

**Minutes of the Shevington Parish Council
Policy & General Purposes Committee Meeting
Held Wednesday, 7 October 2020
7.00pm Virtual Meeting**

Present: Councillor I Whiteley (Chairman), Councillors W McKnight, C Horridge, J Whiteley, V Galligan and J Higham
Co-opted Committee Members: Dist Cllr J Brown
One member of the public

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

1. Apologies

Cllr J Ball, M Grimes and M Crosby

2. Declaration of Interests

None

Standing Orders were suspended.

3. Anti-Social Behaviour at East Quarry

A warm welcome was extended to Cllr K Jukes of Wrightington Parish Council. She opened by saying that she was not present in her capacity as a parish councillor and was not representing Wrightington Parish Council, but as a member of the public.

Cllr V Galligan joined the meeting.

Ms Jukes explained that she lived opposite East Quarry, the owner of which was planning to have the quarry drained and filled. He was then planning to have 300 houses built on it during his lifetime.

Cllr W McKnight joined the meeting.

A document about the anti-social behaviour at the quarry, particularly in hot weather, had been prepared by Ms Jukes and had been previously circulated to members. The anti-social behaviour issues - and the dangers associated with them - that were giving concern to residents of properties in the vicinity of the quarry were discussed.

The owner of the quarry was no longer emptying the water from the quarry into Calico Brook, but was now proposing to empty it into a manhole in Appley Lane North. In the last 5 or 6 weeks he had submitted a new application to drain 70% of the quarry. Residents were concerned that, because the body of water was currently supporting the quarry wall, draining it could lead to the de-stabilisation of that wall, putting the houses on its boundary at risk from subsidence. Local residents wished it to remain full because of the risk of de-stabilisation. However, because of the anti-social behaviour, residents were concerned about the level of security employed at the site and were of the view that this needed to be raised.

The document that had been sent to the Parish Council had also been sent to other agencies and to the Director of Environment at Wigan Council. The residents wanted Wigan Council, who own The Slacks through which Calico Brook runs, to do whatever they could to prevent the owner of the quarry draining it. The Parish Council would send a letter of support to Wigan Council.

A Co-opted Committee member advised that there had been several meetings about the draining of the quarry between its owner and Wigan Council and West Lancashire Borough Council officers. Wigan Council's officers were being very vigilant to ensure that there was no repeat of the flooding that had occurred in the Millbank area three decades ago and were not letting the quarry owner have his own way. There were many legal processes to be followed before permission could be given to the owner to begin pumping water out of the quarry.

A member informed the Committee that United Utilities had to give the owner permission to empty the water in the quarry through an inspection chamber into the sewers.

The Committee were informed that Lancashire County Council, Wigan Council and the Environment Agency were, for different reasons, jointly responsible for dealing with the issues.

A member who had walked around the site observed that, in her opinion, the site was very secure, but young people would try to get in if they wanted to. The adequacy of the fencing in relation to the security of the site was discussed. Local residents were of the view that the fencing should be much more substantial and that the owner had a duty of care to provide security guards to patrol the area in addition to making improvements to the fencing.

The Committee agreed that the application submitted should be obtained from the Environment Agency for it to be considered before a decision about a representation and its content was made.

Ms K Juckes left the meeting.

Standing Orders were re-instated.

4. Minutes of the Last Policy & General Purposes Committee Meeting (2 September 2020)

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

5. Village Issues

Chairman of Shevington Garden Club

It was reported that Mr Andrew Moakes, the Chairman of Shevington Garden Club, had recently been hospitalised following a very sudden illness. The Clerk was delegated to arrange for flowers and a 'Get Well' card to be sent to Mr Moakes.

Vicarage Lane Allotments

A member reported that the poor drainage was continuing to create issues for the tenants.

Weeds at Roadsides

A Co-opted Committee member reported that a resident of Kilburn Drive had expressed concern about the number of weeds that were growing in the roadsides. The matter was being looked into.

Introduction of Roundabout at Randalls Corner

An enquiry about the possibility of introducing a roundabout at Randalls Corner had been re-submitted to Wigan Council by a Co-opted Committee member. As on the previous occasion, the LA had replied that this was not possible.

6. Boundary Maintenance at Vicarage Lane Fields

- (a) Residents of two properties in St Anne's Drive that had a boundary with Vicarage Lane Fields had complained that the branches of trees on the Council's property were overhanging theirs and were taking a great deal of light from their gardens. They had asked if the Council would be willing to arrange for these trees to have their crowns reduced. The Clerk had visited the site from the Vicarage Lane Fields side and had ascertained that only one of the trees – a very nicely shaped oak – was on the Council's property. The other trees were part of the adjoining property. The residents in question had been informed. The Committee discussed the crown reduction of the oak tree.

Resolved: The Clerk would obtain quotations for the pruning of the oak tree.

- (b) Some time ago the Vicarage Lane Fields Allotments Committee had asked the Parish Council if the tall hawthorn hedging separating the allotments from the Vicarage Lane footpath could be pruned on the allotments side. This was discussed.

Resolved: The Clerk would obtain quotations for the pruning of the hawthorn hedge along the boundary between the allotments site and the footpath from Vicarage Lane to Crooke Village

- (c) The hedgerows along the boundaries with properties in St Anne's Drive and Inward Drive were overgrown and needed to be tidied up. This could be done in stages, but would need to be done on the St Anne's Drive side in order to gain access to the tree that needed to be pruned.

Resolved: The Clerk would seek quotations for the above work.

- (d) While inspecting the trees and hedging along the boundaries it was noticeable that there were many piles of refuse that owners of neighbouring properties had thrown over their fences into the hedgerows over many years. This would need to be cleared, as it constituted a potential H&S issue.

Resolved: The Clerk would seek quotes for the removal of the refuse.

7. Pruning of Trees in Memorial Park

Shevington in Bloom had raised concerns that the Tibetan Cherry in the Sensory Garden was not growing as well as it had been. They were of the view that a large part of the problem was that it was not getting enough light. When they had planted it six years ago, there had been no tree branches invading its space, but there were now quite a few. They had asked if some of the branches on trees close by could be cut back to prevent the park losing this lovely tree.

In addition some of the branches on the trees overhanging the area where the Christmas tree stands would need to be pruned back, as in 2019 the Christmas tree kept becoming entangled with these branches.

As the trees were in the Conservation Area, permission would have to be sought from the Planning Department to carry out the pruning.

Resolved: An application seeking permission to prune the trees would be submitted to the Planning Department.

8. Annual Inspection of Property Timetable

A suggested timetable for the Annual Inspection of Property had been previously circulated to members. The Inspection had been divided into five sections, each one covering a different area of the Parish and/or Parish Council Property. Each section would be inspected on a different date over a two week period. The number of members attending each session would be restricted in line with whatever Coronavirus regulations were relevant at the time.

Members were invited to email the Clerk to let her know when they were available.

9. Letter of Thanks to Shopkeepers

The final version of the letter prepared by Cllr J Whiteley had been previously circulated. The Chairman was happy with it.

Resolved: The Committee approved the final version of the letter, which would be signed by the Chairman and circulated to local shops.

10. Equality Duties

The Council's Equal Opportunities Policy was reviewed. There were no changes.

Resolved: The Committee approved the Equal Opportunities Policy.

A member raised an equal opportunities issue. The Committee referred the issue to the Finance Committee, which would consider the matter at its next meeting.

11. Shevington Recreation Ground Trustee Vacancy

It was reported that a vacancy had arisen for a Trustee from the community. It was the responsibility of the Parish Council to appoint that Trustee. Members discussed the appointment process.

Resolved: A notice would be placed in the November edition of the newsletter and on the Parish Council's website asking residents to submit expressions of interest in the vacancy.

The Clerk would let the Secretary to the Trustees know the Council's intentions.

12. November Newsletter

Topics for the November edition of the newsletter were considered.

Resolved: The following were agreed for inclusion:

- Car Park at Woodnook Shops
- Break-ins – Whats App Groups
- Elnup Wood Developments
- Car Park Resurfacing at Shevington Methodist Church
- Shevington Library Re-Opens
- Heritage Lottery Funding for Memorial Park
- External Audit 2019-20 (if completed)
- Christmas Decorations
- Vicarage Lane Community Building
- Shevington Recreation Ground Trustee Vacancy
- Standard Items

13. Meeting with Wigan Council Officers

The Parish Council were due to meet virtually with Wigan Council's senior officers on Tuesday, 20 October at 4pm. The officers had asked the Council to submit a list of items to be discussed. Suggestions were considered by the Committee.

Resolved: The following topics for discussion were agreed:

- The Deal funding for new play equipment in Memorial Park
- Parking in Shevington village
- A roundabout for Randalls Corner in Appley Bridge
- Improvements to the footpath from Vicarage Lane, Shevington, to Crooke Village
- Plans for the site of the former Miles Lane Community Primary School and they would be initiated.

The Clerk advised that, as this meeting was to be held virtually via the Teams platform, she would have to share the email addresses of all members attending with Wigan Council's Democratic Services Department. It was noted that all members had previously given their permission in writing for their email addresses to be shared with Wigan Council, when necessary.

14. WLBC Community Infrastructure Levy Projects-Consultation

Since 2010, West Lancashire Borough Council had collected monies from new development through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), which had to be used to provide infrastructure required to support new development. The Council were saving the bulk of the monies up to fund large and expensive infrastructure schemes. However, each year they used some of the monies to fund smaller infrastructure schemes. The Council considered all the infrastructure schemes identified as being needed to support new development and had drawn up a shortlist of projects and their priority.

In 2020 WLBC had up to £200,000 available to spend on infrastructure projects in 2021/22. They had put forward a shortlist of projects that the available money might be spent on in 2021/22. Amongst the projects were towpath improvements between Parbold and Appley Bridge. The proposed expenditure on these improvements was £385,000. As the project required over £100,000 of CIL to be spent on it, this would be funded through the saved strategic CIL funds that the Council held.

WLBC were seeking the Parish Council's views on their proposals on how they should spend their CIL money. The Parish Council was being consulted in its capacity as a neighbouring authority. The only project that impacted directly on this Parish was the one relating to the towpath improvements.

Resolved: The Committee agreed that WLBC should be informed that they supported the project relating to towpath improvements.

15. Changes to the Current Planning System – Consultation Responses

At the request of the Council Cllr M Grimes had prepared responses to this consultation. The responses were submitted to NALC for inclusion in their response on behalf of the sector. The consultation document and a briefing paper had been circulated with papers for the Committee meeting in September. The briefing paper and Cllr Grimes's responses to the questions had been circulated for information and, in the case of the latter, retrospective approval by members.

Resolved: The responses to the consultation were approved retrospectively.

16. Planning for the Future - Consultation

NALC had drawn parish and town councils' attention to this consultation on Planning for the Future. Two documents had been circulated: one was a briefing from NALC and the other was the consultation document. NALC proposed to respond to the consultation on behalf of the sector and were inviting local councils to forward their responses to them by 15 October.

Members discussed the consultation briefly and agreed that responses should be left to the professional planners at the principal authority.

17. Transparency & Competition: a Call for Evidence on Data on Land Control - Consultation

NALC had drawn parish and town councils' attention to this consultation on Land Control. Two documents had been circulated: one was a briefing from NALC and the other was the consultation document. NALC proposed to respond to the consultation on behalf of the sector and were inviting local councils to forward their responses to them by 16 October.

Members discussed the consultation briefly and agreed that responses should be left to the principal authority.

18. Planning Applications

There were no planning applications to consider.

19. Dates of Next Meetings

28 October (Council); 4 November (Policy & GP and Finance Committees)

There being no further business, the Meeting closed at 8:07 pm.

Chairman