

**Minutes of the Meeting of Shevington Parish Council
Held Wednesday 31 August 2022
7:00pm – The Community Centre at Vicarage Lane Fields**

Present: Councillors William McKnight (Chairman), Michael Grimes, Jess Higham and Vicky Galligan
Eight members of the public

Officer in Attendance: Mrs Krystyna Pilkington (Clerk)

790 Apologies for Absence

Cllrs Ira Whiteley, John Whiteley, John Ball and Mike Crosby

791 Declaration of Interests

Cllr Vicky Galligan w.r.t. Item 799 (*personal & prejudicial*)

Standing Orders were suspended.

792 Matters Introduced by Members of the Public

Grassed Area Behind Longbrook, Shevington

A resident, who was attending on behalf of herself and many neighbours who shared the same concerns about the way some dog owners were misusing the grassed area behind Longbrook described the issues.

The grassy area behind Longbrook was a fantastic, much needed area for family recreation. It was used extensively by children, but there had been a very noticeable increase in the number of dogs brought there by their owners. Responsible owners kept their dogs on a lead and cleaned up their mess, using the bins provided. Sadly, nearly all of the owners took their dogs off the lead on arrival and then promptly looked at their mobiles, giving their dogs full access to the field, outer perimeters and the areas behind trees and bushes..... all of the places frequented by children. Many actively encouraged their dogs to go behind bushes and trees so they did not have to bother picking up the litter - but this was exactly where children played hide and seek.

The resident's husband had cleaned up dog litter in the area many times in an effort to protect the children, who could so easily pick up a serious infection from it, but something more co-ordinated needed to be done urgently. In addition to the dog litter problem a child had recently been badly bitten by a dog in the grassy area. This had necessitated several visits to Alder Hey hospital for treatment. The dog had not been on a lead and when the owner realised what had happened they had quickly left the area, apparently making no effort to ensure the child was unharmed.

The issues and the residents' concerns were discussed at length. The resident was advised that local residents should report as many incidents as possible to Wigan Council via the 'Report It' app. If there were a large number of reports over a relatively short period of time the anti-social behaviour team would be prompted to act and they would mount a campaign with regard

to the dog litter. She was also advised to attend the Ward Councillors' weekly surgery on a Saturday morning and discuss the issues with them.

The Parish Council, for its part, would put notices on its websites and in the newsletter. The Clerk agreed to write Wigan Council to ask them if they would consider running a 'pick up your dog litter' campaign.

Cllr Vicky Galligan joined the meeting.

Lighting in Bankwood

It was reported that a replacement lamp post installed in Bankwood was much taller than the original and the light it provided was diffused by the trees in the vicinity. As a result the area was not as well lit as before. The Chairman agreed to report this to Street Lighting.

793 District Councillors' Reports

Dist Cllr Vicky Galligan's report on behalf of Wigan ward councillors was received:

- The Wigan ward councillors had recently allocated a substantial grant from their Brighter Borough funds to the Memories group. Other community groups that needed financial support were invited to get in touch.
- £2,000 were still available in the Vocal Eyes account. Community groups were invited to put forward projects.
- The ward councillors had resumed their weekly surgeries at Shevington Library. The surgeries were taking place between 10 am and 11 am on Saturday mornings. The Police would attend when they could.
- A complaint from Shevington in Bloom about the appearance of several concrete structures in front of the large flower bed outside Wigan & Leigh Hospice Shop was being looked into.
- 'Our Town' personnel were currently undertaking a community clean up in the area. Suggestions for improvements were invited from residents.
- Complaints had been received about cars parking on pavements – mainly along Shevington Lane (near the High School) and along Miles Lane.

Standing Orders were re-instated.

794 Minutes of the Last Ordinary Meeting of the Council (29 June 2022)

The previously circulated Minutes were considered.

Resolved: That the Minutes of the Last Ordinary Meeting of the Parish Council, held on 29 June 2022, were approved as a true and correct record.

795 Chairman's Report

The Chairman reported that he had recently met with a couple of Wigan Council officers who had information about grants that were available to local groups. He had asked the officers to share that information with the Clerk, who, when asked, advised that she had not received any information from the two officers.

796 Reports from Councillors

East Quarry

It was reported that the owner of East Quarry had been prosecuted by the Health & Safety Executive for failing to comply with the conditions of an environmental permit. A resident had asked a member whether there were any updates on the progress or outcome of the case. There was a brief discussion during which it became apparent that there were no members present who could provide an update.

797 Reports from Representatives

Crooke Village Residents' Association

The representative reported that the Crooke Hall Inn were holding a Beer & Music Festival over the coming weekend. There would be live music, stalls and other activities.

Village volunteers had started work on the planting up of planters and flower beds. This was being funded partly by funds raised through a collection amongst residents.

A date would be arranged with the Clerk for an inspection of Crooke Village and Crooke and Otters Croft woods.

Shevington Recreation Ground Trustees

The representative reported that the SRGT were due to hold a meeting on 7 September. This would be their first meeting since before the start of the Covid pandemic.

'in Bloom' Groups

It was reported by the representative that Appley Bridge in Bloom had been invited to attend the area meeting for Liverpool, Manchester and Lancashire on 19 October. The presentations were to be made at Bolton Wanderers' Stadium.

Patient Participation Group

The member who liaised with the PPG reported that the PPG would now be meeting bi-monthly instead of quarterly. Issues relating to the AskMyGP service were on the PPG agenda for the next meeting. Discussions had been held with the surgery staff and improvements had been introduced.

Residents were invited to attend a Health Check-up being held on Friday, 9 September at Shevington Library.

A member raised the matter of a letter she had received from the baby clinic. The information on it was very much out of date and needed to be reviewed. The representative agreed to bring this to the PPG's attention.

Vicarage Lane Developments

VLF Community & Recreational Centre

The Community building had been selected as one of five well-being and community hubs by the Rugby League World Cup and the sports clubs had been jointly developing it over the last twelve months:

- The clubs ran First Aid courses, coaching courses, fitness sessions and karate classes. Baby mediation classes were to begin on 13 September. This was part of a Wigan Council outreach programme for babies and young families.

- A variety of sessions were provided for disadvantaged children and community groups were welcome to use the facilities at the centre.
- The clubs also did a great deal of work with Shevington High School. In October the clubs would be delivering mental health classes to selected students at the school. Duke of Edinburgh candidates from the High School received work experience on the site. Several joint meetings had been arranged between the clubs, the school and the FA to discuss grant funding streams to develop sports fields at the school.
- Approximately £4,000 in funding had been secured to develop the outdoor space around the centre.
- A defibrillator had been installed. It could be accessed by the public, if necessary.
- Meetings had been set up with the Groundwork Trust and Young Offenders organisations with a view to facilitating community service.
- £50,000 had recently been raised through a charity event in memory of a member who had died.

A member observed that the achievements of the sports clubs over the past few years should go on record as being phenomenal. This had been done despite the pandemic.

Vicarage Lane Allotments

The allotments society had made huge strides with respect to developing the allotments in the last six months. New allotments had been created and new members had been welcomed. The Society had recently held an Open Day to which they had invited local residents. They had raised a further £206 and engaged with local children by providing activities for them. Funding had also been secured for a fully compostible toilet, which would due to be installed soon.

Requests were put forward for:

1. The sub-heading 'Vicarage Lane Fields Developments' to be become 'Vicarage Lane Fields Developments / Allotments
2. The inclusion of 'Shevington Fete' as a sub-heading under this agenda item.

There were no reports from

Shevington & District Community Association
Shevington Youth Club
Friends of Shevington Memorial Park and
Forest Fold Tenants' Association

798 VLF – Pitch Spectator Barriers

Standing Orders were suspended.

The sports clubs had put forward a request for permission to erect spectator barriers around the end football pitch and the rugby pitch - not around the middle football pitch. Depending on costs, the barriers may include a lower handrail approximately 450 mm above the ground, with the top handrail approximately 1 metre above the ground. The request was discussed. Two representatives of the sports clubs were present to answer questions.

There were several reasons for introducing spectator barriers. One was to reduce access to the pitches to horses, motorised vehicles, bikers, golfers and dog walkers who did not remove their dogs' litter afterwards.

The barriers would be erected approximately 2.5 metres from the touchline around the perimeter of the pitches. Due to financial constraints, the work might be completed in phases.

Standing Orders were re-instated.

Resolved: Permission for spectator barriers to be installed, as outlined above, was approved.

799 VLF – Alcohol Licence

The sports clubs based at Vicarage Lane Fields had applied for an alcohol licence to allow them to serve a few cans of beer on match days to players and supporters before and after games. They did not propose to sell anything other than cans and did not propose to sell beer at other private functions.

Licensing hours would be:

Friday 6pm - 11pm

Saturday 12 Noon - 11pm

Sunday 12 Noon - 7pm

There was a brief discussion. The Council noted that an application for a licence had been submitted.

800 VLF – Topographical Survey Works

As part of Wigan Council's initiative to improve walking and cycling connections, the Major Projects Team were looking into the possibility of upgrading the footpaths leading from Shevington to Crooke Village. The MPT had written to ask for the Council's permission for their surveyor to carry out a topographical survey along the edge of the existing ditchline between Dixon Avenue and the Public Right of Way near to Vicarage Lane allotments. The area to be surveyed would be approximately 5 to 10m in width.

The proposed scheme was to create a 3m wide surfaced bridleway with lighting along this length to join a proposed path from Vicarage Lane to Crooke Village. The works were to be carried out by a local surveyor on behalf of Wigan Council. A map showing the route (orange) of the proposed bridleway across Vicarage Lane Fields had been previously circulated.

Standing Orders were suspended.

Representatives of Vicarage Lane Fields stakeholder groups were present and were invited to express their views about the proposals. The following reservations about creating such a bridleway were put forward:

- There had been no consultation with either the Parish Council or the VLF stakeholders about the possible introduction of such a bridleway.
- The introduction of such a link would make it easier for people to indulge in anti-social behaviour and for unauthorised vehicles to access the route to Crooke.
- The bridleway would run along the length of the rugby pitch. There would be H&S issues for horses and riders from rugby balls flying through the air. A horse bolting would pose a serious danger to players and spectators on the field.

In favour of the suggestion was the fact that the bridleway would provide a link from the Council estate to the PROW from Vicarage Lane to Crooke Village.

Representatives of the sports clubs put forward a request that, if permission was granted, one of their representatives should be present on site when the survey was carried out.

Standing Orders were re-instated.

Resolved: The Council agreed to give their permission for a surveyor employed by Wigan Council's Major Projects Team to carry out a topographical survey along the edge of the existing ditchline between Dixon Avenue and the Public Right of Way near to Vicarage Lane allotments.

A member asked for a recorded vote.

FOR: Cllrs Vicky Galligan, Jess Higham and Mike Grimes

AGAINST: Cllr Bill McKnight

The Clerk was asked to inform the MPT, when she wrote to them, that there was significant opposition amongst the stakeholders of Vicarage Lane Fields to the proposal of creating a bridleway along this route and to ask the Team what the possibility of upgrading the PROW from Church Lane to its junction with the PROW to Crooke Village was, as it might be a better option. The Clerk was also to ask the MPT if the surveyors report could be sent to the Parish Council once it was available.

801 September Newsletter

The contents of the September edition of the newsletter were discussed.

Resolved: The following articles were approved for inclusion:

1. Annual Parish Walk
2. Remembrance Sunday notice
3. Appley Bridge Men's Association (*rollover from July*)
4. Open Day at VLF Allotments
5. Best Kept Allotment at Forest Fold Allotments
6. Shevington Garden Club Annual Show
7. Shevington Garden Club Visit to RHS Bridgewater Gardens
8. Parish Council Accounts 2021-22
9. Dog Fouling

Cllr Mike Grimes, who acted as the steward during the Walk, reported that there were fewer walkers this year than in past years. However, those who took part were very generous and £186.75 was collected in aid of Dementia Friends.

802 Best Kept Allotment

The allotments at Forest Fold were judged in July.

Resolved: The Council approved:

- (a) The Policy & General Purposes Committee's recommendation that the value of the prize for the tenant awarded first place should be increased to £40 and
- (b) The judge's recommendation that the first place should be awarded to Plot No.14.

The Council noted that the other plots selected for awards were as follows:
Second place = Plot No.7; Third place = Plot No.8; Most improved plot = Plot No.22D;
Best raised bed = RB6

803 Clerk's Report

The Clerk's report was received. *See Appendix A*

804 External Audit 2021-22

The External Audit Report for 2021-22 and supporting documentation were received and considered. There were no issues.

Resolved:

- (a) The External Audit Report for 2021-22 was accepted and approved.
- (b) The Notice of Conclusion of Audit, the AGAR and the External Audit Report would be published before 30 September for a period of 14 days on a date of the Clerk's choosing.
- (c) A fee of 50p would be charged for a hard copy of the certified AGAR.

805 External Audit Arrangements 2022-23 to 2026-27

A document explaining the Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments role in the appointment of external auditors for local council accounts – a statutory requirement – was received and considered. Local councils had the right to opt out of the SAAA regime. If they decided to opt out, they had to undertake a lengthy process to appoint their own external auditor. This process was also outlined in the document.

Resolved: The Council agreed to opt into the SAAA process for the appointment of an external auditor for the financial years 2022-23 to 2026-27.

No further action was required.

806 Financial Aid Applications

Appley Bridge WI

This item was deferred for consideration by the Finance Committee at its meeting the following week.

807 Payments, Income & Bank Balances

The Income / Expenditure schedules for July and August were received.
See Appendix B

Resolved: That the Accounts be approved, the cheques signed and internet transfers made in payment, due notice being given to the bank statements exhibited.

808 Planning Applications

There were no relevant planning applications to bring to the attention of the Council.

809 Next Meetings

7 September (Policy & General Purposes & Finance Committees);
28 September (Council)

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8:55 pm.

Chairman