

**Minutes of the Meeting of Shevington Parish Council
Held Wednesday 26 January 2022
7:00pm – Held Virtually via MS Teams**

Present: Councillors William McKnight (Chairman), Christopher Horridge, John Whiteley, Ira Whiteley, Jessica Higham and Michael Crosby
Dist Cllr Janet Brown and two members of the public
Ms Angela Durkin (Team Leader – Housing Development) and Mr Peter Collins (Project Manager - New Build and Regeneration) of Wigan Council

Officer in Attendance: Mrs Krystyna Pilkington (Clerk)

632 Apologies for Absence

Cllrs Vicky Galligan, Mike Grimes and John Ball

633 Declaration of Interests

Cllr Bill McKnight w.r.t. Item 634 (*personal*)
Cllr Chris Horridge w.r.t. Item 644 (*personal & prejudicial*)

Standing Orders were suspended.

Cllr Ira Whiteley took the Chair.

634 The Future of the Former Shevington Community School Site

Cllr Ira Whiteley welcomed and introduced Mr Peter Collins (Project Manager - New Build and Regeneration) and Ms Angela Durkin (Team Leader – Housing Development) of Wigan Council, who updated the Parish Council on the latest developments with respect to the future of the former Shevington Community School site.
See Appendix A

*Cllr Jessica Higham joined the meeting during Mr Collins's presentation.
Cllr Mike Crosby joined the meeting while questions were taken.*

An update letter regarding the plans for redeveloping the former school site at Miles Lane, which had recently been sent to local residents, had been shared with the Parish Council prior to the meeting. In the letter residents had been informed that a website had been set up which would contain information about the Extra Care scheme. It would be updated as the project progressed. In addition the project leaders would be sending further update letters to residents and stakeholders throughout the life of this scheme.

*Ms Durkin and Mr Collins were thanked for their presentation and left the meeting.
Cllr Bill McKnight returned to the Chair.*

635 Matters Introduced by Members of the Public

None.

636 District Councillors' Reports

Dist Cllr Janet Brown's report was received. *See Appendix B*

Cllr Mike Crosby reported the following in his capacity as a District Councillor:

Issues Relating to the Low Bridge at Gathurst

Cllr Mike Crosby had received several complaints about HGVs trying to take an alternative route under the low bridge at Gathurst when the motorway was closed as a result of an accident on 7 January. He had looked into the matter and had established that there were approximately 15 signs in the surrounding areas advising drivers of the low bridge at Gathurst. Consequently, requests by residents for additional signage had been refused by the LA.

LG Boundary Commission's Consultation

The consultation over the proposals for revised Wigan Council ward boundaries was closing on 7 February. Shevington with Lower Ground ward would be increasing slightly in size in terms of electorate by taking in the Robin Hill estate in Standish to even up the numbers in all wards throughout the Borough. It was proposed that Standish ward would be reduced in size, as it was significantly larger than many other wards.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

637 Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Council (15 December 2021)

The previously circulated Minutes were considered.

Resolved: That the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council, held on 15 December 2021, were approved as a true and correct record.

638 Chairman's Report

The Chairman advised the Council that the following week's Policy & General Purposes Committee's meeting would take place virtually, as it was too short notice to arrange a face to face meeting. However, the February Council meeting would be held face to face.

639 Reports from Councillors

Christmas Shop-Front Awards

In reply to a question from a member, the Clerk advised that a date for the presentations had not yet been arranged.

Large Lorries at Paradise Farm

A member reported that large lorries were being parked on the land adjacent to Paradise Farm. This land was to the left of the building when facing it from Shevington Lane. Recently the number of lorries doing this had increased. As the entrance of the school

was across the road from the entrance to Paradise Farm, there was concern about the number of vehicles arriving at and leaving the site and the potential impact they could have on school traffic. Following a short discussion, it was agreed that Cllr Mike Crosby would look into the matter and report back to the Council.

Upgrading the Canal and Paths in the Neighbouring Area

A member informed the Parish Council that Wigan Council's Major Projects Team were holding a meeting about proposals to upgrade the canal towpath and other suitable paths in the area. The meeting would be held via MS Teams on Tuesday, 8 February at 4:30pm and was open to all. The member would send the details of how the meeting could be joined to the Clerk for circulation.

Pothole at the Entrance to the Car Park at Randall's Corner

It was reported that a very large pothole had appeared at the entrance to the car park at Randall's Corner. There was a short discussion about its precise location. As the pothole was identified as being on property belonging to the owner of the shops, Cllr Chris Horridge agreed to deal with the matter.

640 Reports from Representatives

Shevington & District Community Association

It was reported that:

- To date 10 tablet computers had been borrowed by local residents via the tablet scheme for Wigan North. TechMates were providing support to beginners in the use of the tablets by running sessions every Friday morning at the Methodist Church.
- The Community Association had received a grant of £1,000 from Greater Manchester, which had been used to buy a projector and a screen.
- Seated yoga sessions, which were taking place every Thursday morning, had been organised by a member of the Association.
- According to the CA's treasurer, approximately £8,000 had been secured in grants by the Association's members in the past year.
- Grants were awarded to Shevington Community Fete and to a small Charity that made bed quilts for use by children at the Hospice.
- A carers' group - run as part of the Age-Friendly Community initiative – would begin meeting on 25 April. The CA were grateful for the mention this had received in the previous edition of the newsletter.
- The next meeting was due to take place on 22 February and would be the AGM.

Crooke Village Residents' Association

It was reported that Crooke Hall Inn had been closed for a couple weeks while it underwent a small internal refurbishment funded by the brewery. While the work was being undertaken the workmen had discovered a worsening leak in the cellar bar. The cause of the leak had been attributed to a kerb drain at the front of the pub and had been reported to the LA. The representative asked if the District Councillors would be willing to find out where the LA were up to with regard to dealing with the issue. There had also recently been a change in tenanted landlords at the pub.

The representative asked for an update from the District Councillors about progress with the Chris Boardman scheme for improvements to the canal towpath and neighbouring paths. The representative advised that the canal towpath was not suitable for use as a bridleway, as it presented many hazards for horses and, unless H&S mitigations (which

were not included in the Chris Boardman scheme) were introduced, if a horse were to get into trouble, the outcome for the horse was invariably a poor one.

The representative informed the meeting that he had found that the GM Clean Air Policy had been largely misunderstood by the general public. Many thought that all residents who owned private vehicles would be directly affected by it and would be charged if their vehicles were over a certain age. They had not realised that the charges only applied to commercial vehicles. He observed that a public information campaign to correct this misperception would be helpful. It was suggested that an item about this should be included in the next newsletter.

Shevington Youth Club

As a result of some input from Wigan Council and Wigan Warriors the Youth Club was now opening on Friday evenings for young people in Key Stages 3 and 4 (age 11 to 16). There tended to be between 10 and 12 attendees. If at opening time there were no attendees present, the club leaders were going out into the village and inviting them in. The aim of the exercise was a reduction in anti-social behaviour in the centre of Shevington on Friday evenings.

Shevington Recreation Ground Trustees

There was nothing to report from the SRGT.

The Clerk informed the Council that she periodically received complaints from different people about the poor condition of the part of the car park in Gathurst Lane for which the SRGT were responsible. She had referred these to the Secretary to the Trustees. Recently she had received another such complaint and had agreed to bring it to the Council's attention. This was discussed. Cllr Jessica Higham agreed to raise the matter of the car park and the possibility of holding a meeting of the SRGT with the Secretary.

'in Bloom' Groups

The Appley Bridge in Bloom co-ordinator reported that the volunteers had been working throughout the Winter. It was very mild and very green at the moment, which spelled good growing prospects for the Summer.

Patient Participation Group

There was no report.

Vicarage Lane Fields Developments

A suggestion that this item be removed from the list of regular reports was discussed. The representative of the Shevington Garden Club was present and reported that, due to Covid, meetings of the VLF Allotments Society had not taken place, so there had not been anything to report. As some members wished to keep the item in place, the Clerk was asked to write to the representative of the sports clubs and ask if there was any possibility of reports being made more regularly and in person.

Friends of Shevington Memorial Park

There was no report.

641 DRAFT Minutes of the Finance Committee (12 January 2022)

The DRAFT minutes of the Finance Committee meeting on 12 January 2022 were received.

642 Footpath – Mill Lane

The Parish Council had received a request from Wrightington Parish Council asking if they would consider pursuing with Wigan Council the possibility of upgrading the footpath from Randall's Corner to the Boathouse to a bridleway.

The footpath was on the Wigan side of the boundary and followed a route to the left hand side of Mill Lane, under the railway bridge, coming out near The Boathouse. At the moment pedestrians were forced to walk in the road to avoid the overgrown bushes on the left hand side of Mill Lane, as there was no footway adjacent to the road on the West Lancashire side of the boundary. Wrightington Parish Council had sent a request to Lancashire County Council to ask that the bushes be removed to assist in making the walking route wider and safer for pedestrian access.

However, Wrightington PC were of the view that, whilst walking this route might take longer and not be as direct as walking at the side of the carriageway, if the route were upgraded to a bridleway, it would acquire definitive rights and would create a multi-purpose route which could be used by disabled people, people with prams, horses and cyclists.

The Council discussed the request from Wrightington PC at length. The following points were made:

- Wigan Council did not have the type of funding available at the present time to upgrade the footpath and it was unlikely that they would agree to upgrade the footpath.
- There had been many complaints about the way equestrians (who were currently not allowed to use the footpath) were abusing it and frightening pedestrians.
- The footpath was not necessarily suitable for use as a bridleway, as it was wide at some points and then narrowed considerably.
- The footpath was well-used and, if it met the criteria for a bridleway, an upgrade would be welcomed, as cyclists also used it.
- Cutting back the over-grown hedgerows would widen the narrower section of the footpath. The 'Beat It' Team could be asked to do this.
- A bridleway could be a muddy track, which was often the preferred choice of equestrians. It could not be paved and should not be shingled with small stones, as both surfaces were dangerous for a horse's feet. Upgrading the footpath to a bridleway would not necessarily result in an improved footpath for pedestrians.
- Rural England's rules for designating a footpath as a bridleway were that there should be access to and egress from the path via a legal route for horses. This did not include a towpath owned by the Canal & River Trust, which horses could no longer use.

Cllr Jessica Higham was due to attend Wigan Council's Major Projects Team meeting about proposals to upgrade the canal towpath and other suitable paths in the area. It was agreed that she would try to establish whether the path from Mill Lane to The Boathouse was one of the paths included in their schedule. She would report back to the Council.

Dist Cllr Janet Brown left the meeting.

643 Queen's Platinum Jubilee Tree

Shevington in Bloom have asked if a tree could be planted in the Memorial Garden to commemorate Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee this year. They had suggested that the tree should be a Silver Birch. There was a vacant space to the right of the path at the entrance to the Memorial Garden where this tree could be planted.

SinB had obtained a quote for a *Betula jacquemontii*, which had a brighter, whiter, bark than the normal Silver Birch. They were of the view that it was a suitable colour for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and they were willing to plant it and look after it, as they had done with respect to the three Tibetan cherry trees currently in the Memorial Garden.

The Secretary to SinB had obtained a quote from JA Jones & Sons for a tree of similar size to the Tibetan cherry trees. The cherry trees had all been funded by private donation. However, on this occasion SinB had asked if the Parish Council would consider funding the Platinum Jubilee tree.

During the discussion that followed it was suggested that Platinum Jubilee trees should also be planted at sites in Crooke Village, Shevington Moor and Shevington Vale. There were no suitable public spaces in Appley Bridge. Sources of funding were considered, one of which was the balance in the WWI cost centre. Cllr John Whiteley (who had been the Chairman of the WWI Working Party) explained the purpose behind retaining that balance. However, he observed that he would have no objection to its being used to fund trees to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee.

The Clerk was asked to look into the costs and report back to the Council at the meeting at the end of February.

644 Forest Fold Allotment Matters (1)

The Allotments Working Party met via MS Teams with representatives of the FFTA on Thursday, 13 January. A report on the meeting had been previously circulated and was received. The report contained a number of requests made by the FFTA Committee and recommendations made by the working party.

In reply to an enquiry from the FFTA the Clerk had reported that there was no set procedure for dealing with tenants who did not comply with the tenancy agreement. The members of the FFTA Committee were of the view that there should be a formal written procedure in place for dealing with tenants who did not keep their side of the agreement. This had been discussed.

The FFTA had offered to research the legal position and prepare a document containing a legally compliant procedure for dealing with tenants who did not comply with the tenancy agreement. Once prepared, the document would be presented for consideration and adoption by the Parish Council.

Resolved: The Council accepted the above offer made by the FFTA Committee.

As the agenda was quite long, it was agreed to defer consideration of the remaining requests and recommendations to the Policy & General Purposes Committee meeting on 2 February 2022.

645 Clerk's Report

The Clerk's report was received. *See Appendix C*

January Newsletter

A member observed that some of the graphics of the 'Responsible Dog Owner' item on the back of the newsletter were a little blurred and suggested that perhaps they should not have been included.

646 Financial Aid Applications

None.

647 Payments, Income & Bank Balances

The Income / Expenditure schedule for January was received. *See Appendix D*

Resolved: That the Accounts be approved, the cheques signed and internet transfers made in payment, due notice being given to the bank statements exhibited.

648 Budget & Precept 2022/23

The budget and precept recommended by the Finance Committee for 2022 were discussed.

Resolved: The Council approved a budgeted expenditure of £94,787 (*including Expenditure Contingency*) and a precept of £80,651 for the financial year 2022/23, as recommended by the Finance Committee. The budgeted expenditure would be subject to adjustment throughout the year as new or renewed contracts were agreed.

649 Income Generation

During the Finance Committee earlier in January a member had suggested that the Parish Council consider other ways of generating income. To this end a suggestion by the same member that the Council produce and sell some Shevington-related memorabilia to raise additional funds was discussed.

Members agreed that, in principle, the suggestion was a good one. Several members had previous experience of this method of fundraising. The initial outlay would have to be large and, for it to be successful, there needed to be a target purpose and target audience. Past experience of members indicated that the Council could be left with large amounts of unsold stock and very little in the way of additional funds raised. Consequently, the suggestion was not supported by the Council.

650 Planning Applications

None

651 Next Meetings

2 February (Policy & General Purposes Committee); 23 February (Council)

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

Resolved: That, in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it was advisable in the public interest that the press and public be excluded and they were instructed to withdraw.

The members of the public left the meeting.

652 Forest Fold Allotment Matters (2)

The Clerk reported on the position with regard to the condition of allotment plot 22C and the matter was briefly discussed.

Resolved: The Clerk was authorised to formally inform the tenant that, once it had terminated on 28 February 2022, their tenancy would not be renewed. The tenant was to be asked to remove all property belonging to them by the end of February. If this had not happened by that date, the property would be removed to a secure place, from where the tenant was to collect it by 31 March 2022.

653 Memorial Park GM Contract

The Council discussed the quotations provided for the Memorial Park Grounds Maintenance contract for 2022.

Resolved: The Council awarded the contract (*valued at £4,596.04*) to Envirocare MS Ltd.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9:20pm.

Chairman