities. The aim is to give local people a clear understanding of what the Parish Council does and what it is trying to achieve. It details what we intend to focus on over the next five years. The Business Plan is a 'living' document that we will review annually, use to drive the budgeting process, plan activities for the coming years and enable the Parish Council to monitor its progress against key priorities.

The purpose of the Plan is fourfold, to:

- set out the objectives and plans of the Parish Council, acknowledging the important role of community groups who have a common vision with the Parish Council;
- help the Parish Council fulfil its role within the community;
- communicate the Parish Council's vision and plans to local people; and
- provide a basis for local people to become involved in shaping the future of their village.

This Plan was originally written after discussion with other local organisations. It is our intention to keep this Plan under constant review and maintain close links with village life and the neighbourhood we serve.

Vision

The Parish Council's vision is to put in place policies and initiatives which will help to improve Saughall and Shotwick Park, encourage a greater sense of involvement and pride in the community and promote sustainable and vibrant economic activity in the Parish.

The Parish Council will have regard to best practice elsewhere and conduct its business by means which are transparent, sustainable, environmentally friendly, and that present the best value in achieving the actions laid out in this Plan.

Good Governance Objectives

The Parish Council aims to be a professional, competent and caring Council that is open and accountable in all that it does and ensures the sound financial management of its resources.

The Parish Council aims to:

- Be well-informed about the needs and opinions of the parish's residents and businesses by consulting them on major issues.
- Improve services to the public by encouraging Members and the Clerk to develop their skills by undertaking appropriate training.
- Ensure we give Councillors the opportunity to keep abreast of new opportunities and policy.
- Continuously promote public participation in all Parish Council meetings and initiatives.
- Deal with enquiries and fault reports from members of the public speedily and efficiently.
- Be an effective custodian of the Council's property and documents.

The Parish Council recognises the role of good communication in building positive relationships with the public and with organisations that provide services in the parish. We will continue to seek to improve established channels of communication and find new ones.

Business Plan

This rolling five year Business Plan aims to meet the Parish Council's vision. The Parish Council will co-operate and liaise, where appropriate, with parishioners and village organisations with a view to improving the general wellbeing of Saughall.

The Parish Council will endeavour to:

- enhance its role within the community and improve its communication with its parishioners;
- continue to maintain and develop the Parish Council's website providing information about the Council, signposting people to other service providers and posting regular news of Council initiatives on the website;
- enhance the facilities available to the community and, by working in partnership with the Vernon Institute Trustees, contribute to the costs of maintaining the structure and fabric of the Vernon Institute (Village Hall) The Clock Tower and War Memorial are the property of the Parish Council.
- continue to develop the Golden Jubilee Park, resolve the drainage problems and the surface area of the car park
- further promote local democracy by encouraging more residents to stand for election to the Parish Council;
- work closely with the All Saints C of E Primary School, the Saughall Neighbourhood Management Team and other local youth organisations to ensure that the needs of the young people in the village are adequately addressed;
- explore further opportunities for the Council to engage with the community;
- plant trees and bulbs to improve the look of the village;
- improve village approaches and welcome signs;

- exploit as many external grant aid opportunities as it can to fund village improvement activities;
- maintain continuing professional development for the Clerk and Parish Councillors; and;
- support and encourage local businesses.

Parish Council

Parishioners elect up to twelve Parish Councillors every four years. The Council elects a Chairman and Vice-Chairman annually at the Annual Parish Council Meeting in May.

The Council reports to the electorate at the Annual Parish Meeting.

The Chairman receives an allowance of £1000, other Councillors are unpaid but are able to claim travel expenses, when appropriate.

We voluntarily commit our time to improving Saughall and Shotwick Park and maintaining it as an attractive and sustainable place in which to live, visit and do business.

Elections were last held in May 2019. There are 12 elected Members. The next election will be in May 2023 and following that in 2027.

Saughall and Shotwick Park has an electorate of **2518** (as of 1 December 2018).

The Parish Council is supported by a part-time Clerk, and a Responsible Financial Officer (normally this is the Clerk). They ensure that all statutory and legal requirements are complied with.

The Council works to its Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, these lay down the rules by which we operate and conduct our business.

We have based our Standing Orders (which are reviewed and revised regularly) on a model prepared by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC). We also expect Parish Councillors to adhere to the Council's Code of Conduct also adopted from NALC.

Areas of responsibility include:

- the management of the Parish Council's budget;
- development and maintenance of the Golden Jubilee Park (in the Parish Council's ownership);
- informing and lobbying Cheshire West and Chester Council when highway and footpath repairs and maintenance are required;
- liaising with Cheshire Police over crime and anti-social behaviour;
- as a statutory consultee of the Planning Authority, (Cheshire West and Chester Council) submitting comments and feedback on all planning applications in Saughall and Shotwick Park. We give a local view of any proposed building work and our feedback can be broad ranging. Interested residents frequently ask us to

support their view of a proposed development and developers will often seek our input before they submit their application. We are protective of the Green Belt.

The Parish Council has excellent relationships with Cheshire West and Chester Council, the local ward Borough Councillor and Cheshire Police.

The Parish Council is represented on a number of external organisations, including the Vernon Institute Management Committee and the Cheshire Association of Local Councils

The Parish Council holds a number of meetings as follows throughout the year and members of the public are always welcome to attend:

- monthly meetings of the Parish Council usually take place on the first Monday of the month (second Monday if the first Monday is a public holiday);
- During the Covid-19 emergency all Parish Council meetings were cancelled between April and June 2020, after which meetings were held virtually via 'Zoom' and it is the intention to continue virtual meetings on a monthly basis from September 2020 until May 2021
- The Annual Parish Meeting is held between 1 March and 1 June (inclusive) each year. Although not a Parish Council meeting an open invitation is extended to the community.

Members of the public are able to address Councillors, immediately prior to the commencement of any Parish Council meeting providing the appropriate (five clear working days) notice is given to the Clerk.

AN EFFECTIVE, TRANSPARENT AND OPEN COUNCIL

The Parish Council understands the need for good, clear communications as this helps residents to understand what the Council is doing on behalf of the community. We will listen to the views of local people and make representations on their behalf whenever possible.

We will do this by:-

- Providing regular Parish Surgeries
- Public participation at Parish Council meetings
- Facilitating a Parish Council Newsletter, issued quarterly as part of the Mollington & Saughall Handbook
- Posting notices on noticeboards in the village
- Emails to the clerk to the Council **clerk@saughall.gov.uk**
- Provide relevant information to social media sites.

Thus ensuring that the Council's work and deliberations are conveyed to parishioners on a regular basis, in a format that is easily understood, we hope this will encourage feedback that may influence final decisions and ensure they reflect the wishes of the community.

Saughall Parish Council Web site – www.saughall.gov.uk

Provides easy access to the latest news and to a database of all its Minutes etc. It promotes the village, has improved community relations and provides information on what is happening in the village. It is the public face of this Council and it is our intention to develop it further to include more about the local community and volunteer groups, and provide links to other relevant websites.

The Parish Council will:

- provide an opportunity, prior to each Parish Council meeting, for public speaking;
- share a report covering Council activities during the previous twelve months at the Annual Parish Meeting;
- continue to hold monthly Surgeries in various locations around the village enabling parishioners to raise issues and discuss concerns on a one-to-one basis with Councillors;
- invite representatives of outside agencies to address the Council on key matters of interest (to Parish Council Meetings but also to round table discussions with the Council);
- try to find ways to encourage parishioners to attend its meetings so that they are able to see how the Council operates and understand the decision making process;
- continue to review its website www.saughall.gov.uk and investigate ways to improve and enhance it, making it as interactive as possible;
- continue to explore the use of social media to actively encourage engagement between Parishioners and the Parish Council;
- make updated versions of the Parish Council's Business Plan available on the Council's website;
- Distribute a quarterly newsletter included in the Mollington & Saughall Handbook which is delivered to every house in Saughall and Shotwick Park;
- appoint representatives to appropriate external agencies and committees;
- set up working groups with other statutory and voluntary bodies, businesses, residents and other stakeholders as appropriate, in order to facilitate coordinated effort;
- issue press releases about important matters when it is considered appropriate to do so;
- continue to work with the local press, for example the Chester Chronicle, with a Saughall news round up to promote Parish Council initiatives and ensure accurate and unbiased reporting;
- working with the Police, promote crime reduction in the area;
- attend relevant conferences and meetings;
- be involved with appropriate village organisations; and
- continue to review the Council's policies and procedures to ensure that it is run in a legal and business-like manner.

A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Sporting and Leisure Facilities

The Golden Jubilee Park on Fiddlers Lane, Saughall provides excellent sporting facilities and play areas for the whole community.

The Vernon Institute on Church Road, Saughall is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and provides both sporting and social based activities and is the meeting place for many local organisations.

Golden Jubilee Park

Originally donated to the village by the Vernon family in 1953 for recreational activities, the Parish Council purchased a further portion of adjacent land to provide extra outdoor facilities. Over £50,000 has been invested in new equipment/ facilities since 2018

The Uniformed Groups of Saughall including the Rainbows, Brownies, Guides, Rangers, Beavers, Cubs and Scout Groups formed a joint Committee which raised funds and built the current Headquarters building (known as The Scout Hut).

Other facilities sited on the Golden Jubilee Park include, Cricket pitch, a Multi-use Game Area (MUGA), a hard standing with goal end, an aerial runway, a BMX cycle track, a pyramid climbing frame and a swing park for younger children, all providing our Community with an opportunity to be involved in outdoor Sport and Fitness activities all year round.

There are two ponds providing a habitat for local wildlife, including great crested newts and a recently planted apple orchard to the rear of the Park.

Community and Social Centres

Saughall is fortunate in having within its boundaries a number of active and popular community and social centres, which together provide a range of facilities and benefits for the whole community. The Parish Council is keen to liaise and work together with these centres in planning co-ordinated developments for the wider benefit of the community.

The Uniformed Groups' Headquarters:

The Uniformed Group Headquarters Building (known as the Scout Hut) is of a demountable design and was built in 1998 on Parish Council land.

In December 2014 it suffered serious fire damage. The building, owned and maintained by the Uniformed Groups' Committee, has now undergone a full refurbishment.

In August 2020 the Parish Council installed a comprehensive CCTV system in the building which offers additional security and acts as a deterrent to any criminal activities on Council owned property

The Vernon Institute (Village Hall):

The Parish Council will continue to work with the Trustees of the Vernon Institute to identify ways to maximise usage of their building and improve income, to identify possible funding streams and provide funding itself through the parish precept to maintain the structure and fabric of the Vernon Institute.

The Parish Council understands the significance and importance of the Vernon Institute to the local community.

The Vernon Institute also owns and manages the sports pitches at the bottom of Seahill Road (just over the parish border in Wales), which compliments the facilities provided on the Golden Jubilee Park.

Other sports facilities provided in the Vernon Institute building e.g. table tennis, badminton and snooker.

War Memorial (Vernon Institute)

The Parish Council own and maintain the Clock Tower and War Memorial on the site of the Vernon Institute and ensures that all persons killed on active service are appropriately recognised. Working with the Vernon Institute Trustees the Parish Council paid for the re-cladding of the Tower during 2018/19.

All Saints Church:

All Saints Church offers a variety of different services and activities for the community. In its Statement of Purpose the church says:

‘We are here to help everyone to know God and grow in the love of Christ, through prayer and teaching, welcome and worship, fellowship and service to the community’.

It seeks to work with the other local churches, in particular the Methodist Church and St Bartholomew’s Church, Sealand, together contributing to the life of the village at three different levels: meeting spiritual needs, providing pastoral care, and contributing to the social life of the community.

This is put into practice by offering regular worship for all ages, baptisms, weddings and funerals, pastoral visiting, discussion groups, social activities and fundraising events. The main Sunday service is weekly at 9.30am, On the second and fourth Wednesday in each month there is a 10.30am Communion service. Every Wednesday during term time at 2.00pm a ‘Praise and Play’ service for pre-school children and their carers. Monthly on Wednesdays at 3.30pm ‘Messy Church’ provides worship and activities for primary school children and their parents. Special services are offered at festival times, including Christmas, Easter and Harvest.

The Seniors’ Group meets every other Monday at 2pm and provides an opportunity for people to meet, chat and be entertained. More ‘senior’ members of the community, many of whom have been bereaved, particularly value this group. The ‘Prayer Circle’ is a group

of people committed to respond to particular requests for prayer from anyone in the community or beyond.

A number of social and fundraising events are organised through the year, attracting people from the church and wider community. The main event is the Summer Fair and Crowning of the Rose Queen, held in the Church grounds, and this is very much a village event. There is also a Christmas Fair (visited by Santa), concerts in church, and social evenings in support of the Church.

There are close links with Saughall All Saints C of E Primary School, which is a church school taking its name from the church. The vicar takes assemblies in school and the school holds services in church. The church appoints three members of the school's Governing Body.

The church receives no money from the state, the Diocese, or the Church of England, it is maintained exclusively by the congregation and public donations

It has to be financially independent and is currently required to pay £35,000 annually to the Diocese to cover the cost of the vicar's stipend (salary). Together with housing, and other expenses of the wider church it needs a total income in excess of £50,000 p.a. to sustain its life and activities.

Saughall Methodist Church

Sunday morning worship at 10.45am offers both traditional and informal worship.

Coffee Mornings

These are generally the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month. When there is a 5th Wednesday we also have a 'bring & buy' or other fundraising events.

All Saints C of E Primary School:

Saughall All Saints C of E Primary School held its official Opening Ceremony in May 2011, the vicar at All Saints Church at that time cut the ribbon. Since then it has developed into a popular and well supported school.

The School holds a Harvest Service in All Saints Church and sings at the switching on of Saughall Christmas Lights ceremony each year in December.

The School supports the British Legion poppy appeal, Smile International shoe box appeal and Children in Need.

A Safe Community

Although Police statistics define Saughall as an area of low crime, the Parish Council has identified five particular areas of concern:

- (a) speeding traffic
- (b) peaks of burglary in outhouses and sheds

- (c) anti-social behaviour and nuisance youth activity
- (d) a fear of crime
- (e) litter and dog fouling

Cheshire Police works closely with the Parish Council.

The Parish Council established the Saughall Neighbourhood Management Team made up of local volunteers who meet regularly to look at local issues and concerns and to plan what can be done to tackle them. Although grant aid is no longer available to fund this worthwhile initiative, it is still going strong, carrying out good work and in particular, running a very successful Summer School each year keeping our youngsters out of 'trouble'.

The Parish Council will:

- participate in initiatives that address anti-social behaviour and nuisance youth activity, and continue to work with other authorities (Cheshire Police, Cheshire West and Chester Council) to further reduce crime and the fear of crime;
- Saughall has a population skewed 60% to age groups over 60 years. There is good work at All Saints church and at the Vernon Institute in this area, however, there is still quite large numbers in the village who lack social opportunity, particularly men. The Council will encourage and build on projects to address this issue;
- give consideration to new recreation facilities
- work with the young people of the village to provide funding for appropriate facilities such as cycling amenities;
- regularly invite the PCSO and the Police's local Beat Officer to Council meetings to discuss any concerns;
- continue to support the Saughall Neighbourhood Management Team;
- continue to lobby Cheshire West and Chester Council for traffic calming measures, speed restrictions, and to reduce the potential risk of accidents at hazardous junctions;
- educate residents and visitors to "Kill their Speed" and to continue with the help of Cheshire Police, to highlight the current speed at which people are travelling; and
- seek to deal with the problems of litter, dog fouling, graffiti, fly posting, noise pollution etc. by helping to foster a responsible attitude and enhancing the sense of community and good neighbourliness.

Village Events

The Parish Council supports village events in a number of ways and will continue to do so.

We lead in the organisation of the Remembrance Sunday Service and support it financially.

We liaise with the Rotary Club of Saughall in holding events in the village.

We also support all Village Fairs and have a presence at these events and are involved with the arrangements for the Christmas Lights Switch-On celebration in partnership with the Vernon Institute Management Committee and others.

Democratic Representation

The Parish Council hopes that a sense of community will continue to develop through this Business Plan and the actions arising from it. We hope that this will lead to an increased awareness of our activities and, as a consequence, will encourage more residents, to stand for election to the Parish Council or join other voluntary community groups. The Parish Council is always keen to encourage youth participation in its activities.

CREATING A BETTER ENVIRONMENT

Saughall and Shotwick Park is a parish that lies to the north west of the City of Chester, and is contained within the Borough of Cheshire West and Chester. It is five miles away from Chester City itself, so for many parishioners it acts as a “dormitory” village to the City.

However, unlike some other “dormitory” villages around the country, Saughall and Shotwick Park retain their distinctive and pleasant features that make the area a desirable place to live within the Cheshire property market. This may be down to the Green Belt that surrounds the village with open farm land on all sides. The western Parish boundary forms the historical boundary between England and Wales.

Saughall is mentioned in the Domesday book as two separate settlements of **Saughall Magna** (Great Saughall) and **Saughall Parva** (Little Saughall)

Three separate settlements of Great and Little Saughall and Shotwick Park make up the Parish area. Great and Little Saughall became part of the Saughall Civil Parish in 1948, whilst Shotwick Park joined up in 1972.

Presently the village can be described as thriving, in comparison to some other parishes. The Parish contains:

- A Church of England Primary School (All Saints)
- Toddler Group
- Private Nursery
- Playgroup
- Three Public Houses
- Two Places of Worship
- Vernon Institute (Village Hall)
- Playground and Leisure Facilities (The Golden Jubilee Park)
- A Post Office
- A Medical Centre
- A Pharmacy
- A mobile library operating at the Vernon Institute Car Park
- Over 40 thriving community groups.
- A number of Retail Outlets
- A weekly Farmers’ Market
- A regular bus service

The area covered by Saughall and Shotwick Park Parish is a pleasant and healthy location in which to live. It is incumbent upon the Parish Council to ensure this environment continues to be enhanced for the benefit of all residents and will do so with the advice of its Environment and Tree Warden. Therefore, we will monitor the environment and support initiatives that protect and improve local wildlife habitats, tree cover, hedgerows and other important landscape features.

Conservation Area

The Conservation Area is a tract of land in the village that has been awarded protected status in order to ensure that natural features and cultural heritage are safeguarded. It covers that part of the village focussed on the Vernon Institute and the Greyhound Public House. It is an important part of the character of the village and needs to be carefully protected.

Allotments

There are a number of allotments in Saughall, in the ownership of Cheshire West and Chester Council that have all been allocated. It is widely accepted that allotments can improve local diet, increase the amount of food locally produced, reduce obesity and increase physical activity. More locally grown produce could make parishioners healthier and reduce carbon emissions. Allotment sites promote community cohesion, education, recycling, health and the environment.

Street Planting and Street Scene

The Parish Council will:

- improve the appearance of verges and other open spaces by continuing to plant bulbs and giving consideration to providing floral displays, flower beds etc.;
- discourage parking on grass verges;
- adopt a tree planting/replanting strategy, including on-going tree husbandry;
- undertake an audit to identify where new signs are needed to replace old or broken signs and unnecessary signs, and seek to have them removed or re-sited;
- consider providing new 'Saughall' signs to welcome people to the village;
- continue to report potholes to Cheshire West and Chester Council and lobby for them to be repaired;
- identify areas where litter is a problem, continue to monitor litter bins and report any problems to Cheshire West and Chester Council.
- take appropriate steps to deter fly tipping, fly posting and graffiti; and
- consider the continued improvement of the Village Christmas lights in ensuing years.

Public Rights of Way /Permissive Paths and Bridleways

A large area of Saughall and Shotwick Park is owned by Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWAC) and currently managed by the County Farms organisation. They have started to sell off this asset when tenancy's become vacant.

The village is fortunate to have a comprehensive network of Public rights of Way and Bridleways, giving access to the countryside and surrounding villages.

During 2017, the Parish Council working with Cheshire West and Chester Council had all '**Permissive Paths**' re-designated as '**Public Rights of Way**' which will protect them in future, whoever ownership is transferred to and the Parish Council will contribute to their upkeep.

The Parish Council, working with its Parish Paths Wardens and CWAC Public Rights of Way Section will continue to:

- try to ensure paths and bridleways are maintained in a good condition at all times;
- identify and report areas that need repair and attention; and
- promote the benefits from walking and the local area by providing map boards provide free copies of its Parish Footpath Booklets.

HOUSING AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The residents of Saughall and Shotwick Park place great value on their village which, combined with a good range of services, gives the village its special, dynamic character. This needs to be continually enhanced and protected. We are committed to the principles of sustainability.

A large proportion of the parish is attractive farm land and countryside. Although the Parish Council will resist any development in the Green Belt other than is essential in support of agricultural activity or, as an exceptions site, it will examine all opportunities to provide more affordable housing for local people.

We aim to ensure that the village maintains its individuality, whilst developing a housing strategy to cope with future demand, and that we make the best use of available land and defend the Green Belt for future generations where we believe that its loss will negatively influence our parish.

In 2019 the Parish Council commissioned a Housing Survey, which was conducted in partnership with Cheshire Community Action and CWAC, the results were published in August 2020.

The number of participants was disappointingly low, only 159 (11%) responded out of 1,400 surveyed.

The survey stated that 71 new dwellings were completed from April 2010 to March 2018 averaging 9 new dwellings per year and that the population was estimated at 3,120

Planning

As part of the statutory planning process, Cheshire West and Chester Council must consult the Parish Council on planning applications. The Council scrutinises many applications each year providing feedback to the principal authority. We give a local view of any proposed building work and our feedback can be broad ranging. Interested residents frequently ask us to support their view of a proposed development and developers will often seek our input before they submit their application.

The Council believes that we need to maintain Saughall as a village and not become part of a greater urban area linked with Blacon or surrounding villages. We recognise the need to develop housing but wish to avoid over development and building in the Green Belt. We believe that if the village grows too much, too quickly we will lose the sense of community that we have developed over the years.

Affordable Housing Schemes

Whilst the 2019 Housing Survey has not revealed a huge demand for affordable housing within the parish, it has identified some unmet need and CWAC would like to bring forward their site in Lodge Lane as affordable housing, if this need is not met by other sites coming forward in the village.

The Parish Council's position statement on this matter is as follows:

- it wants to see the village developed for the benefit of the local community;
- it wants to be fully consulted on any proposed development in Saughall and Shotwick Park;
- it will seek to encourage residential developments within the village and especially affordable housing to meet local housing needs; and
- it will identify additional suitable sites to meet demand.

Redundant Land Sites within the Village

From time to time buildings and land may become redundant within the village. The Parish Council's preference is for such sites to be firstly considered for re-use for the wider community's benefit. Should re-development of such sites occur we would seek to secure some benefit to the village.

TRANSPORT STRATEGY

The Parish Council has no direct responsibility for transport and related matters. Thus, its role is principally one of advocacy in the interest of the village.

Public Transport

As the Parish of Saughall and Shotwick Park lies only five miles from Chester City centre the half-hourly public transport system currently in place appears to work well for most residents, however, only a small percentage of residents actually make use of the public transport available with the vast majority preferring to use their own transport.

The Parish Council, in association with interested partners, will:

- promote an increased usage of public transport, not only to safeguard its future, but to reduce traffic congestion and be more environmentally friendly;
- seek to reduce the reliance on private vehicles;
- promote the health benefits of leaving your vehicle at home;
- liaise specifically with the bus companies and consider, together, the possible provision of more flexible public transport and lobby them for improved services;
- consider local school transport issues;
- liaise with Cheshire West and Chester Council's Transport Co-ordination Service regularly regarding bus service issues; and
- lobby bus and rail companies for a co-ordinated bus/rail network.

Traffic Control

The Parish Council recognises residents' concerns about speeding, illegal parking and parking on grass verges and pavements. We will continue to lobby Cheshire West and Chester Council and the Police for appropriate traffic calming measures and other controls, and consider contributing to the cost thereof.

The Parish Council will work in partnership with Cheshire West and Chester Council as the Highways Authority for the provision of improved road markings and surface areas at bus stops and appropriate kerbs.

Pedestrians and Cycling

In association with the Police and Cheshire West and Chester Council, the Parish Council will seek improvements to the pedestrian environment, and will continue to monitor the condition of footways, street lighting and road surfaces and seek to ensure they are properly maintained and encourage safer cycling access.

The Parish Council wishes to see an increase in walking and cycling, and will press for measures to improve the provision of, and environment for, these modes of transport and investigate possible safe cycling routes in and around the village.

We will also promote and provide free copies of our new Parish Footpaths Booklet.

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

Saughall has a range of facilities which fulfil most of the daily needs of local residents. The Parish Council supports appropriate business development which is in keeping with the local environment.

The Parish Council has a stated Policy on the future employment in the village. It is as follows:

- the Parish Council recognises the importance of ensuring that there are jobs in the rural area and will seek to maximise appropriate employment opportunities both in the village and on its borders for the residents of Saughall and Shotwick Park;
- the Parish Council will support regeneration of redundant sites within the village and encourage new and appropriate industry/businesses etc. to establish themselves there and provide job opportunities; and
- the Parish Council will actively support an increase in the level of entrepreneurship within the local community and try to foster growth at a local level. This may include activity to increase the potential for social enterprises and community based business start-ups, enable community businesses to grow and sustain growth and improve the operating environment for existing businesses. The Local Produce (Farmers) Market is an example of such entrepreneurship.

The parish currently has a number of retail services, a lot more than some neighbouring parishes. A large number of residents use the local shopping facilities on a regular weekly basis and believe that the facilities are generally of a reasonable standard for essential needs. The Parish Council will actively work to ensure the retention of these services.

Parking in the village is problematic and the Parish Council will support appropriate developments which encourage additional use of local services.

Wherever possible, the Parish Council will source services and supplies from local businesses.

FINANCIAL STRATEGY

It is important to keep a sharp eye on the purse strings whilst still meeting community aspirations and this Business Plan is an excellent tool for carrying out this task.

Income

The residents of Saughall and Shotwick Park (mainly through the 'precept') fund the Parish Council.

The precept is the local tax levied by the Parish Council that Cheshire West and Chester Council collects on our behalf as part of the Council Tax bill. In 2019, £56.20 per year (band D property) of Saughall and Shotwick Park's residents' total Council Tax (£1.08 per week) contributes to the Parish Council precept.

The Parish Council is aware of the financial pressure on residents and will always ensure the residents get value for money.

Capital Budget

As the Parish Council's resources are limited, many of the development projects now depend on external grants. We will attempt to attract Government, lottery and other grants into the local area and provide match funding as projects arise. However, their availability is restricted by the economic downturn. It is, therefore, proposed that we also give some thought to public fund raising initiatives.

Best Value

The Parish Council is duty bound to provide value for money and will always examine proposals for expenditure carefully to ensure they are necessary and represent best value for the parish.

Accounts

The Parish Council's Accounts are audited (internally by the Internal Auditor and by the External Auditor) annually.

A summary of the accounts, budget and other audited accounts for each year is available on the Parish Council's website www.saughall.gov.uk

The Parish Council will:

- ensure there are sufficient reserves to cover contingencies;
- review, and where practicable reduce, expenditure;
- provide grants for worthwhile community action projects;
- investigate, and exploit appropriate grant aid opportunities;
- Consider introducing a public fund raising initiative to finance any major projects.

END

**Last update:-
October 2020**