

**Clerk's Report**  
**Shevington Annual Parish Meeting**  
**Held 19 May 2021**  
**7 pm Shevington Memorial Park**

Good Evening, everyone. How lovely to see so many of you here. The purpose of the Clerk's report is, as always, to provide you with an overview of the work of the Parish Council over the past year.

In 2020 the Annual Parish Meeting took place in March – just before the first lockdown. People who came to that meeting were aware that momentous changes were on the horizon and those who were involved with community groups were talking about the possibility of having to cancel planned events. Across the road from Shevington Library – at the Co-op – the shelves, as in other supermarkets, were half empty: people were panic buying and things like toilet paper, paper towels, bacterial wipes, soap and other cleaning materials were being rationed. Sanitiser was like gold and masks cost a small fortune.

Fourteen months on and frequently changing Covid restrictions, social distancing, masks and sanitiser have become a part of life – and a vital one.

The Parish Council, like everyone else, has had to adapt. Since July 2020 we have been holding meetings virtually. To do this – like everyone else – we have had to learn new skills and develop those we already had. Covid regulations have created more work, not less. Some have found this more difficult than others, but we have got there in the end.

**Projects**

Work on our projects has continued, even though it has often had to happen remotely.

The new pitches at Vicarage Lane Fields were marked out in 2019, but, due to successive lockdowns, have only been in use sporadically. The sports clubs were very successful in sourcing funding for a community building and work on its construction was able to continue. The building includes team changing facilities and is now open and available for hire for indoor activities permitted by Covid restrictions.

Shevington Gardening Club have continued to develop the allotments site at Vicarage Lane Fields and they are now managed by the Tenants' Association. The cultivation of allotments has been a permitted activity throughout all lockdowns and both the Vicarage Lane Fields and Forest Fold sites have seen a great deal of healthy activity. There is now a new Tenants' Association at the Forest Fold site and they have thrown themselves into managing the site with great enthusiasm.

The bowling green at Forest Fold was closed throughout 2020, but it was still maintained by the green keeper. It re-opened this year in April for Covid-secure activities organised by the home teams. From 1 June it will re-open for individual play.

Since the glorious Spring and early Summer of 2020 it rarely stopped raining until April of this year and Memorial Park was so water-logged that the paved footpaths were moving regularly. The contract for the new drainage was awarded over a year ago and it was the Council's intention to carry out footpath repairs after the new system had been installed. However, the paved paths could no longer be left and, as you will see, repairs on them are currently in progress. They are being paid for from a combination of reserves and a grant from the Friends of Shevington Memorial Park.

The Council's bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for funding to pay for the new drainage and some other elements of the Memorial Park Project was submitted last year, but, like many others, was closed down by the HLF at the beginning of the pandemic. As a result the Parish Council decided to go for Plan B – to consult residents about the possibility of applying for a loan from the Public Works Loans Board. Most of the residents

who replied to the consultation gave Plan B their backing, so an application has now gone forward and we await a decision.

The consultation drew the Parish Council's attention to the problems that Crooke Village have been having with flooding events and the fears that the residents have that the new drainage system proposed for the park could impact in a negative way on Crooke. The Council have taken this on board and have instructed their consultants to amend it in such a way that this does not happen.

Throughout the past year the Council have:

- continued to fund the general maintenance of the Recreation Ground;
- continued to maintain Shevington Memorial Park;
- continued to maintain the bowling green and other elements at Forest Fold;
- provided community Christmas trees (together with lights) in the centre of Shevington village, on Crooke Village green, in the centre of Appley Bridge and in Shevington Moor;
- provided Christmas motifs for the lamp standards for the shopping area between the two mini-roundabouts in Gathurst Lane and Christmas garlands for lamp posts in Appley Bridge and Shevington Moor,
- continued to support all the activities of 'In Bloom' groups by funding the maintenance of some 45 planters, which are located in all areas of the Parish and also paying for the plants for some of the flower beds in several locations in the Parish and the watering of most of the planters and flower beds during the Summer months – this will continue.
- maintained its provision of litter bins in the green spaces around the Parish.

The RHS cancelled all of its 'in Bloom' competitions in 2020, but this year Memorial Park has again been entered on a stand-alone basis in the North West in Bloom 'Small Parks' competition. Shevington in Bloom will be working on this and Appley Bridge in Bloom too will be active in Appley Bridge and Shevington Vale.

### **Support for Local Organisations and Other Bodies**

Elected members continued to represent the Parish Council

- on the Youth Club management committee;
- as Trustees of Shevington Recreation Ground;
- at meetings of Shevington & District Community Association;
- on Wigan Council's Audit, Governance & Standards Committee;
- as Trustees of Shevington United Charities,

albeit some of the above bodies have not met throughout the pandemic.

The Council have also maintained links with Crooke Village Residents Association and Appley Bridge Community Association.

Formal Remembrance services were not held November 2020, but our Chairman, Cllr Ira Whiteley, laid a wreath on behalf of residents at Shevington Memorial and Cllr Mike Grimes, did the same at the Memorial at Appley Bridge.

### **Supporting Local Businesses**

The 'Christmas Shop Front' competition was held for the thirteenth year running. The winner in 2020 was Elizabeth Ann Hairdresser of Shevington Moor, who nominated Wigan & Leigh Hospice as their chosen Charity. Thanks go to Pam Powell for again judging the competition. Due to Covid regulations we have only just been able to make the presentations.

### **Planning Matters**

The Council have continued to comment on planning applications, where appropriate. The draining of and developments proposed by its owner for East Quarry at Appley Bridge have caused divisions among the

residents of the village. The Council have been engaging with both sides and are aware of all the differing points of view.

### **Communication**

The Parish Council engages with residents in a number of different ways: via the website, the notice boards, the newsletter - a bi-monthly publication – and Facebook. Subject to Covid regulations, these have continued to be used. The calendar of meetings, which have been taking place virtually, is advertised on the website and many have been attended by residents.

Members of the public are always welcome and can speak during the first thirty minutes of the Full Council Meeting about any issues or suggestions they have.

### **Finance**

This year we have once again included information on the Council Tax bill about the Parish Council and the work it does. We are proud to say that up to now our finances have been sound and we have been able to make ends meet, despite keeping precept increases to a bare minimum for several years. However, because inevitably things wear out and need repair, in 2020 we took the step of increasing the precept by 10%. This took us back to levels similar to those in 2010 and meant an increase to the value of the cost of a cup of coffee per year for every household. 2021 has seen a much more modest, inflation-linked increase.

### **Public Concerns**

The Parish Council is always willing to take any matters of concern seriously and works with the Community Safety Team and the GMP whenever possible to combat anti-social behaviour. It will continue to do so until all unacceptable behaviour is under control. In connection with this the Council have made a commitment to fund the Data Plan and on-going maintenance of the CCTV system that was installed in the centre of Shevington in 2019. As recent months have witnessed a considerable increase in anti-social behaviour centred on Memorial Park, we are now looking into the possibility of introducing CCTV in Church Lane.

### **Conclusion**

Over the past year Parish Councillors and co-opted Committee members have tried to work with many groups in the parish to achieve various goals – too numerous to mention. The Parish Council is always anxious to support and encourage local activities.

Krystyna Pilkington  
Clerk to Shevington Parish Council