

Shevington Parish Council
Clerk's Report to the Council Meeting of 31 March 2016

Refurbishment of Ladies Toilet

The refurbishment of the Ladies toilet at the bowling green is in the process of being refurbished and should have been completed in time for the beginning of the season. Unfortunately, the materials supplier did not have sufficient panelling in stock and more had to be ordered. This will not be available until tomorrow lunchtime, so it is now unlikely that the work will be finished earlier than Friday tea-time. The painting of the outside has been done.

Parish Plan Review Questionnaire and March Newsletter

The Parish Plan Review questionnaire and the March edition of the newsletter are currently being delivered. There is a box in Shevington Library for responses.

Proposed Changes to Rail Route from Southport to Manchester

We recently wrote to several entities to raise concerns and object to the proposed changes to rail routes from Southport to Manchester:

TfGM have written:

“As you may be aware, the Department for Transport (DfT) recently announced that it had selected Arriva Rail North to operate the next Northern Rail franchise from 1 April 2016. The exact nature of future services was not explicitly defined in the Invitation to Tender, therefore the future split of services on the Southport line is not known at this point in time.

Arriva have committed to working with all stakeholders to finalise the details of the December 2017 timetable change over the course of the next year. Only when this process is complete will specific details of service patterns to Manchester's stations be known, as well as any impact upon the Southport-Wigan-Manchester line services.”

Arriva Rail North have written:

“To answer the points you raised in your first letter, I can confirm:

- There will be little change to existing service patterns to start with, and the December 2017 timetable will see the first major change to timetables. We will now be developing and refining our plans for this timetable in detail and will be consulting with stakeholders on these plans later this year.
- We will be introducing a new regional management structure with stakeholder managers who will be responsible for building relations with stakeholders in their local area. Community Rail Partnerships, such as the West Lancashire CRP are important to us, and we will be increasing the direct financial contributions to them and providing more resources to support, upskill and communicate with them.
- We will be providing improved customer information systems, including video help points that will enable passengers to see as well as speak to members of staff and vice versa at over 400 stations.

With regards to the prospective loss of through trains to Manchester Piccadilly and Manchester Airport. We recognise that this may be a matter of real concern to some passengers and want to have a dialogue with passengers and stakeholders about it. Firstly, I would like to make it clear that we are not proposing to reduce the number of trains serving Southport, but to change the end destination of some of them. The earliest that these changes could take place is December 2017, so this is not an immediate prospect. The form of the December 2016 timetable is already in place having been managed by the incumbent Northern team, and only minor changes to this timetable are likely to be possible now.

Major changes to the infrastructure of the railways in the North West are expected to be

completed by December 2017 as part of the 'Northern Hub' Scheme and will enable major improvements in train services to be introduced then. These will include First TransPennine Express running two long distance trains per in each direction between Piccadilly, Oxford Road and Victoria in each direction as well as Northern commitments to run new services from the Calder Valley to Manchester Airport. Operations west of Piccadilly are intensive and complex and will be more so from December 2017. We have therefore had to think carefully in prioritising the services that we run through this corridor. The Invitation to Tender issued by Rail North and the Department for Transport did not require the connection between Southport and Piccadilly to be maintained and therefore our planning took this into account. Our thinking so far has been to favour electrically operated trains going through to Piccadilly as there is a wider range of potential destinations beyond Piccadilly than there is beyond Victoria, and this allows for more efficient use of the electric fleet. It is this that enables the ambitious improvement in services that we are proposing. Simply switching destinations has far more complex implications than it seems on the surface.

However we are not intending to worsen Southport's connectivity, quite the reverse. One train per hour will be extended beyond Victoria along the Calder Valley to Leeds or Bradford. This, we believe, will do much to improve Southport's attractiveness as a visitor destination from many towns in West Yorkshire and the east of the Greater Manchester conurbation. Southport will, of course, benefit from improved rolling stock with the removal of all Pacers by the end of 2019.

There are some months before these proposals need to be finalised and we will be carefully considering the concerns that have been raised and engaging with stakeholders, particularly after 1st April when the new Northern franchise begins. This is a highly complex matter and the devil is always in the detail. It is important that we deliver the commercial benefits that we have forecast. So, while I cannot give any guarantee as to what the outcome might be, I can certainly guarantee that the matter will be fully and properly considered."

Abandoned Car in Bowling Green Car Park

The abandoned car was removed by Egerton's (at the request of the LA) in the early part of the week beginning 7 March.

Vandalism

Earlier this month the Shevington in Bloom Co-ordinator reported that staff of the Nail & Beauty Bar had discovered (as they were leaving work at 8pm on a Friday evening) that plants from the round concrete planters had been removed and strewn over the ground. They did their best to restore them to their original homes. It seems there were many young people about that evening. The SinB Co-ordinator had written back to ask them to report the incident on 101.

Re-Routing of Evening Services for No.635 Bus

Enclosed is a letter (dated 12 March) from TfGM in response to our letter about the re-routing of evening services provided by the No.635 bus. A second letter was sent to Mr King on 29 March confirming that the evening services were re-instated on 14 March.

Greenhouse Plastic

The greenhouse at Forest Fold is used by the 'In Bloom' groups to over-winter some plants and grow on others for the Summer season. Recently my attention was drawn by the SinB Co-ordinator to the condition of the black plastic lining the wooden trays on which plant pots are accommodated. On inspection the black plastic was found to have hardened and was

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crumbling. The broken edges were in places quite sharp and, in view of this, could have resulted in volunteers cutting themselves, posing an H&S issue, exacerbated by the fact that the trays were contaminated by soil. In the light of this fresh plastic sheeting was purchased from the plastics factory in Preston at a cost of £5 (inc VAT) and Cllr C Horridge has agreed to remove the existing plastic and replace it with the new plastic FOC. This was arranged in consultation with the Chair and Cllr Horridge.

Britain In Bloom Entry

Wigan (and Shevington) will be judged for the Britain in Bloom award on 9 August.

Dog Fouling Issues in Shevington Vale / Appley Bridge

A representative of the LA's Environment Waste Services has written to say that in order for them to direct their resources it would be really useful to know which streets within Shevington Vale and Appley Bridge are experiencing problems. Once provided with that information, they will arrange for stencils to be put on the pavements in the first instance and also to arrange for signage to be installed. (However, they have a backlog at the moment of installation of signage). If there are specific times of day that the fouling occurs they can arrange for the Enforcement Officers to patrol and issue fixed penalty notices should they witness anyone who allows their dog to foul and they fail to pick up the faeces. I am now awaiting this information so that I can pass it on to Environment Waste Services.

Tree & Bench IMO Dorothy Nightingale

The tree IMO Dorothy Nightingale was planted at the location in Memorial Park agreed by the Parish Council (opposite St Anne's Parish Centre) a couple of weeks ago. It was agreed that the bench should be fitted in a position outside the children's play area. It was dedicated in a memorial service led by the Vicar of St Anne's, Rev Philip Dennison, held on Easter Sunday at 11:30am.

Council Tax Letter

The Parish Council's information has this year been included almost in full on the letter accompanying the LA's Council Tax demand.

Plaque IMO Robert Inward Randall

I have spoken to the current owner of the properties at Randall's Corner, which were all formerly owned by R I Randall. He is at present awaiting the start of the refurbishment work on the properties, but said he would be willing to consider allowing a small plaque, perhaps saying something like 'Robert Inward Randall lived here – plus dates', to be displayed on the external wall of one of the buildings. He showed me a photograph of how the properties had looked during Randall's day. It was the building that now houses the Costcutter store that had a sign saying 'Randalls Corner' attached to it, so perhaps this might be the one to carry the plaque.

Clerk to Haigh Parish Council

Following the resignation of the current Clerk to Haigh Parish Council, who is moving to another part of the country, I have been appointed as his replacement with effect from 1 April 2016.

K.M.P. 31.03.16