



POLICY & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING

WEDNESDAY 3 MARCH 2021 ~ 7:00 P.M. ~ TO BE HELD VIRTUALLY

Please let the Clerk know if you intend to join the meeting by emailing clerk.shevingtonpc@yahoo.co.uk by Monday, 1 March so that you can be sent an invitation and joining instructions.

AGENDA

- 1. Apologies** – to receive apologies from Committee members.
- 2. Declaration of Interests** - to receive any declarations of interest (personal and/or prejudicial) with regard to items on the Agenda.
Unless already entered in the Council's Register of Members' interests, members are required to disclose any personal interest, (which includes any disclosable pecuniary interest), they may have in any of the items included on the agenda for the meeting in accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council on 28 June 2012 and amended on 25 October 2012. Members are reminded that if they have any personal interests of a prejudicial nature or a disclosable pecuniary interest they must not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must leave the room. Any member needing clarification must contact the Clerk.
- 3. Minutes of the Last Policy & General Purposes Committee Meeting (3 February 2021)**
- to consider, agree and approve the signature of the previously circulated Minutes by the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting. (circulated with papers for the February Council meeting)
- 4. Village Issues** – *for information only*
To receive reports relating to the legitimate business of the Council from Committee members and Council officers (Councillors are asked to advise the Clerk in advance of any reports – including the subject matter - they wish to make.)
- 5. March Newsletter** - *for agreement* (to follow)
Several articles for the March newsletter are still awaited – the completed text will follow as soon as it is available. Members are invited to approve the text for inclusion.
(*Co-opted Committee members may vote on this.*)
- 6. Model Design Code (Consultation)** – *for agreement* (enclosed)
Enclosed is information that was circulated to members earlier this month about the MHCLG consultation. The full consultation literature can be found on the Government website and downloaded from there.
The following options are available to the Committee:

- (a) To prepare responses to the questions listed by NALC in the accompanying document and submit them to NALC by Friday, 12 March.
- (b) To prepare responses to the questions in the consultation and submit them to the MHCLG by the deadline of 27 March.
- (c) To do nothing.

Members are invited to agree the best way forward.

(Co-opted Committee members may vote on this.)

7. Right to Regenerate (Consultation) - for agreement (enclosed)

Enclosed is information that was circulated to members earlier this month about the MHCLG consultation. The full consultation literature can be found on the Government website and downloaded from there.

The following options are available to the Committee:

- (a) To prepare responses to the questions in the consultation and submit them to the MHCLG by the deadline of 13 March.
- (b) To do nothing.

Members are invited to agree the best way forward.

(Co-opted Committee members may vote on this.)

8. Annual Parish Meeting – for agreement

In 2021 the Annual Parish Meeting has been scheduled to take place on Wednesday, 17 March and will have to take place virtually.

Below is the format used last year and in previous years:

1. APOLOGIES
2. MINUTES OF LAST ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES
4. CLERK'S REPORT
5. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT
6. ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS (RE-NAMED COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS)
7. MATTERS INTRODUCED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

While most of the agenda can be followed virtually, there are issues when it comes to Item 6 – the presentation of the Community Service Awards.

The Annual Parish Meeting can take place at any time between 1 March and 1 June (*inclusive*). At present the Government's plan is to allow outdoor gatherings of up to 30 people from the 17 May. An alternative to holding the APM in March might be to hold it during the second half of May in an outdoor setting such as Shevington Recreation Ground. This would, of course, be dependant on the weather and a case of bring your own chairs and umbrellas. Plan B, if it rains or if we have inclement weather, would be to hold the event virtually. Another possibility is to have two events: the APM as planned in March and the presentations outside in May.

Members are invited to agree the best way forward.

9. Opening of Bowling Green – for discussion and agreement

As part of Step One of the easing of restrictions outdoor sports facilities, such as tennis and basketball courts, will be allowed to reopen at the end of March, and people will be allowed to take part in formally organised outdoor sports. Shevington Village Bowling Club members are itching to return to playing on the bowling green as soon as they can. They have been told by the Crown Green Bowling Association that they may be able to return to competitive league matches from May. The CGBA provide guidance for organising matches in a secure way. The SVBC members took part in one or two organised matches at other venues in 2020 and are now aware of the things they need to do (e.g. maintain records for 'track & trace' purposes, clean the toilets after they have used them, use sanitiser regularly, etc) to keep each other safe and matches Covid-secure. They are not prepared to do this for individual members playing on ad hoc occasions – only team members on match days. Individual members usually pay a membership fee for the season and play whenever they wish, as long as this does not clash with team matches. Individuals using the green in this way would need to book in and the green would have to be supervised while they were playing. The only way this could be possible would be if the caretaking staff who open and close the bowling green were willing to supervise the facility on specific occasions during the week instead of opening and closing it each day and leaving users to their own devices. If staff were willing to do this, we would need to advertise this in the March newsletter and on the website(s).

Bookings to use the green could be made online, by phone or in person with the member of staff, who would keep a record of attendees for track and trace purposes. The number of

people using the green at any one time and the length of time they would be able play for would be restricted by Covid regulations.

Members are invited to consider the situation and agree the best way forward.

(Co-opted Committee members may vote on this.)

10. Complaint to the Ombudsman re Environment Agency

– for discussion and agreement (enclosed)

A reply to our FOI enquiry sent to the Environment Agency about applications for a Water Abstraction Licence submitted by Maybrook Investments Ltd stated:

“Maybrook Investments Ltd did submit an application in summer 2019 and very soon after made an amendment. Although there have been long periods of inactivity in the applicant submitting further information requested by the Environment Agency and further amendments made, the application was not withdrawn at any point. The Environment Agency has now received all the required documentation, the consultation period has closed and the licence is currently being issued.”

The statement that the application has never been withdrawn is curious, as the information that it was withdrawn in March 2020 was originally seen on the Environment Agency website.

The Council have, moreover, been told in the past by the group campaigning against the abstraction of water from East Quarry that the application had been withdrawn.

When the above was reported to the Council meeting in January, members agreed to consider lodging a complaint against the Environment Agency with the Ombudsman. This was discussed further during the Council meeting in February. Members of the East Quarry campaign group were present at the meeting and have supplied further information about the campaign. This is enclosed.

Enclosed also is information from the Citizens Advice Bureau about the circumstances in which complaints can be made to an Ombudsman, which Ombudsman is the appropriate one in relation to the EA, how long the process can take and what the Ombudsman's powers are.

In this case it is the Parliamentary Ombudsman to whom a complaint may be submitted.

The following is from the Parliamentary Ombudsman's website:

“You should complain to the organisation first and give them a chance to put things right. When you get their final response, if you are not happy with how they have dealt with your complaint, we may be able to consider it. However, we can only consider complaints about government departments that an MP has referred to us, so you need to ask your MP to do this. This is a legal requirement.

As we are the final stage for unresolved complaints, we usually expect you to complain to the organisation you are unhappy with first. This is so that it has the chance to look into your concerns and, where needed, put things right for you.”

Members are invited to discuss matters and agree the best way forward.

11. Appointment of Recreation Ground Trustee – for agreement

At last week's Council meeting it was agreed that a date for informal discussions with the applicants for this position would be selected at this meeting. Members are invited to select a date.

12. Planning Applications – to consider for comment

At the time of the preparation of this agenda there were no relevant planning applications to bring to the attention of the Committee.

13. Dates of Next Meetings: 17 March (Annual Parish Meeting); 31 March (Council); 7 April (Policy & General Purposes Committee)

POTENTIAL CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

14. Community Service Awards – for consideration & agreement (to follow)

(Co-opted Committee members may vote on this.)

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

K Pilkington

Clerk to the Parish Council