

**Minutes of the Shevington Parish Council
Policy & General Purposes Committee Meeting
Held 7 September 2017
7.00pm Shevington Library**

Present: Councillor I Whiteley (Chair), Councillors C Miles, W McKnight, J Ball, K Shaw and J Fletcher.

Co-opted Committee Members: Mrs E Longmore, Mr D Crook and Mrs J Brown.
Two members of the public.

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

1. Apologies

Cllrs C Horridge, J Calderbank and A Bland
Mr B Lomas and Mr B King

2. Declaration of Interests

None.

**3. Minutes of the Last Policy & General Purposes Committee Meetings
(1 June & 3 August)**

1 June

Resolved: The Minutes of the Policy & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 1 June were approved as a true and correct record.

3 August

Resolved: The Minutes of the Policy & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 3 August were approved as a true and correct record.

4. Village Issues

Greater Manchester Spatial Strategy

An update prepared by Mr B King had been circulated previously with other papers for the meeting. *See Appendix A.*

Fly Tipping Behind The Parade of Shops in Gathurst Lane

The Clerk had discussed the issue with the LA's Cleansing Manager, who had agreed to investigate and make arrangements for the removal of the refuse, if necessary. He had informed the Clerk that it was possible that a charge might be levied for its removal.

The Parish Council's Contribution to Shevington In Bloom

A member reported that he had been approached by a resident who had expressed concern that the Parish Council had not agreed to provide a water butt for Shevington in Bloom. The resident had accepted the member's explanation of the position the Council would have found itself in had it provided the butt. During the conversation it had emerged that the resident had been unaware of the magnitude of the Council's contribution towards Shevington in Bloom. The member had clarified the position. This resulted in a lengthy discussion about residents' perception with regard to this matter and ways in which the Parish Council's involvement in the initiative could be publicised more widely. The newsletter was delivered to every household in the Parish. The next edition was due to be published at the end of September and would carry an article about the provision of planters by the Council.

Cutting of Grass Verges

Following a suggestion by a member that the Parish Council consider taking over the maintenance of the grass verges in the Parish from the LA, the Clerk agreed to obtain an estimate for the work from an appropriate contractor.

Directory of Wigan Council's Senior Officers

In view of the turnover of senior staff currently being experienced by Wigan Council it was suggested that the Clerk request an up-to-date directory.

Potholes

A member who had attended the recent Access Forum meeting had taken the opportunity to raise the matter of potholes in the area with the Highways officer present. She had been assured that they were on the Department's 'to-do' list, but, as they were working under considerable budgetary constraints, it was not possible to say when the potholes would be dealt with.

Shevington Library Window

Enquiries had been made about progress in relation to the replacement of the smashed glass in the library window. The window was not of a standard size and the glass had to be cut to fit the frame. The matter was in hand.

Litter Bin at the Junction of Longbrook with High Park

The Clerk reported that the square of concrete at the entrance to the footpath to Elnup Wood at this junction was private property. A Land Registry search would have to be carried out in order to try to establish ownership. However, the Cleansing Manager had assured her that there was sufficient space on the footpath along the public highway for a litter bin to be installed at this location. Permission for this would have to be sought from the Traffic Manager.

Unauthorised Structures and Public Liability

A member reported that she had recently read an article in a publication intended for members and clerks that insurance risks could exist for members in relation to unauthorised structures on property owned by their parish councils. Even though unauthorised, such structures were the liability of the owner of the property. In the event of there being insufficient funds in the Council's accounts to settle a claim, the responsibility would lie with the members. An enquiry would be raised with the Council's insurers to establish whether the policy included cover for unauthorised structures.

Anti-Social Behaviour in Appley Bridge

It was reported that incidents of anti-social behaviour in Appley Bridge, which had initially focussed on the Spar store, seemed to be expanding. The Police had

assured the member delivering this report that, if the abuse was of a sexual or ageist nature, it would be taken seriously.

Cars Parking Along Miles Lane

The parking of cars along Miles Lane continued to create issues, particularly for its residents. Owners of properties often found that their visibility was obstructed when trying to exit onto the main road from their driveways. It was observed that the only traffic wardens could do something about illegal parking – it was not within the remit of the Police, who preferred obstructions on pavements to obstructions in roads. A gentle plea to residents not to park on pavements would be included in the newsletter.

Map of Litter Bins

The Clerk reported that the Cleansing Manager had stated that he was not aware of the existence of a map of the locations of Wigan Council's litter bins, but he had agreed to find out whether such a thing existed.

Awards for All

The Chairman informed the Committee that parish councils were eligible to apply for grants to 'Awards for All'.

Head-Butting a BusTime-Table

The Chairman reported that she had recently observed some young people from the High School head-butting a bus time-table in Shevington village. She had challenged them and tried to persuade them that this was inappropriate behaviour.

5. Council Information on Wigan Council Website – Update

The Committee reviewed the text of the information about the Parish Council on Wigan Council's website.

Resolved: The sentences / phrases listed below would be deleted / amended accordingly:

- '...is given an annual budget from the Council.' *(to be amended)*
- '...and organise the waste disposal units placed there.' *(to be deleted)*
- '...Horticultural Society....' *(to be amended)*
- '(and the council would.....owners!) *(to be deleted)*
- '...governing bodies of the primary school in the area....' *(to be deleted)*

All the organisations on which the Council was represented would be listed.

6. OPSTA Newsletter

The OPSTA newsletter was received.

7. Report on the Annual Inspection of Property

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

8. Vicarage Lane Fields Changing Rooms

Standing Orders were suspended.

A representative of the sports clubs introduced Mr James Dyson, the project manager working on behalf of TGMS. The Committee were updated on progress with the project:

- The car park was nearing completion. The ditch still had to be cleaned and connected to the field drain.
- The pitches were under construction. They should have been seeded, but the deterioration in the weather was preventing progress.

The planning application for the proposed changing rooms was discussed and questions about the previously circulated plans and the submission of the planning application were answered:

- Sewage from the changing rooms would be going into the main sewer, which was already on the land.
- The FA had specified the layout for the changing rooms. They required that each changing room should have a toilet, so there was no need for urinals. The layout complied with both FA and RA requirements.
- There was a separate room in which adults would change.
- The sports clubs were reliant on being able to access funding from the two associations – all previously secured grant funding had been spent. They had to comply with their requirements in order to access funding from them.
- These were not just changing rooms, but a community asset.
- The fees for planning applications were set by central government, who charged parish councils approximately £1,000 less for an application of this nature than they charged other bodies.

Standing Orders were re-instated.

Resolved: The plans for the changing rooms were approved. It was agreed that the planning application would be submitted in the name of the Parish Council.

The Clerk advised that she had been told by Wigan Council's project manager that all funds allocated to the construction of the car park had now been spent and there was no funding in place at present for security fencing for the car park.

9. Review of Memorial Park & Forest Fold Site Grounds Maintenance Contract Specifications

The specifications for the Memorial Park and Forest Fold site grounds maintenance contracts were reviewed.

Resolved: The specifications were approved subject to one amendment: the maintenance of the car park in Gathurst Lane would cease to be part of the Forest Fold site maintenance contract from June 2018 and become part of the Memorial Park contract from that month.

10. Long-Lasting Light Bulbs

The Chairman reported that she had visited the Co-op to establish whether they would be willing and able to provide a disposal facility for long-lasting light bulbs. She had been told that they already provided a disposal facility for batteries and would consider it, but had not received an answer to her original question because the managers had been on holiday.

11. September Newsletter

The previously circulated text for the newsletter was discussed. Several minor alterations were made. The Chairman agreed to prepare the text for the outstanding items listed.

Resolved: Subject to the amendments, the text for the September newsletter was approved.

The article on the closure of Shevington Community Primary School prompted a discussion about proposals for the future of the site and the introduction of safety features for the pedestrian route from Shevington to Shevington Vale. It was reported that the LA were seeking sealed bids for the site and that none of the promised safety features had been introduced. A letter expressing concern about the latter would be sent to the Education Department. The letter would also include an enquiry about proposals for the future of the site.

12. SLCC Training Day

One of the sessions (delivered by the SLCC's Legal Advisor) during the Training Day covered an update on future changes in legislation.

A new Data Protection Act was due to be passed in the Autumn with the legislation due to come into force on 25 May 2018. There was a great deal of information on the ICO website about this which included a self-assessment test. Parish councils would need to be ready when the new legislation came online in May of next year.

There was very little information at present about what the new legislation would include, but it was expected that there would be more rights for individuals and new obligations for data controllers and data processors. The regulations were expected to be tougher.

13. Social Media Policy

The SLCC's legal advisor had also advised all those attending the training day that all councils should have a Social Media Policy. A model policy taken from the SLCC website had been previously circulated.

The model policy and the reasons for having one were discussed at length. It was agreed that both this policy and the one adopted earlier this year by Wigan Council would be compared at a future meeting, when a decision about which one should be adopted would be made.

14. Equal Opportunities Policy

The Council's Equal Opportunities Policy was reviewed.

Resolved: Subject to the deletion of the word 'Council' from the phrase 'residents of Shevington Parish Council' on P.2, the Equal Opportunities Policy was approved.

In response to a question from a member about the ease with which the Complaints Procedure could be found on the website the Clerk advised that the Complaints Procedure could be found under the Parish Council Policies link. Further discussion would be held with the Website Manager about making the Procedure more accessible.

15. Achievement Award

Suggestions for the presentation of achievement awards by the Parish Council were considered. Several individuals were nominated. This would be discussed further at a future meeting.

16. Planning Applications

None.

17. Dates of Next Meetings

Council: 28 September

There being no further business, the Meeting closed at 8:30pm.

Chairman