

**Minutes of the Shevington Parish Council
Extra-Ordinary Policy & General Purposes Committee Meeting
Held Wednesday, 18 November 2020
7.00pm Virtual Meeting**

Present: Councillor W McKnight (Vice Chairman), Councillors I Whiteley (Chairman), C Horridge, J Whiteley, V Galligan, M Crosby, J Ball, M Grimes and J Higham
Co-opted Committee Members: Dist Cllr J Brown and Mr B Lomas
4 members of the public

In Attendance: Mrs K Pilkington (Clerk to the Council)

Cllr W McKnight took the Chair for the whole of the meeting.

1. Apologies

Mrs E Longmore

2. Declaration of Interests

Cllrs I Whiteley w.r.t. Item No.3 (*personal*)

Considerable discussion took place about the nature of some members' interests in the project and whether they would have a conflict of interest and would need to withdraw from the meeting at an appropriate point.

3. The Memorial Park Project

A paper outlining developments in relation to the project and some proposals with regard to options for the way forward had been previously circulated and was received.

(a) Drainage

The options in relation to funding the installation of drainage were discussed. Members were asked to note that the contract had been awarded and a change of layout would more than likely incur increased costs. The possibility of securing a loan for the drainage and other elements of the project was considered.

Cllr V Galligan joined the meeting.

Members made the following observations:

- The project needed to be looked at in the round, even though it might be carried out in stages over several years. The loan that was applied for needed to cover more than just the drainage.
- The project needed to be thought through properly. At present things were moving too quickly.
- A plan needed to be formulated.
- The residents needed to be consulted about what costs they were willing to cover.
- The FSMP had been set up purely to raise funds for play equipment and operated separately. Over a two year period the group should be able to raise substantial funding towards the cost of new play equipment in the park. This would mean that

ultimately only a small loan might need to be secured towards the cost of the equipment.

- Consultations carried out in February 2019 by the FSMP and consultations carried out during fetes held in successive years had provided an overview of what residents wished to see in the park.

The Vice Chairman observed that members of the Parish Council had never received or discussed a report on the February 2019 consultation. In response to this the meeting was informed by Cllr Galligan that she had now circulated the report in question to all members by email.

In reply to a question from a member the Clerk advised that a consultation about raising the precept to repay a loan had to be carried out and analysed prior to submitting the application for a loan.

Resolved: The Clerk was asked to look into the costs of loan repayments for drainage and replacement tree planting and work with Cllr M Grimes to put the information before the full Council the following week.

Committee members were in favour of addressing the drainage first.

Mr B Lomas left the meeting.

The Vice Chairman informed the Committee that more information was needed in relation to the cost of new play equipment and was told by another member that the FSMP were in the process of obtaining indicative quotations.

Another member reminded the Committee that the Director of Environment at Wigan Council had recently offered the services of his staff to help with the design of effective and desirable play equipment for the park. The member summarised that the elements of the project, which was likely to last several years, would need to be addressed in stages – probably in the following order: drainage, trees, children’s play equipment, adult provision and landscaping.

The issue of the lack of a signed agreement between the Parish Council and the FSMP was raised. The Clerk explained the history of the agreement that had previously been discussed and approved by the Parish Council, but had not been signed by the FSMP. A member explained that one of the district councillors had had concerns about some of the functions of the FSMP and had referred his concerns to Wigan Council’s legal department for advice.

The agreement would feature on the agenda of a future Committee meeting.

(b) Play Equipment

Two members of the FSMP gave a presentation on general proposals for the new playground. The FSMP had been briefed on this the previous week. However, the proposals had not yet been peer reviewed by the rest of the group. Proposals for locations of equipment for different age groups were included in the presentation.

The proposals for the design of the park were discussed.

Further discussion ensued about the nature of personal and prejudicial interests. The Clerk was asked to clarify the status of three parish councillors in relation to interests with respect to this matter with the Monitoring Officer.

It was suggested that the FSMP should prepare a written document for a future Council meeting to explain what the group was about.

4. Dates of Next Meetings

25 November (Council); 2 December (Policy & GP and Finance Committees)

There being no further business, the Meeting closed at 9pm.

Chairman