

**Minutes of the Shevington Parish Council
Policy & General Purposes Committee Meeting
Held Wednesday, 3 February 2021
7pm Virtual Meeting**

Present: Councillor Ira Whiteley (Chairman), Councillors William McKnight, Christopher Horridge, John Whiteley, Michael Grimes, Michael Crosby, Vicky Galligan and Jessica Higham

Co-opted Committee Members: Dist Cllr Janet Brown and Mr Brian Lomas

No members of the public

In Attendance: Mrs K Pilkington (Clerk to the Council)

1. Apologies

Cllr John Ball
Mrs E Longmore

2. Declaration of Interests

Cllr Chris Horridge w.r.t. Item No.13 (*personal & prejudicial*)

**3. Minutes of the Last Policy & General Purposes Committee Meeting
(2 December 2020)**

Resolved: The Minutes of the Policy & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 2 December 2020 were approved as a true and correct record.

In reply to a question from a member about a response to a letter about the use of part of the recreation ground for enlarged car parking provision in Church Lane, the Clerk informed the Council that the Recreation Ground Trustees had not met recently. She had spoken to the Secretary to the Trustees and reported that he had been of the opinion that the Charity Commission might not permit this.

Mr B Lomas joined the meeting.

4. Village Issues

Footpath from Stockley Park to Back Lane

It was reported that a resident had raised concerns about the safety of this footpath. Its surface had become uneven because of growing tree roots, which were pushing it up, and the poor lighting provision meant it was difficult for pedestrians to see their way after dark. A letter bringing attention to this issue would be sent to the LA.

Dog Fouling (1)

A member reported that she had received many complaints recently about dog fouling in public places. A letter drawing attention to this would be sent to the LA. A reminder about collecting and disposing of dog litter in bins could be included in the next newsletter.

Dist Cllr Janet Brown joined the meeting.

Bollard and Grass Verge on Miles Lane

It was reported that a bollard outside a house in Miles Lane had been removed and thrown in the ditch further along the road. The owner of the house was now driving across the grass verge on which the bollard had been installed and mud was being left on the footpath. The matter was discussed. It had been suggested that these activities might constitute a breach of tenancy. However, Dist Cllr Janet Brown had looked into the matter and had been informed by the LA that there was no breach of tenancy. Two new bollards had been introduced and another would be introduced at the end of the verge. Progress with everything was very slow at present, so it was not certain as to when this would happen.

Security Issues

A member reported that there had been a spate of burglaries in both Shevington and Standish recently. Three bungalows in Old Lane had been broken into between 4pm and 7pm on the same evening. There had also been burglaries in Appley Bridge, Shevington Moor and Shevington Lane. The Police had increased patrols in the area and had been in contact with local Community Watch teams asking that the public should be made aware of the issues. A message about the burglaries would be put in a prominent position on the website – it had already been shared via Facebook.

Footpath from Vicarage Lane to Crooke Village

Cllr John Whiteley had been looking into the possibility of providing a safe cycling route from Shevington to Wigan and upgrading the footpath so that it would be suitable for cycling. He reported that there was nothing that could be done about providing a safe cycling route along the road at the present time. For the footpath from Vicarage Lane to Crooke Village to become safe for cyclists it would have to be upgraded to a bridleway, when it would be legally accessible to both cyclists and horses. Again, nothing could be done about this at present. The LA's Rights of Way Officer was aware of the condition and nature of the footpath. It was currently fairly accessible to pushchairs, but not to bicycles or horses, but the LA would look into the possibility of at least improving the drainage at the southern end.

Tibetan Cherry Trees

The Shevington in Bloom Co-ordinator had contacted the Chairman about the two new Tibetan cherry trees that were due to be planted in the Memorial Garden and had asked if they could act as two of the replacement trees for the trees in the park that were due to be felled. This was discussed. The Committee were reminded that it had already been agreed that the cherry trees would be replacing the two beech saplings in the Memorial Garden that had died. The Trees & Woodlands Officer had stipulated the variety of trees that were to be planted in place of the trees that were being removed. The Chairman would inform the SinB Co-ordinator.

PROW from Broadriding Road to The Nook

Dist Cllr Janet Brown reported that the repairs to this Public Rights of Way were due to begin the following Monday.

Footbridge Over the Motorway

A member reported issues with the condition of the footpath on either side of the footbridge at Hullet Hole Wood. It was badly in need of repair and would be reported to the LA by Dist Cllr Janet Brown. The condition of other footpaths in the Parish were discussed.

Dog Fouling (2)

Dist Cllr Janet Brown reported that she had too had received many complaints about dog fouling. Following a short discussion it was agreed that the Clerk would write to the LA about this to support action taken by Dist Cllr Brown.

Crooke Green Verge

Several councillors had received complaints from residents of Crooke Village about damage caused by large vehicles to one of the verges of the Green. Cllrs John Whiteley and Jess Higham would join the next meeting of the CVRA to discuss this.

5. Text for Council Tax Letter

The text prepared for inclusion in the Council Tax letter sent to residents had been previously circulated and was discussed.

Resolved: The text for inclusion in the Council Tax letter to residents was approved.

6. Community Engagement Strategy

The Community Engagement Strategy had been updated in line with suggestions made during the meeting in December.

At present both the old and new websites were in use. A brief discussion took place about the future of the websites and whether the names of both should be included in the Community Engagement Strategy document. As the old website was to be gradually phased out, it was agreed that Cllrs John Whiteley and Vicky Galligan should have a virtual meeting with the Clerk to discuss and agree the way forward.

Resolved: The Community Engagement Strategy was adopted. It was agreed that only the name of the new website would be included in the document.

7. School Crossing Patrol in Church Lane

A letter had been received from the Headteacher of St Bernadette's School. In the letter the Headteacher had expressed concern about the lack of a school crossing patrol in Church Lane and described the difficulties the school had experienced in getting the patrol re-instated. The issues were discussed. It was reported that Highways would not upgrade the crossing patrol from a 'C' category to a 'B' category. Because of this it was of low priority when it came to assigning personnel to manage it. In addition there were many vacancies at the present time for school crossing personnel. The Council were actively advertising for new recruits, but had not been successful in attracting anyone.

Resolved: A letter asking that the crossing patrol be upgraded to a higher category would be sent to the LA. The Parish Council were concerned about the safety of children crossing Church Lane and were willing to also include the advert for new crossing patrol personnel in the next edition of the newsletter.

Dist Cllr Janet Brown also agreed to write to the LA.

8. Dog Attack in Elnup Wood

The Parish Council had received an email recounting one resident's experiences when their family dog (which was on a lead) was attacked by another dog (which was not on a lead) while being taken for a walk in Elnup Wood. The matter was discussed.

Resolved: It was agreed that a generalised article about keeping pet dogs under control would be prepared by Cllr Jess Higham for inclusion in the newsletter.

9. RHS 'In Bloom' Entry – Memorial Park

After careful consideration the RHS had decided to take a positive view regarding the pandemic and invite applications for Britain in Bloom in 2021. Because of the pandemic they had extended the application deadline to 30 April 2021 which was a month later than normal to give everyone extra time in which to make their decision. They would assess the situation regarding the pandemic in May and decide the safest way of judging the entries.

Memorial Park had on two occasions been entered in the 'Small Parks' category and had done very well. The RHS were mainly interested in plant displays and the part of the park that had usually been entered was the Memorial Garden. Judging usually took place in July. The work was carried out by a combination of the grounds maintenance contractors and Shevington in Bloom volunteers.

The SinB volunteers would be contacted about the opportunity of entering Memorial Park in the 'Small Parks' category of the RHS competition. If they were prepared to carry out the work as usual, the Parish Council would support them.

10. East Quarry & Parbold

It was reported that an Abstraction Licence had been granted by the Environment Agency to Maybrook Investments to partially drain East Quarry on the grounds of Health & Safety. A copy of the consent document had been previously circulated and was received. An email from a representative of the Parbold Hill Group and a report prepared by the Group were also received. A lengthy discussion followed.

A group of residents of Appley Bridge had asked for a private meeting with members of the Parish Council to discuss the impact of the latest developments on the local community and it was suggested by a member that this should be delegated to West ward councillors and go ahead as soon as possible.

Two-thirds of the water from East Quarry would be drained into a large culvert built in the 1980s as part of the flood alleviation scheme in Mill Lane. There was concern amongst residents about the arrangements for the testing of water samples from East Quarry. They were adamant that it should not be carried out by Maybrook Investments.

There was a tunnel connecting East and West Quarries which had been filled in, but had never been sealed. This had given rise to the fear that draining East Quarry could lead to contamination of the water courses with leachate from both quarries. As the water level in East Quarry dropped, the risk of this would grow.

Each year, during very hot weather, local residents had to cope with an influx of young people from other areas who were tempted to cool off by diving into the water at East Quarry. The fencing surrounding the quarry was insufficient to prevent the young people from entering and permission to partially drain it had been given on the basis that this would deter young people from diving into the water. However, only the applicant would benefit from the draining of the water, not local residents.

There were concerns that the EA report did not take into account geotechnical issues, such as the rapid removal of water possibly putting pressure on the sides of the quarry, causing them to shift. The applicant's eventual aim was to totally empty East Quarry and fill it with inert waste, which would be brought into the area by rail to the pad at West Quarry, which had the same owner. Inert waste was not supposed to have a smell, but it would not be totally odourless if it had not been properly treated.

Once East Quarry had been filled, development would follow and Appley Bridge did not have the infra-structure to cope with it. It was estimated that it would take at least ten years to fill the quarry. The owner was seeking permission to bring waste in by road, thereby increasing the volume of wagon traffic in the area. As the approach route consisted principally of C-category roads, it was hoped that West Lancashire Borough Council would not grant it.

The same company also owned Parbold Quarry and proposals for that and for East and West Quarries were all connected. The Parbold Hill Group had instructed a barrister to investigate the legality of all of the procedures that had taken place in relation to the projects. The Group had been raising funds for the barrister's fee and had approached several parish councils to ask them to consider making a contribution towards the fee. Most had agreed. The Group wished to ask the Parish Council if they would also consider doing this.

Resolved: The Committee agreed:

- (a) that Cllrs Mike Grimes, Chris Horridge and Jess Higham would meet virtually with the group of residents from Appley Bridge at 7:30pm on Wednesday, 10 February.
- (b) A decision about making a contribution to the barrister's fee would be made by the Full Council at the end of the month.

Other members were asked to let the Clerk know if they wished to attend the meeting.

11. Complaint to the Ombudsman re Environment Agency

A suggestion that the Parish Council should write to the Ombudsman to complain that the Environment Agency had misled local residents by posting incorrect information on their website was considered. A member reported that in this instance the complaint would need to be made to the Parliamentary Ombudsman via the MP. It was agreed that a decision would be deferred to a future meeting.

12. Mobile Phone Mast Consultation

The Committee received a pre-application consultation letter and proposed plans (as well as several other documents) in relation to the proposed upgrade to the existing

telecommunications installation at the site in Back Lane. The intention was to carry out a simple upgrade, which involved replacing old facilities with new ones. The proposals were discussed briefly and noted. It was agreed that no comment would be made at the present time.

13. Agreement with Forest Fold Allotments Tenants' Association

When the Parish Council agreed that a Tenants' Association should be set up at Forest Fold it was also agreed that there would be a simple written agreement as to the nature of the functions to be carried out by the Tenants' Association Committee. This was something that needed to be explored in greater depth with the Tenants' Association Committee.

Resolved: Cllrs Bill McKnight and John Whiteley and the Clerk would arrange to meet with the Committee of the Forest Fold Allotments Tenants' Association to discuss the nature of the Association's responsibilities.

14. Parish & Town Training Courses

The Committee received information about a Chairmanship workshop and workshops for new councillors and clerks to be provided via Zoom by Parish & Town Training. The cost of the Chairmanship workshop was £25 per person and the cost of the New Councillors and Clerks workshops was £30 per module.

Cllr Bill McKnight had previously been booked onto a Chairmanship workshop which had been full and then another that had been cancelled due to low uptake. As the fee paid had been retained by the training provider to put towards a future workshop, Cllr McKnight would be joining this one on 25 March.

15. Planning Applications

There were no planning applications to consider.

16. Dates of Next Meetings

24 February (Council);
3 March (Policy & General Purposes and Finance Committees)

There being no further business, the Meeting closed at 8:45 pm.

Chairman