

**Clerk's Report  
Shevington Annual Parish Meeting  
Held 16 March 2017  
7 pm Shevington Library**

The purpose of this report is to present a review of developments in the Parish and the work of the Parish Council over the past year.

**Projects**

The Council have continued to focus on proposals for the development of Vicarage Lane Fields.

A great deal of time and energy has been spent over the past year on the preparation and assignment of leases to Shevington FC and Shevington Sharks ARLFC for land to be used as playing fields and an associated car park and to Shevington Gardening Club for the setting up and management of allotments at Vicarage Lane Fields. The car park will also be available for use by allotment tenants.

The work on the leases for the two sports clubs has now been completed and that on the lease for Shevington Gardening Club is in its final stages. Work can now begin on the next stage of the project - which is to install the car park, do the drainage and prepare the ground for the allotment site.

Throughout the year the work of the Friends of Otters Croft & Crooke Woods – a group of volunteers committed to improving and maintaining the ecology of this Site of Biological Importance – has continued. An appeal through the newsletter resulted in an increase in the numbers joining the group.

The drainage in Memorial Park has continued to create issues. Every time it rains ponds appear at the Church Lane end of the park. The Council intend in the coming year to turn their energy to the preparation of a scheme for improvements. To achieve their aims they will have to bid for grant funding.

The Council are also working with the District Councillors to try to improve the surface of the unadopted road behind the parade of shops in Gathurst Lane. At present it is an eyesore at the centre of our Parish with a tendency to flooding when it rains.

45% of the Trustees of Shevington Recreation Ground are appointed by the Council. Throughout the year some of our appointees have been active in securing grants for further improvements to this green lung in the centre of Shevington. Meanwhile, the Council have continued to fund the general maintenance of the Recreation Ground.

As in past years the Council provided community Christmas trees in the centre of Shevington village, on Crooke Village green, in the centre of Appley Bridge and in Shevington Moor.

Throughout the year the Council continued to support the 'In Bloom' groups with a view to enhancing the local environment. Not only did the Council continue to fund the maintenance of some 45 planters, which are located in all areas of the parish, but they

## **Appendix A**

also paid for the plants for some of the flower beds in several locations in the parish. In the coming year the Council will also be funding the watering of most of the planters and flower beds during the Summer months.

All the 'In Bloom' groups did very well in the North West in Bloom competition and the Council were delighted for them. In 2016 Shevington in Bloom volunteers contributed to Wigan's entry in the Britain in Bloom competition and we were very pleased to hear that they played a major part in Wigan's winning 'Gold' and other accolades in their category in the competition. Congratulations to all on fitting rewards for a great deal of hard work by, essentially, a small and dedicated number of people.

Sadly, due to a shortage of volunteers, Shevington in Bloom will not be entering the North West in Bloom competition this year. Recent advertising has, however, helped to double their numbers.

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

Cllr Ira Whiteley has continued with her role at the Youth Club.

Cllrs Ira Whiteley and Jean Fletcher represent the Parish Council as Trustees of Shevington Recreation Ground. Mr Jim Maloney, Mrs Veronica Maloney and Mr Andy Williams have also been appointed by the Council as Trustees from the local community.

Several of the members regularly attend Shevington & District Community Association meetings and are involved in running the Association's events. Cllrs Ira Whiteley and Carole Miles are the Council's official representatives to the Association. Cllr Chris Horridge acted as liaison with our allotment tenants, but during the year he relinquished this and the role has been taken over by Mr Shaun Boyle. Over the past few months a working party, consisting of Cllr Ira Whiteley, Cllr Jean Fletcher, Mrs Eileen Longmore and Mr Andy Moakes, has been looking into matters associated with the allotments and the tenancy agreements. Their work has resulted in a number of changes being introduced.

The decision taken by the Parish Council in 2014 to not take up its place on Wigan Council's Standards Committee was reversed in 2016 and Cllr Jean Fletcher now represents the Council on this Body.

From time to time members also attend meetings of Crooke Village Residents Association.

Over the past year the Council has been very generous in making donations to a number of local organisations. Beneficiaries over the past year have included St Anne's PCC, Shevington, who received a donation towards the upkeep of the churchyard, the Royal British Legion, Wigan & Leigh Hospice, Dreams Come True and Shevington Guides.

In November our Councillors were amongst those leading the annual Remembrance Day Service at Shevington Memorial. The Vice Chair, Cllr Bill McKnight, represented the Council at the Memorial at Appley Bridge.

### **Commemoration of the Centenary of the Outbreak of World War One**

Last Summer the members of the WW1 Centenary working party applied for and were successful in securing a small grant towards the cost of a display cabinet, which will house the Tower of London poppy and other WW1 Centenary memorabilia.

### **Parish Plan**

The consultation on the report on the Parish Plan Review was launched at last year's Annual Parish Meeting. Once the residents had been consulted, the document was revised in line with the majority view and was adopted by the Parish Council in the Autumn. It is being presented later during this meeting, when everyone present will receive a copy, and will later be circulated to the agencies with whom the Parish Council work in partnership.

### **Supporting Local Businesses**

The 'Christmas Shop Front' competition was held for the ninth year running. The winner in 2016 was the Wigan & Leigh Hospice Shop. Donations were made to Wigan & Leigh Hospice and Dreams Come True – the two Charities nominated by the top three entries. Thank you to Adrian Speakman, the local celebrity for giving up his time to act as the judge.

### **The Environment**

The Council employ a number of different contractors to look after its properties and the local environment, something to which it will continue to be committed. During the past year a new Parish Caretaker has been appointed. He is responsible for doing many of the small, but very important jobs, that no one else can do.

### **Planning and other Building Matters**

A special 'Thank You' must go to our co-opted Committee member, Mr Barry King, who has been invaluable in preparing reports and replies with regard to numerous consultations in this area over the past year. With his help planning applications continue to be monitored and commented on by the Parish Council, as they arise and as necessary.

Cllr Bill McKnight and Mr King have continued to monitor issues arising as a result of the development at Herons Wharf – now largely completed. This was the site of the former glue works at Appley Bridge and the quality of remediation procedures caused considerable concern.

Arriva Rail North took over the 'Northern' services on 1 April this year. Even before they took over we heard that there were proposals to re-route all train services from Southport to Manchester so that they terminated at Victoria, resulting in the loss of links to Manchester Airport and main line routes via Piccadilly. OPSTA are campaigning against this and the Council are supporting them.

### **Communication**

The Parish Council communicates with residents in a number of different ways: via the website, the notice boards and the newsletter - a bi-monthly publication. In August the Council hire a stall at the Annual Fete and members use this opportunity to engage with residents. The calendar of meetings, which usually take place at Shevington Library, is advertised on the website.

## **Appendix A**

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.

This year we have once again included information on the Council Tax bill about the Parish Council and the work it does.

### **Public Concerns**

The Parish Council is always willing to take any matters of concern seriously and works with the Community Safety Team and the PCSOs who patrol the village. It will continue to do so until all unacceptable behaviour is under control.

Last year the Parish suffered from a spate of invasions by gangs of young people from other areas. The young people in question were behaving in a threatening manner towards residents and vandalising property - mainly in the centre of Shevington village. They also attacked evening buses, resulting in a temporary withdrawal of some services. The Council supported Greater Manchester Police in their work in dealing with these invasions.

The threatened closure of one of the Community primary schools galvanised the local community into action. The Parish Council supported the work of the 'Save Our Federation Schools' campaign and Cllrs Ira Whiteley, Angie Bland and Jean Fletcher attended a meeting with senior staff of Wigan Council's Education Department to put the case for keeping all three schools open. Sadly, despite a vigorous campaign fought jointly by the parents of children at all three Federation schools, a decision was taken by Wigan Council's Cabinet to close Shevington Community Primary School, which not very long ago had celebrated its 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

### **Conclusion**

Over the past year Parish Councillors and co-opted Committee members have been working 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