

Shevington Parish Council

Clerk's Report to the Council Meeting of 20 January 2021

Christmas Decorations

All Christmas decorations have been removed – only the fencing remains. I am waiting to hear when that will be removed. 2020 was the third year of our lease of the lamp standard motifs in Gathurst Lane and the Council will need to decide whether to renew the lease or go for new motifs at this location.

Newsletter and Consultation

Both the newsletter and the consultation are at the printer's and will be delivered door-to-door next week. The consultation has gone live on the old website and we have received two replies. We are encouraging people to respond online, but, if that is not possible, residents may post their responses through the letterboxes at Shevington Library and Lester Petcare Clinic or in the collection box at Costcutter in Appley Bridge.

Inspection of Trees

An enquiry about the frequency with which trees should be inspected were made with our insurers, who replied that they did not give advice on this and that we should refer the question to the LA. The Trees & Woodlands Officer at the LA has provided the following advice:

'You should have a tree risk management plan for all of the land under the Parish Council management which is close to key targets, such as roads, properties, public paths and open spaces. There is currently no set standards or timescales but I suggest that where you have large trees and targets you should have a competent person such as gardener have a brief look as often as possible, particularly following storms or windy days to make sure there is no imminent dangers. Observations should be recorded for audit purposes and in the event that suspected defects are observed then these should be referred to your qualified arboriculturalist to carry out a more detailed tree inspection. A more detailed tree survey by the qualified arboriculturalist should then be carried out every 2-3years who will clearly set out a programme of tree works and actions based on risk and priority.'

Gritting

Gritting was undertaken in both Memorial Park and Gathurst Lane car park on one occasion in December and on two occasions in January.

Memorial Park Treeworks

Weather permitting, the tree surgeon aims to carry out the work at the northern end of the park on 27, 28 and 29 January, with the remainder of the work being done on 3, 4 and 5 February.

Appley Bridge and Parbold Quarry Issues

I have been contacted by someone from Wrightington who is involved with the group working on the issues associated with the former quarry sites at Appley Bridge and Parbold. I understand that permission for partial drainage of East Quarry has been granted, as has permission for the proposal for the Parbold site. Arrangements have been made for me to receive information from one of the group leaders about their plans with regard to their next steps in the fight. The matter was discussed by Wrightington Parish Council during their meeting on Monday evening - which was attended by Cllr Chris Horridge. Cllr Mike Grimes has acquired the East Quarry decision statement and has forwarded it to me. This will be an agenda item at the Policy & General Purposes Committee meeting.

Forest Fold Allotments

The tenancy agreement has been updated to include all changes agreed in spring of last year and have been circulated to tenants. 12 out of 35 tenants have settled their plot rent by BACS and signed their tenancy agreements electronically within one week of receiving their new documentation by email. A further 13 tenants either do not have an email address or have not shared it and have been sent documentation by post. So far one of these tenants has paid.

New Litter Bin

The new litter bin for outside Whiteacre Park was delivered yesterday and will be installed as soon as the weather permits.

Uncontrolled Dogs in Public Spaces

We have received the following from a resident:

'Irresponsible dog owners are making rural areas of Shevington off limits to responsible dog owners. Today (15 January) our dog, who is always on a lead, has been attacked in Elnup wood and was seriously injured by another dog that was off its lead and obviously out of the owner's control. As a result our dog has undergone surgery for deep wounds and is being kept in overnight for observation. I am sick of the number of times uncontrolled dogs have approached our dog only to be met with abuse when the owners have been politely asked to put their dog on a lead, or having to listen to some nonsense that the dog is only 'being friendly'. They haven't the slightest care or understanding that when an uncontrolled dog approaches a dog that is under control then this can lead to a dangerous situation, apart from the concern it causes for the controlling owner.

As a result of today Elnup wood is now off limits for our dog walks as is Crook footpath, so we are now forced to limit our walks to the streets around Shevington. It is unacceptable that our right to enjoy Shevington's rural walks is being denied by careless dog owners. Our dog was close to being killed today and we don't know how it will be affected through recovery and all because someone thought their dog just wanted to play! This won't be the first, or last time, animals will be attacked in Shevington and the wider borough by uncontrolled dogs. The situation seems to be getting out of control and it needs to be addressed at Parish and Borough Council level. A good start would be the implementation of bye laws requiring dogs to be on leads and fines to back this up if they are not. We should all feel safe with our pets when out walking in Shevington.'

The resident has also written to Wigan Council. I replied to the enquiry and told the writer that I would bring this to the Council's attention and that we would include something in the March edition of the newsletter. It will also be an agenda item at the Policy & General Purposes Committee meeting.

Wigan North Community Network Meeting

We have received an invitation to join the next meeting, which will be held virtually on 25 February.

Padlock on Bowling Green Gate

The padlock has been found to be damaged and is difficult to manage. A new one has been ordered. The padlock comes with tow keys as standard, but, because volunteer group leaders, staff and regular contractors all have keys, so that they can access the site when working there, I have ordered additional keys, which cost more than the initial package.

K.M.P. 20.01.21