

# Guilden Sutton Parish Council Newsletter

March 2011, no 141

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## Annual parish meeting

The annual parish meeting will  
be held in the Village Hall on  
Monday April 4 at 7pm.

Come along and hear reports  
on the council's work and ask  
questions.

All electors welcome.

## **Elections**

Elections for the two seats in the new Cheshire West and Chester Council Chester Villages ward, which covers Guilden Sutton and for the eight seats on Guilden Sutton Parish Council will be held on Thursday 5 May 2011 from 7am to 10pm.

Notice of the elections will be given on the village noticeboards no later than Friday 18 March.

Nominations for either election may be delivered to Cheshire West and Chester Council from Monday 21 March and must be in by noon on Monday 4 April. It is advisable not to wait until the last minute!

A statement of those nominated will appear by noon on Wednesday 6 April and candidates have until noon on Thursday 7 April to withdraw.

The last day for requesting a new postal vote is Thursday 14 April by 5pm.

The Parish Council is hoping to achieve Quality Council status and it is therefore important that at least six candidates (two thirds) stand for election to meet the requirement.

## **Annual Parish Meeting.**

This will be held in the Village Hall on Monday 4 April at 7pm. The Council's annual report will be available and all electors are able to attend and have questions answered.

Unlike public speaking at meetings of the Parish Council, councillors are able to deal with questions as they are put.

It will be followed by the normal monthly meeting of the Parish Council.

## **Parish Council Budget 2011/12.**

For the fourth successive year, the Council has felt able to maintain its budget at £18,674. The precept would also have been held at the 2010/11 figure of £15,778 but for the loss of the last of the former Chester City Council grants which were paid to offset part of the Council's expenditure. The grant of £645, roughly £1 per house, had been used towards the cost of litter picking. The precept for the year was therefore set at £16,423, equivalent to 49p per week for an average house.

Guilden Sutton Parish Council.

Approved budget 2011/12

Head	2010/11	2011/12
ChALC sub	350	375
CPRE	30	30
Ch Community Action	50	50
Md Ch Ftpth Soc	10	10
BTCV	0	0
Cty Playing Fields Assn	20	20
CLT	40	40
Salaries	5725	5725
Agreed expenses	104	156
Clerk's gratuity	185	185
Postage	200	150
Photocopies	175	300
Stationery/equipment	50	50
Telephone	50	50
Clerk's mileage	100	135
Parish car park rates	645	325
Insurance	1450	1050
Audit fees	225	225
Gnds maintenance	1500	1500
Lengthsman	1500	1500
Playing field rent	640	640
Footpath Group	50	50
Newsletter	600	600
Room hire	20	20
Memorial garden	50	50
Play Area capital	1000	1000
St John's PCC	200	250
Meeting expenses	125	125
Bulbs	100	100
Public seat	150	150
Web site	50	50
Shelter cleaning	65	75
CCTV maintenance	250	250
Christmas	50	50
Holiday Club grant	200	200
Member training	300	500
Clerk's qualification	500	0

QPC	550	550
Parish Plan/VDS	0	0
Events	1000	1000
Contingency	455	1228
	18764	18764

#### Financed by

Precept	15778	16423
VAT	125	100
Double taxation grant	w/d	w/d
Interest	50	25
Lengthsman grant	650	w/d
Principal authority grant	0	???
Graveyard grant	200	250
Reserves	1961	1966
	18764	18764

If the Council feels that new standards of street cleaning to be introduced by Cheshire West and Chester Council from April onwards are not satisfactory, the cost of maintaining all or part of the present litter picking service of certain areas of the village by a local contractor will fall entirely on council tax payers locally.

#### **Your council tax bill.**

As Cheshire West and Chester Council, Cheshire Fire Authority and Cheshire Police Authority have all frozen their council tax bills for 2011/12, your bill will be much the same next year as this, apart from the small Parish Council increase mentioned above, at £1,491.13 for an average house.

These are extracts from what the other authorities say:

**Cheshire West and Chester Council** heard that robust financial management would enable the authority to protect front line services and dispel concerns over closures of children's centres and libraries.

Cllr Les Ford, finance executive member and deputy leader, reported that from the council's opening budget in 2009 to the closing position in April this year, the council had saved £56m in costs.

Around £11m has been re-invested in front-line services, producing net savings of approximately £45m over the two years.

Said Cllr Ford: "The auditor's conclusion on our first set of accounts for 2009/10 was 'unqualified value for money'.

The auditor had added: "This Council is strong and confident and focused on providing modern and effective services that make a difference. The council is as well prepared as could be expected to cope with the pressures ahead."

The comprehensive spending review had produced a higher reduction than expected, meaning that the council needed to save £25.9m over the next two years and formula grant had been hit harder than the national average. Around £9.1m of grants had been removed altogether and £30m removed from the control of the council to the schools' ring-fenced budget.

Despite these setbacks, the budget earmarks almost £115m to provide leisure and culture facilities across the borough in the first phase of the capital vision from 2011-14. And it also allocates priority investments of £7.2m to children's services, including extra support for safeguarding children and £5.1m to adult social care and health to help meet growing demand on the service and pressure on learning disability budgets.

The 2011-12 budget also contains a £3.9m provision from reserves to cover redundancy costs. Around 140 full-time equivalent jobs – 2.5% of the workforce – are expected to go as part of the need to make savings.

It is hoped that many of these job losses will be accounted for by natural wastage – the number is well below the average staff turnover – or voluntary redundancy.

**Cheshire Fire Authority:** New fire engines and specialist systems to help identify and protect vulnerable residents are among investments planned by Cheshire Fire Authority over the next 12 months.

Members set the organisation's budget for 2011/12 at £44.3m and agreed its tax level should stay unchanged at £66.43 for a Band D home.

Fire Authority Chair Cllr David Topping said the freeze had been possible due to nearly £2 million in efficiencies and savings which meant key safety projects could still be supported.

"These are very difficult times for residents and I am delighted that we won't have to ask them to pay any more for the services we provide," he said. "Like all workers in the public sector, our staff will not be getting a pay rise but the budget we have approved will still allow us to invest in frontline services so we can protect the communities we serve and ensure our fire crews are properly equipped. I believe providing a first class fire and rescue service for less than £1.28 a week for an average household represents excellent value for money." At the meeting authority members also agreed to freeze their allowances at existing levels.

Key safety projects planned over the next 12 months include:

Buying two new standard fire engines and a specialist midi appliance with 4 wheel drive at a cost of over £700,000

£100,000 to improve facilities at fire stations for firefighters and the community

A £29,500 annual programme to replace the specialist thermal image cameras carried on every fire engine

£12,000 for using technology which will help further improve how staff can identify and support at risk households.

The projects follow a near £1 million investment over the last 12 months which has seen new protective clothing and breathing apparatus for all firefighters.

**Cheshire Police Authority** agreed to set a budget for policing in Cheshire of £177.2m. The budget seeks to minimise the impact of cuts in police funding on neighbourhood policing and roles that tackle criminal activity and protect vulnerable people.

Police Authority chairman, Margaret Ollerenshaw said: "This has been the most difficult budget the authority has had to develop. It is quite depressing to see the level of cuts we are having to make, following the considerable work of the authority over the last 16 years to develop the constabulary so that it has the capability and capacity to make Cheshire safer and protect the public from harm. "The performance of the constabulary is good. Public satisfaction levels with policing have never been better and crime is at its lowest level for 30 years. "This year, setting the budget has been very challenging as we wanted to prevent damage to frontline policing. We have identified the necessary £11m savings this year by reducing costs and changing the way we work, the equipment we buy and reviewing the buildings we own. It is with deep regret that we will have to reduce police officer numbers by 62 by not replacing them as they retire or leave, police officer recruitment will be restricted to just 24 new officers and 27 police staff will be made redundant to balance the budget. We are keen to ensure that staff facing redundancy will be provided with the appropriate support and advice needed to help them through these difficult times. In trying to minimise the impact on the front-line, we have already deployed 35 police officers based in headquarters to local communities".

The authority says the level of council tax has been frozen this year, so the people of Cheshire will be paying the same for their policing as last year meaning that a Band D household will pay £144.53 per year for policing.

However, the challenge doesn't end this year as the coalition government has reduced police funding which means that over the next four years, a total of £35.4m savings will have to be made. During that timescale, police officer numbers could reduce by as many as 213 and police staff by 446.

The chairman added: "In the 17 years that I have been involved with the police authority, this has been the most challenging decision we have had to take. This time, we have had to ensure that we have the right people in the right place with the right skills working to continue to keep people safe and we believe we have set a budget which can achieve that given the economic climate."

### **Dog bins.**

If you are a dog walker please poop scoop and make use of the dog bins around the village. The Council has been concerned to hear of owners who have not tidied up after their pets for whatever reason. This is an offence.

## **Highway issues.**

We have previously reported on a large number of highway issues which have arisen in the village, involving both maintenance and traffic. These have been pursued with Cheshire West and Chester Council, which is the local highway authority and the area highway engineer has recently provided a detailed update which can be seen in the Council's February minutes which are on the web site.

Although there is no news at present on the proposed 30mph limit on Guilden Sutton Lane, a 30mph limit on Station Lane through to the A56, which was taken up with Mickle Trafford and District Parish Council and Borough Cllr Stuart Parker, has been approved. Watch out for the new signs.

## **Watch out for horses.**

Horses are often ridden through the village and this note from the British Horse Society might help when we encounter them in our cars.

*Horses are unpredictable and easily frightened by things they perceive as a threat. This comes from their natural instincts, they are prey animals and as such, their reaction to any threat is flight. A twitch in the ditch may take them back to the Sabre Tooth Tiger that threatened their ancestors – waiting to pounce as they pass.*

*The bird flying out from behind a hedgerow or the plastic bag blowing in the wind may cause the horse to unexpectedly spook into the road . . . and into your oncoming car. There is little a rider can do about this, natural behavioural instincts are strong.*

*In some instances, the rider may be busy keeping control of their horse and not able to acknowledge your consideration, but they will be very grateful to you.*

*The message therefore is, please be careful when passing horses, give them a wide berth and go by SLOWLY and be prepared to stop if necessary! Nobody wants to damage your vehicle and with a little consideration there is room for everyone to live in harmony on the roads.*

## **Have your say!**

Cheshire West and Chester Council carries out a range of consultations on its future plans and other matters affecting residents and businesses. The consultation page on their web site links to the different areas of the site where the consultations are advertised. At the time of writing you could have your say on the following issues: One City Consultation, Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

## **Policing matters**

Our village PC Rob Boulton is frequently out and about in the parish at times and using transport which may not immediately be familiar. Patrols are carried out in the early hours and by bike.

PC Boulton encourages all of us to keep our property secure, whether it's the house, shed or a vehicle on the drive and to keep valuables out of sight. And do not hesitate to contact the police if you see anything suspicious.

His monthly bulletins can be seen on parish noticeboards and in the Post Office shop window where contact details also appear.

## **Trees, bushes and hedges**

Hopefully Spring is round the corner so if any part of your property adjoins a footway, including the back and side, why not check to make sure any trees, bushes or hedges are not getting in the way.

There are some spots where this is occurring so please be a good neighbour to passers-by and take your shears to any offending growth.

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**Information.** The Council's e mail address is [info@guildensutton.org.uk](mailto:info@guildensutton.org.uk) and its web site is at [www.guildensutton.org.uk](http://www.guildensutton.org.uk)

**Future meetings:** Future meetings of the Council are due to be held in the Village Hall at 7.30pm on Mondays 4 April, 9 or 16 May, 6 June, 18 July, 5 September, 3 October, 7 November, 5 December, 2011.

The Annual Parish Meeting will take place at 7pm on Monday 4 April.

All meetings include public speaking time and residents are welcome to attend and address the Council. Councillors also hold a surgery at 10am in Summerfield Road on the Saturday prior to each Parish Council meeting.

**Contact** Councillors Trisha Paterson (Chairman), 300307, Imogen Brown 300812, Alan Davis 303022, Danny Fisher 301398, Derek Hughes 300185, Jane Hughes 300863, Michelle Kerfoot 300644 and Bill Moulton 348473 or the Clerk, David Norbury, 1 Orchard Croft, Guilden Sutton, CHESTER, CH3 7SL, 300783. Mr Brian Lewin 301501 is the Rights of Way Warden. The Parish Tree Wardens are Cllr Brown 300812 and Mr Alan Young, 301558. Cllr Jane Hughes deals with recycling issues. Cllr Moulton is the Local Bus User Contact.