

Shevington Parish Council
Clerk's Report to the Meeting of the Council – 31 August 2022

Internal Audit 2022-23

Heelis & Lodge have confirmed that they will be available to carry out the internal audit for this financial year.

Memorial Park Drainage

I met on site with Nathan Davies (Flood Risk Engineer at Wigan Council) in mid-July. We were joined by Mike Thomas and Steve Tebbitt of the CVRA and the issues in relation to United Utilities and planning were discussed. The subject of the drainage will feature as an agenda item at a meeting when it is known that most parish councillors will be present and more information is available. A more detailed report will be circulated for that meeting.

Sign for Shevington Moor

I have carried out some research in relation to the costings for such a sign. So far the costs are proving to be quite high – this is before installation costs are taken into consideration. We will also need to establish a location and whether we will be given permission to erect the sign at the chosen location.

Tree Risk Management Plan

This will feature on the agenda of next week's Policy & General Purposes Committee meeting. We will also need to consider several issues concerning some trees in Memorial Park:

- a) A group of trees along the boundary with the rear gardens of properties in Fern Close were pruned approximately 10 years ago and the residents have asked if these trees could be pruned again.
- b) Three trees in the area close to No.35 Shevington Lane have been identified by the Trees & Woodlands officer as having died. He has recommended that they be felled. They will need to be replaced.

Planning Application for Replacement Fencing Along the Boundary Between St Bernadette's School and Memorial Park

Following the receipt of our representation and observations made by the Trees & Woodlands Officer, the issues raised in relation to trees along the boundary were discussed by the Planning Department with the Archdiocese of Liverpool. As a result the planning application was resubmitted and the Council received a letter of consultation about the re-submitted application. The re-submission involves removal of the existing boundary fence and its replacement by a 2.4m high fence 1 metre to the east of the current fence line - away from the line of trees. The deadline for a response was 10 August, so, following consultation with the Chairman, I sent a representation supporting the changes, subject to care being taken not to damage the root systems, on behalf of the Parish Council. I also took the opportunity in the letter to raise concern over the matter of the proximity of the new fencing to the large trees bordering Church Lane.

July Newsletter

This was delivered as arranged.

Ash Dieback at Forest Fold

The Trees & Woodlands Officer inspected a tree growing on the bowling green at the end of June. He has reported that it has some very minor symptoms of Chalara Ash decline which is not significant enough to warrant removal. Standing advice from the Forestry Commission states that, unless there is less than 35% live growth and there are no other significant pests, diseases or structural defects, only dead branches which pose a significant risk of harm should be removed and the trees monitored.

He has advised that, if the grounds staff remove fallen leaves in autumn and dispose of them away from the tree, it should reduce the impact of the fungus which releases spores from fallen leaves. All of the younger Ash are showing more significant symptoms of Chalara but this is consistent with the rest of the country. Research is finding that younger trees are not as tolerant to the fungus as older trees but,

Shevington Parish Council
Clerk's Report to the Meeting of the Council – 31 August 2022

again, he does not think any action is necessary at this time. He is happy to take another look in twelve months time to determine if things have worsened.

This information has been shared with the neighbours who raised concerns about the tree.

Allotment Tenant

A new tenant who took over a vacant plot in April has only visited the plot once and has allowed it to become overgrown. Neighbouring tenants complained and attempts were made to contact him informally, but there has been no response. Consequently, following a request from the FFTA, the Enforcement Procedure has been put into place. As the First Warning has not elicited a response/reaction, the tenant is now on the Second Warning.

New Cover Assistant

The new Cover Assistant took up post on 1 July.

Change to the Legal Status of Zurich Insurance

Zurich Insurance have written to inform the Council that they are proposing to transfer parts of Zurich's UK general insurance business from Zurich Insurance plc (ZIP) to Zurich Insurance Company Ltd (ZIC). This is an internal reorganisation between two companies within the Zurich Group and is in response to Brexit. The transfer will be carried out using an insurance business transfer scheme under Part VII of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000, subject to approval by the High Court in the UK. If the proposal is approved, they will transfer this business to the UK branch of ZIC. They expect this transfer to take place on 1 January 2023. Policy terms will not be affected.

The transfer is necessary because, since Brexit, Zurich's general insurance business in the UK has been written through the UK branch of ZIP (an insurer based in Ireland) under the Temporary Permissions Regime (TPR). The TPR is overseen by the Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA) and is currently due to end on 31 December 2023. To remain compliant with their legal and regulatory obligations, they intend to transfer the relevant business to the UK branch of ZIC (a Swiss-based insurance company).

As the transfer forms part of an internal reorganisation within the Zurich Group, policy coverage, administration and service levels will not be affected. There will be no change to how we currently deal with Zurich in the UK, including in relation to any claim or complaint. We can continue to use our current policy or claim number. Your policy cover, premium, terms and conditions, rights and obligations will stay the same.

The Council's interests are protected by the legal process Zurich are required to follow: Zurich have written to tell us what is proposed and to give us an opportunity to raise any concerns before the transfer takes effect. We can object if we think we would be adversely affected.

Zurich will seek approval for the transfer from the High Court in the UK. The High Court will only approve the transfer if it is satisfied it is appropriate in all circumstances.

Zurich have appointed an Independent Expert who has been approved by the PRA in consultation with the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). The Independent Expert has reviewed the terms of the transfer and produced a report for the High Court. This report concludes that the proposed transfer will not have a material adverse effect on any transferring or non-transferring policyholders or claimants. Zurich have also consulted with the PRA and FCA, their industry regulators, who will assess the proposed transfer alongside their statutory objectives. Each will provide a report to the High Court.

Annual Inspection of Property

The inspection took place during the first week in August. All relevant areas were covered, with the exception of Otters Croft Wood and Croke Village. This was because some people who needed to be there were not available. We will need to agree an alternative date for the inspection of both areas.

Shevington Parish Council
Clerk's Report to the Meeting of the Council – 31 August 2022

Difficulties with Accessing the Ask My GP Service

Shevington Surgery PPG have expressed regret that patients have felt the need to make representations to the Parish Council regarding the Ask My GP service offered earlier in the year by the Surgery. They wish to say, first and foremost, that this is not purely a Shevington Surgery issue, but a nationwide problem. There is a vast shortage of GPs and this is having a knock-on effect when trying to book appointments. However, Shevington Surgery have assured the PPG that urgent cases, children and elderly patients will actually be seen wherever possible despite the fact that Ask My GP is full. This has been tested by a couple of PPG members and found to be true.

The PPG are in constant contact with the Surgery and are fully aware that Ask My GP does fill up very quickly and that this is totally unacceptable. The Surgery have been looking into hybrid methods of consulting healthcare professionals. This will mean not simply asking to see the GP but to be directed to the best possible healthcare professional in relation to the condition reported by the patient. As with any new initiative it is going to take time to bed in.

The PPG have had meetings with the surgery regarding the issues with Ask My GP. They are also looking at engaging with the patient population of Shevington Surgery about hybrid consultations. One option they are considering is to hold a surgery during which patients can come along and pose questions to PPG members. Another option they are considering is a leafleting campaign.

The PPG have asked if issues raised by patients about Shevington Surgery could be directed to the PPG, who will try to provide answers.

Since receiving the above observations by email, Shevington Surgery have changed their appointments system. In mid-July they issued the following statement:

APPOINTMENTS SYSTEM CHANGES FROM MONDAY 18TH JULY 2022

As from Monday 18th July 2022 the following changes will come into effect:

The AskmyGP System will open from 7.30 am until 10.00 am each day Monday to Friday.

- All requests will be triaged by a GP or Clinician, who will decide if the request is URGENT or ROUTINE.
- URGENT requests will be dealt with on the day, and you will be contacted and offered an appointment, either telephone or face to face.
- ROUTINE requests will be contacted and offered an appointment, either telephone or face to face, within the next few weeks.
- After 10.00 am if you need URGENT medical advice before the next working day, within the surgery opening hours (up until 6.30pm), please contact the surgery, via telephone if possible. Requests for children aged 12 and under after 10.00 am should also be directed to the surgery, via the telephone if possible. These requests will also be triaged and dealt with as clinically appropriate.
- Routine appointments are also available via the Extended Access Service. These can be booked by contacting 01942 482848.
- For URGENT medical advice out of hours please contact NHS 111.
- If you have a medical emergency, please dial 999.

These changes have been made following feedback from our patients, staff, and PPG to help improve access and continuity of care.

Zip Wire in Memorial Park

In early July a resident reported that the seat on the zip wire had become detached from its chain. I reported this to the relevant officer and a repair was carried out very promptly.

Addition of a Signatory

The request to add a bank signatory was submitted to the bank in early July. This was acknowledged. I have not received any further communications from the bank.

Shevington Parish Council
Clerk's Report to the Meeting of the Council – 31 August 2022

St Helens Borough Local Plan

We have been informed that St Helens Local Plan was adopted on 12 July 2022.

Tree on the Boundary of Otters Croft Wood with Farmer's Field

This tree was felled in late July. Please note its size compared to the human beings!



Potholes Along the Road in Forest Fold

Some time ago the presence of potholes along the road surface in Forest Fold was reported to the Parish Council. The road is not part of our lease and the residents of the three domestic properties have access, but do not own the road. They do have the right, however, to carry out repairs to the road. The right to do this is not included in our lease. In view of this I contacted Wigan Council to establish the position. There has been no definitive answer to date. We have been looking into land ownership and maintenance responsibility. Last week Land Management apologised for the delay in replying to my enquiries and informed me that they have had to consult the Legal Department for advice and are waiting for their response. They will update me when they have further information.

Places for Everyone – Update

Places for Everyone is set to undergo public examination by the Planning Inspectorate later this year. Beginning on 1 November, a series of hearings will take place in which Planning Inspectors appointed by the Secretary of State will test whether the Plan is sound and legally compliant. This means that the Inspectors have to be satisfied that the Plan is positively prepared, justified, effective, and consistent with national policy and that it meets legal requirements including the duty to cooperate.

The sessions will also hear representations from individuals, community groups and organisations who submitted comments during the consultation on the publication plan in 2021. Almost 200 requests were made to participate in the hearings, and around 25 participants have been invited to attend each session. All sessions will be streamed live online, and will also be made available on the GMCA website.

K.M.P. 30.08.22