

**Minutes of Shevington Parish Council Meeting
Held Wednesday 24 February 2021
7:00pm – Virtual Meeting**

Present: Councillor Ira Whiteley (*Chairman*), Cllrs William McKnight, Christopher Horridge, Jessica Higham, Michael Grimes, Michael Crosby and John Whiteley
Dist Cllrs Janet Brown and Marlaine Whitham
Eleven members of the public

Officer in Attendance: Mrs Krystyna Pilkington (Clerk)

396 Apologies for Absence

Cllr John Ball

397 Declaration of Interests

Cllr Bill McKnight w.r.t. Item 418

Standing Orders were suspended.

398 Matters Introduced by Members of the Public

WW1 Grant

Several years ago the Parish Council had received a grant towards the costs of the commemoration of the Great War. A resident asked how much of the grant still remained. A member responded that there was approximately £900 left and explained what it was intended for and that it had not yet been used because the commemoration project was still a work in progress.

Missing Bin in Crooke Village

A resident reported that some time ago Crooke Village had lost a litter bin from Crooke Park. It had disappeared either during or after a flooding event. Residents had searched for it, but had not been able to find it. There was some confusion about how and when it had disappeared and conflicting accounts of what had happened had been put forward. As the matter of the missing bin was included on the agenda later in the meeting, further discussion was deferred until then.

399 District Councillors' Reports

The District Councillors' report had been previously circulated and was received.
See Appendix A

Dist Cllrs Marlaine Whitham and Janet Brown highlighted aspects of their report.

Earlier in the day information packs for vulnerable residents had been delivered to a resident for distribution.

Broken glass and rubbish had been found in the play areas at Whiteacre Park. Dist Cllr Janet Brown had asked Wigan Council's workforce to remove the glass and the rubbish and replace the sand. There were no funds available for any improvements, but Wigan Council's workforce had agreed to inspect the sand on a weekly basis. A Co-opted Committee member agreed to monitor the situation.

New litter pickers had been delivered to Shevington Library and were waiting to be collected by the volunteers.

Standing Orders were re-instated.

400 Minutes of the Last Ordinary Meeting of the Council (20 January 2021)

The previously circulated Minutes were considered.

Resolved: That the Minutes of the last Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council, held on 20 January 2021, were approved as a true and correct record.

401 Chairman's Report

There was no report from the Chairman.

402 Reports from Councillors

There were no reports from councillors.

403 Reports from Representatives

Shevington & District Community Association

Cllr Mike Crosby had joined the last meeting and reported that it should have been the AGM, but, because of the Covid situation, those who had attended had agreed that the incumbent officers should continue in post.

Dist Cllr Marlaine Whitham gave an excellent report on progress with TechMates.

Cllr John Whiteley had also joined the meeting and reported that a minute's silence had been held for several members who had died during the previous twelve months. The Treasurer had reported that the Association had had difficulty acquiring a debit card, so he had written to the Chairman of the bank and had received a reply from the Chairman's PA letting him know that not only would a debit card be arranged the following day, but a donation of £300 would be made towards the CA's funds.

Crooke Village Residents' Association

Cllr Jess Higham had attended the last CVRA meeting, when a litter picking session had been proposed. She asked whether CVRA members could have access to new litter pickers.

A member of the CVRA thanked Cllr Higham for joining their last meeting. The CVRA had much appreciated the parish councillor's attendance and would endeavour to send a representative to Parish Council meetings in future.

Shevington Youth Club

It was reported that, because of lockdown, the Youth Club had not been used very much recently, but Wigan Youth Zone had made use of it daily the previous week (half term break) between 9 am and 4 pm.

The floor of the Club was warping at present, because water was seeping in and causing damage. This would have to be looked at and repairs might need to be carried out.

Shevington Recreation Ground Trustees

The process of appointing a new Trustee was currently in progress.

'in Bloom' Groups

The Clerk reported that both Appley Bridge in Bloom and Edible Appley Bridge would be entering the RHS Britain in Bloom competition.

Shevington in Bloom had also agreed to bring Memorial Park up to the standard required for entry under the small parks category in the competition.

Patient Participation Group

The representative reported that he was up to date with all of his circulations, so there was nothing to report since his last update.

Another member reported that he had experienced a number of communication issues with Shevington Surgery earlier in the day when trying to arrange an appointment with a doctor. He had eventually been successful, but it had taken all day to achieve this. The issues and possible reasons for them were discussed. The Parish Council's representative would look into the matters raised and would report back.

Audit, Governance & Standards Committee

The next meeting was due to take place in March, so there was nothing to report. There had so far been no feedback with respect to the issue the representative had raised about whether it was actually necessary for the Parish Council to have representation at the meeting.

Vicarage Lane Fields Developments

There was no report.

Friends of Shevington Memorial Park

The FSMP had recently received a donation of £200 from the sale of firewood produced through the felling of dead and dying trees.

404 DRAFT Minutes of the Policy & General Purposes Committee Meeting (3 February 2021)

The DRAFT Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 6 January 2021 were received.

A representative of the CVRA raised the matter of proposals recorded in the minutes to upgrade the footpath from Vicarage Lane to Crooke Village to a bridleway and suitable for use by cyclists. He reported that there was considerable resistance in the village to the footpath being upgraded because of the increase in traffic it would lead to in the village. The plan to address the flooding at the southern end of the footpath was also causing concern because of the flooding events that have taken place within Crooke Village.

In response to a query raised by a member about the continued existence of two Parish Council websites, the Clerk reported that Cllrs John Whiteley and Vicky Galligan would be meeting with her the following evening to discuss the issue and the way forward. The matter would be re-visited at a future Policy & General Purposes Committee meeting.

405 East, West & Parbold Quarries

Earlier in February a meeting had taken place between several members of the Parish Council and several residents of Appley Bridge and Dalton to discuss issues of concern relating to East, West and Parbold quarries, all of which were owned by the same company. A report on the discussion and other matters that had come to light since the meeting had been prepared and had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. Several residents of Appley Bridge were present at the Council meeting.

There were several things that members were asked to consider in relation to these matters:

- The inclusion of an article on the issues in the next newsletter.
- The introduction of a link on the Parish Council's website to the campaign group's website.
- Making a donation from the Chairman's Allowance towards the Parbold Quarry campaign group's legal fund so that they could pay the barrister's fee to mount a legal challenge to a decision made by Lancashire County Council in relation to their decision over Parbold Quarry.
- Whether a complaint about the EA should be lodged with the Parliamentary Ombudsman via the MP for West Lancashire.

The campaign group expressed their gratitude to the Parish Council for agreeing to include an article written by members of the campaign group in the next newsletter and would forward one by the deadline.

The campaign group did not have a website, so there was no link that could be included on the Parish Council's website other than perhaps one to the Parbold Quarry campaign website.

The Council donation and the complaint were discussed briefly. Two of the Appley Bridge residents offered to forward additional information relating to these to help clarify things. It was decided that the Parish Council needed to engage in further discussion amongst themselves before making a decision about the way forward and would wait until the additional information had been received and they had had an opportunity to review it.

406 Crooke Village Flooding Issues

Crooke Village lies downstream and at the junction of several watercourses and had been experiencing increasing issues with flooding. Representatives of the residents of Crooke had joined the meeting to present their concerns about the possible impact of the improvements to the drainage proposed for Memorial Park on Crooke Village.

The residents of Crooke Village were of the view that any reduction in flooding at Memorial Park as a result of the introduction of a new drainage system could seriously exacerbate the already real and ever present danger to the Village from flooding via Millbrook. This was because surface water leaving the park through the inspection chamber in Church Lane would flow through a road drainage system that fed into the Millbrook in the vicinity of Launs Wood.

The CVRA had supplied the Parish Council with photographic, video and documented evidence that had been shared with Wigan Council to illustrate the issues. Because of a lack of communication between the CVRA and the Parish Council the latter had not been aware of the severity of the flooding in Crooke posed by the outflow from the

Millbrook at Launs Wood over the past 5 years. A paper summarising the evidence supplied and the outlining the issues had been prepared and previously circulated to members. The CVRA also tabled an additional paper.

The issues were discussed at length and were noted and accepted by the Parish Council. Because of commercial contractual constraints, the technical drawings for the drainage plans were not available to the general public. In view of this the Parish Council were not able to acquiesce to the CVRA's request to be allowed to inspect the technical drawings without receiving permission from its consultants.

The Clerk had consulted Wigan Council's drainage engineer, who had advised that the new drainage system was design to control the rate at which water would flow out of the park. In her opinion this would reduce the impact on flooding at Crooke Village. The engineer had suggested that the Parish Council should explore the possibility of the design being altered to enable all of the drainage water to exit via the inspection chamber in Shevington Lane, from where it would flow to Gathurst and directly into the River Douglas - thereby reducing water flow into the Millbrook and to Crooke.

Resolved: The following were agreed by the Parish Council:

- The consultant's permission for the detailed drainage plans for Memorial Park to be shared with the CVRA would be sought.
- The Clerk would try to arrange a site meeting between the consultants, Wigan Council's drainage engineer and representatives of the CVRA.
- The consultants would be asked to look into the possibility of amending the drainage plans to enable surface water to leave by the Shevington Lane route only.
- The Parish Council would lobby Wigan Council over the flood risk at Crooke Village.
- To work with more closely with the CVRA and support further flood alleviation work in Lawns Wood and other areas in the Parish to minimise risk to life and property.

407 Crooke Village Green Damage

The southern verge of Crooke Village Green had over the past year suffered damage caused by vehicles driving over it. Concerns about this had recently been brought to the Parish Council's attention by several residents. A short report outlining the issues had been circulated previously. Cllr John Whiteley also gave a verbal report of a site meeting he had had with one of the residents.

The Council noted the issues. Possible solutions would need to be discussed with Wigan Council.

During his site meeting with the resident Cllr Whiteley had discovered that Wigan Council were planning to plant a large number of trees at Crooke Park as part of the National Forest tree planting strategy. The CVRA were supporting this initiative, as they are of the opinion that it might help with the flood alleviation. A member of the CVRA described how the trees would be planted.

408 March Newsletter

Topics for inclusion in the March edition of the newsletter were discussed.

Resolved: The following items were agreed for inclusion:

- (a) Friends of Gathurst Station Appeal for Volunteers
- (b) Please Keep Your Dog on a Lead

- (c) Barry King Obituary
- (d) Outcome of Memorial Park Loan Consultation
- (e) Appointment of New Shevington Recreation Ground Trustee
- (f) Parish Council Precept 2021/22
- (g) Tablets Available for Loan
- (h) East Quarry

The text would be considered by the Policy & General Purposes Committee at their meeting on 3 March and, as always, reserved the right to edit articles received.

409 Outcome of Memorial Park Loan Consultation

A report on the outcome of the consultation on the proposal that the Parish Council should apply for a loan to fund the new drainage scheme in Memorial Park had been previously circulated. It was received and discussed.

The Parish Council noted that:

- In terms of electors the rate of return Parish-wide was approximately 2%.
- All replies appeared to come from adults.
- Most replies had been from residents of Shevington village, where the vast majority approved of the project and agreed to both taking out a loan and raising the precept to pay for it.
- A similar pattern to that in Shevington emerged in Appley Bridge, Shevington Vale and Gathurst.
- In Shevington Moor 50% of the responders supported the project. A majority of the 50% approved of the idea that a loan should be taken out, but only two-thirds of those agreed to a precept increase. The remaining 50% of responders either did not know whether they approved or were opposed to the project.
- In Crooke Village the opposition to the project was unanimous, although some comments make it clear that this was largely due to fears that the outflow of surface water from the park would have an impact on Crooke by increasing flood risk for the village.

As part of the consultation residents had been invited to make additional comments and a number had taken the opportunity to raise other issues besides those in connection with the park. A member observed that the comments could be used to inform the Parish Plan.

410 Memorial Park Loan Application

The proposal that the Parish Council apply for permission to the MHCLG to seek a loan from the PWLB had been the subject of discussion at several meetings during the past few months. A short paper outlining the application process had been circulated to members prior to the meeting.

The Council had at a previous meeting agreed in principle that permission to secure a loan from the PWLB to pay for the drainage and footpath improvements in Memorial Park should be sought. Being informed by the outcome of the recent consultation, members were invited to approve the completion and submission of an application to the MHCLG for the above improvements. Members were also invited to confirm the value of the loan and the repayment period.

Resolved: The Council confirmed that they wished to apply to the MHCLG for permission to seek and secure a loan from the PWLB for the improvements to

Memorial Park referenced above and approved the completion and submission of the relevant application form and preparation of the associated supporting documents. The value of the loan to be taken out would be £150,000 – repayable over 25 years.

411 Financial Monitoring Report

The Financial Monitoring report prepared by Cllr Mike Grimes had been previously circulated. Because of the time and the number of items still on the agenda that had to be dealt with at this meeting, it was agreed that this item would be referred to the Finance Committee meeting the following week.

412 Clerk's Report

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

413 Financial Aid Applications

None

414 Payments, Income & Bank Balances

The Income / Expenditure schedules for January / February were received. *See Appendix C.*

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

415 Planning Applications

There were no new planning applications to bring to the Parish Council's attention.

416 Next Meetings

3 March (Policy & General Purposes and Finance Committees); 31 March (Council)

Cllr Marlaine Whitham left the meeting.

417 Litter Collection Contract

Damaged Bin

It had recently been reported that one of the three bins provided by the Parish Council in Crooke Village was seen being removed by Wigan Council employees, possibly in 2020 or maybe 2019. The bin had been acquired and fitted by members of the CVRA approximately ten years ago and had then been adopted by the Parish Council, who were responsible for emptying it.

The bin had been located near the bridge at the entrance to Launs Wood in Wigan Lower Road. It had been removed because it had been damaged by the flooding and

was no longer fit for purpose. However, its removal had not been reported to the Parish Council until recently.

A member of the CVRA who was present reported that, as far as they were aware, the bin had disappeared during a flooding event about three years ago.

The way forward was discussed.

Resolved: A new single purpose bin would be supplied by the Parish Council and would be fitted at the same location as the bin that had disappeared.

In answer to a question from a member, the Clerk reported that the Council had been paying for the missing bin to be emptied. However, there had been several occasions in the past when Wigan Council had emptied new additional bins over periods of several months without charging until such time as a new SLA had been activated, so these things had evened out.

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.

Dist Cllr Janet Brown and all members of the public left the meeting.

Litter Collection Contract

The specification for the Litter Collection contract for 2021/22 – which included the emptying of the Parish Councils bins and litter picking in Memorial Park and Gathurst Lane car park - had been previously circulated. Several quotations had been sought, but only one contractor had been willing to provide one.

The quotation was discussed.

Resolved: The contract – valued at £5,428.80 - for emptying the Parish Council's litter bins twice a week was awarded to Wigan Council's Streetscene (Greenspace) Services. As the Parish Caretaker carried out litter picking activities three times a week, it was agreed that the litter picking part of the contract would be suspended and that the situation would be monitored for a year.

418 Appointment of Recreation Ground Trustee

The Council considered the previously circulated applications from three individuals. It was agreed that a panel of three members would meet informally with each applicant via conference call. A date for the meetings would be agreed during the Policy & General Purposes Committee meeting the following week.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the Meeting at 9:40 pm.

Chairman