

Shevington Parish Council
Clerk's Report to the Council Meeting of 28 August 2019

Butterflies Children's Charity

We have received a letter from Butterflies Children's Charity thanking the Parish Council for the grant of £50 towards the work of the Charity.

Merchant Navy Day

We will be flying the Red Ensign – the British Merchant Navy's official flag – from the flag pole at Shevington Memorial Garden on Merchant Navy Day, which falls on 3 September. The promotional poster supplied by the Merchant Navy Fund is on display on the notice board in front of Shevington Library.

Annual Parish Walk

The annual Walk intended to keep the Parish footpaths open is on Bank Holiday Monday. Walkers will depart from Shevington Methodist Church at 10am and are invited to return there for light refreshments at the end of the Walk, when a collection will be taken up. The proceeds will be divided between Apple Bridge Boys Brigade and Shevington Luncheon Club.

Issues Turning Right at the Junction of Kilburn Drive with Shevington Lane

Residents recently raised concerns about the issues experienced when turning right from Kilburn Drive into Shevington Lane and offered to fund the installation of a mirror. The matter was forwarded to the LA, whose officer replied that

'.....such traffic mirrors can no longer be erected on the public highway as they are not approved by the Department for Transport. The main reasons why they are not allowed are:

- Their effectiveness in all weathers is likely to be different;*
- They can cause confusion for motorists by providing distorted information;*
- They can create difficulties in judging speed and distance of reflected vehicles;*
- They can cause problems of glare in strong sunlight;*
- They are susceptible to vandalism;*
- Considerable maintenance would be required to keep them completely clean.'*

The officer also stated that the GM Police road casualty records show that there have been no injury accidents at this location, and so would be considered to be more of a perceived issue rather than an actual road safety problem.

As there is another exit from the estate onto Shevington Lane at its junction with Wilton Road, where the issues associated with turning right into the main road do not give rise to similar concerns, I asked whether there is any possibility of introducing a 'No Right Turn' protocol at the junction of Shevington Lane with Kilburn Drive.

Wasps Nest in Memorial Park

A couple of weeks ago a wasps' nest was spotted at the base of a large tree situated just outside the Memorial Garden hedge in Church Lane. The area was cordoned off to prevent the public approaching too close to the tree, the matter was reported to Pest Control and the Trees and Woodlands Officer was consulted about the possible impact of the nest on the health of the tree.

Pest Control informed me verbally that they did not usually treat wasps nests in public places, as treatment tended to make the wasps more aggressive and a greater danger to the public than they would be without being treated, so the nest has been left untouched. Once the wasps have swarmed they will not return to this nest. They will go elsewhere and build a fresh nest. An unrelated swarm will not make a home in this nest in the future.

The Trees and Woodlands Officer informed me verbally that the wasps nest will not harm the tree's health in any way.

Shevington Village Bowling Club News

Shevington Village Bowling Club's Open Day at Forest Fold Bowling Green on Sunday, 11 August was cancelled following the forecast of inclement weather for that day.

Northwest In Bloom Judging

Cllr C Horridge, three members of Shevington in Bloom and I showed the judge from NWinB and the Wigan in Bloom Co-ordinator around Memorial Park on 4 July, answering as many of her questions as we could. The judge had previously visited Millbrook School and went on to judge the work of Appley Bridge in Bloom after leaving Shevington. For the second year running Crooke Village chose not to enter the competition.

Our grounds maintenance contractors had spent two days in the park earlier that week and also at Forest Fold and had, as usual, done a wonderful job. After several phone calls and emails, Wigan Council's workforce reinstated the damaged edging of the wetpour surface under the zip wire that had been removed in 2018 and rotovated the sand in the play areas. The weeds in the play areas had been sprayed a couple of weeks prior to judging day and had died, but had not been removed by the beginning of the week. However, the combined efforts of Cllr C Horridge, the Shevington in Bloom Co-ordinator and our grounds maintenance contractors' team ensured that most weeds had been removed from the play areas by the time of the judge's visit.

Attempted Break-in at Vicarage Lane Fields

Last week members of Shevington Football Club discovered that someone had attempted to break into the storage containers at Vicarage Lane Fields. They welcome relevant information from anyone who may have witnessed something suspicious and have asked everyone to be vigilant.

Allotments

Five tenants have recently been sent letters asking them to tidy up and cultivate their plots or to let us know whether they wish to relinquish them. The waiting list Secretary informs me that the list is quite long and the tenants in question would be easy to replace. Significantly four out of the five had not yet paid their rents at the time the letters were written. Two of the four have now settled their debts, so their plots will be monitored.

PWLB Loan Confirmation Letter

In 2013 the Parish Council took out a loan from the Public Works Loan Board to purchase Vicarage Lane Fields and Otters Croft and Crooke woods. The loan is repayable over 50 years and the interest rate is fixed. On 24 August of this year, six years later, we received a letter confirming the breakdown of our repayments and the annual interest payable over that period of time.

Healthier Wigan Partnership

Dist Cllr M Whitham has written:

"I'm emailing you with a special invitation.

As a member of Wigan Council's Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee I recently had the opportunity to experience a potted version of training that is being rolled out to Health Service personnel. It provided an excellent insight into the strategy and vision that is underpinning some new ways of delivering services. I was inspired by the session and I suggested that it might be usefully shared with people like yourselves who are involved in all sorts of community networks. As a result, Healthier Wigan Partnership Director, Rebecca Murphy, has invited me to get a group of Shevington and District community activists together for this summarised version of the training. I think you would really enjoy it and find it very worthwhile.

The session will be run for us Monday morning, 14th October, 10.30am for an 11am start. It will take place in the Galleries in Wigan town centre and last 1.5 hours or thereabouts. I really do recommend it and I believe that sharing the strategy and vision with people like yourselves would help support health and care services in our community.

Would you be able to come? I look forward to your reply so that I can finalise arrangements and invite others. (Numbers are limited to around 20 people for this session.)"

Anyone interested in going, please contact Dist Cllr M Whitham.

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Damage at Elnup Wood

On 23 July PS N Forshaw sent a brief e-mail about the issues with off road bikes in Elnup Wood. The previous day he had received information that a large group of off road bikers had accessed the area. They had arrived in vans and cars and were parked at the rear of the Wigan Athletic Football Training Ground. He and his team attended the location and encountered over 20 off road vehicles.

The group were from Liverpool, they were all friends and were well organised. They had children with them and many had decent equipment and safety gear. They were all warned under section 59 of the Police Reform Act regarding ASB and told to leave. They left without issue and he hopes will have taken on board the warning and advice he gave them not to return.

Once again PS Forshaw has asked that, if anyone witnesses any issues, he/she should ring 101.

Meanwhile, I still have not received a reply from the Groundwork Trust. However, a resident contacted me after seeing the article about the damage in Elnup Woods in the July newsletter. He had contacted the Groundwork Trust for a second time after seeing the article, because he too had written to them and had not received a reply. On the second occasion he enclosed a copy of the newsletter with his article and, on this occasion, he did receive a reply – initially from the local Project Manager and subsequently from an Executive Director at Groundwork CLM. He has shared the information he received.

The Executive Director outlined some of Groundwork's thinking with respect to the issues associated with the woods, and what they plan to do in the longer term.

Firstly, he provided some context. The woods were sold to the Trust for a peppercorn by the National Coal Board back in the late 1980s. The sale also placed a covenant on the Trust requiring it to retain the woods as a community woodland in perpetuity. Unfortunately, the agreement did not include any form of endowment funding for the management and maintenance of the woods – the liability of which all falls on the Trust.

Over the years the way in which the Trust generates income to support its work has changed a lot. Austerity has seen the end of considerable unrestricted grant funding from central and local government – with the majority of their income now restricted to fund specific projects linked to tackling inequalities and regenerating deprived communities. This means they have very limited resources to invest in Elnup Wood.

However, they are concerned about the deteriorating condition of some of the infrastructure and have embarked on a small programme of work to remove damaged or failing infrastructure, and to replace it with something more robust.

With regards to the evidence of unauthorised cycle track construction, they will investigate, review, take advice from experts, and then formulate a plan to manage things going forward. This will involve liaison with the police, local residents, users of the woods, planning experts, MTB experts, and hopefully the young people themselves. They are keen to find a cost-effective solution that can accommodate the needs of the wide range of user groups that regularly utilise Elnup Woods.

This will take some time, but in the interim they will seek to close the unauthorised tracks and install signage explaining that unauthorised activity of this kind is not permitted.

K.M.P. 27.08.19