

Shevington Parish Council
Clerk's Report to the Annual Meeting of the Council - 26 May 2021

Paved Footpath Repairs in Memorial Park

Work on repairing the paved footpaths in the park began on the morning of Monday, 26 April and are still in progress. The wet weather we are currently experiencing has slowed things down.

Memorial Park Drainage

Last month I reported that the consultants have informed me that they had succeeded in making contact with the Trees & Woodlands Officer and had sent him a draft sketch of proposed alterations to the drainage plan. They have since reported that they have met with the Trees & Woodlands Officer on site and have between them agreed that it will be possible for all surface water to be removed via the south-western exit in Shevington Lane, so that all outflow from the park goes down to the River Douglas at Gathurst, which is downstream from Crooke Village. The draft plans are currently in the CAD queue.

Once the plans are ready, the consultants will carry out a quantity survey and contact the drainage contractor to establish whether they will still be available later this year and to find out whether there will be any additional costs to take into consideration. The old plans did not include any work in the Memorial Garden, but the revised plans do and will involve some manual digging.

I have let the consultants know that the CVRA have asked if they could be included in a meeting between them and Wigan Council officers, so that they could discuss their concerns.

Forest Fold Allotment Matters

Last month I reported that there was a collection of metal items neatly parked along one side of the car park after most allotment refuse had been taken away via the skip. The FFTA Committee arranged to have them removed by a scrap merchant and they have been taken away.

The wooden gate at the entrance to the lower allotment compound was rotten and parts of it were falling off. The FFTA Committee asked if it could be replaced. The Caretaker has since made and fitted a replacement. Materials cost approximately £10.

A request from the FFTA Committee for the trees at the rear of the lower compound to be pruned was approved by the Trees & Woodlands officer, who provided advice on what needed to be done. A quotation of £520 for the work was going to be put before the Council at this meeting for approval. However, a couple of weekends ago one of the trees at the end of the stretch fell down during a night of strong winds and had to be removed, as it had fallen onto the tenant's plot. The tree surgeon quoted £520 for a standalone removal or £200 if it was removed at the same time as the other trees were pruned.

***Income / Expenditure Schedule (Item 31)**

Having consulted with the Chairman and another councillor in line with Standing Orders, it was agreed that the trees should be pruned and the tree removed at the same time. The work was carried out just over a week ago. About a year ago a similar thing had happened to another tree along the boundary of the main site with the neighbouring farmer's field. The farmer had said he would remove it, but had not done so. The tree surgeon agreed to remove it while he was on site without charging for the work.

Bowling Green Matters

All of the teams have begun using the green on a regular basis. It will be open to individual members on Tuesday, 1 June.

East, West & Parbold Quarries – Owner's Attendance Cancelled

Following concerns raised by members of the public in relation to social distancing measures and the possibility of having to limit numbers in the Village Hall, the attendance of the owner of East, West & Parbold Quarries at the Parish Council Meeting on 21 June 2021 has been cancelled. Residents have been asked to submit their questions to the Clerk at: carolyn.parishcouncil@googlemail.com by 5pm on Friday 11 June 2021. These will be forwarded to Mr O'Dowd for a response.

Christmas Shop-Front Presentations

These took place successfully on Thursday, 6 May.

Parking Issues at Vicarage Lane Fields

There were major issues in relation to parking at Vicarage Lane Fields on Sunday morning – mainly due to the volume of vehicles in the area. I have received several complaints from residents of neighbouring streets and there have been heated exchanges between residents and some of the members of the sports clubs on social media. Events are currently under investigation. The matter will be an agenda item at the Policy & General Purposes Committee meeting – a detailed report will be circulated to members for that meeting.

Dog Theft

LALC have written to raise our awareness of the fact that dog theft is increasing at an alarming rate in the North West, particularly in rural areas, which are being targeted by the thieves. The encouraging news is that a bright light is now shining on this matter and things are starting to happen at national, regional and local level: a Taskforce has been set up by the government to take the lead on dog theft. The body involving officials from the Home Office, Ministry for Justice and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) met in the week commencing 21 March to consider the problem.

Listed below are some of the reasons that dogs are being stolen:

- To meet the growing demand for particular breeds which are in short supply - dogs are being stolen 'to order' and they are then sold for extortionate prices
- For monetary reward on the return of the dog - no questions asked
- There is increased demand for working dogs
- For puppy farms - bitches and dogs are kept in deplorable conditions for breeding purposes - there is no regard for their welfare - poorly puppies are being sold to unsuspecting people and this often leads to heartache e.g. some pups don't survive for long after purchase or they have to be euthanised by vets
- For puppy smuggling - within and outside of the UK
- Rising puppy prices
- For fighting - this barbaric activity is still taking place despite the fact that it's illegal - stolen dogs are used as bait.

This paints an utterly sickening picture and we are urged to make residents aware of they can to keep their dogs safe. Once stolen, a dog can easily be moved miles away in a short space of time, so prevention is vital. The circular includes advice on how to protect the canine population and what to do in the event of a dog being stolen.

May Newsletter

The May edition of the newsletter has now been circulated to all households in the Parish.

Annual Parish Meeting

We were blessed with glorious weather last Wednesday so the APM and the Community Award presentations were able to go ahead, as planned, and was enjoyed by all present.

***Income / Expenditure Schedule (Item 31)**

As the plan was to only cancel the meeting in the event of heavy rain or thunderstorms, following consultation with the Chairman and another councillor, six tarpaulins were purchased. The aim was to use them to provide a canopy within the trees in the copse under which part of the meeting could still take place. This would also have provided shelter for the PA system. As we did not need to use them, four of the tarpaulins are being returned to Wickes. The other two will be kept for future use: (i) we may need them in August if we have to run the Parish Council stall outside and it is wet and (ii) we may need one of them in November to provide cover for the PA system, as it often rains on Remembrance Sunday. They may be helpful in the event of wet weather when the 'in Bloom' judging takes place.

K.M.P. 25.05.21