

**Minutes of Shevington Parish Council
Policy & General Purposes Committee Meeting
Held Wednesday, 10 April 2024
7:00pm - The Community Centre at Vicarage Lane Fields**

Present: Councillor Jessica Diggle (Vice Chairman), Councillors Christopher Horridge, Helen Thompson and Janet Brown
Councillors John Whiteley and Michael Grimes (via MS Teams)
Co-opted Committee Members: Mr Charlie Neve
Two members of the public

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

1. Apologies

Cllrs Bill McKnight and Mike Crosby
Mrs Ira Whiteley and Mr Brian Lomas

2. Declaration of Interests

Cllr Chris Horridge wrt an element of Item No.10 (*personal and prejudicial*)

3. Village Issues

Parking Issues

Several members reported that the same issues with parking on yellow lines, pavements, etc persisted throughout the Parish. It was observed that visits from parking enforcement officers were too infrequent. One of the worst places for parking issues was the area in the vicinity of the new Extra Care facility in Miles Lane - a situation currently being exacerbated as a result of renovation being undertaken at Shevington Surgery.

It was also observed that the situation might be further exacerbated once the facility had been completed and was in use, as there had been reports that respite facilities would also be provided for people not permanently living on site. The Committee were advised that M&Y's site manager would be attending the Council meeting later in the month and these and any other issues could be raised with him, as many of the vehicles being parked at this location belonged to the M&Y workforce.

News from the CVRA

The CVRA representative reported the following:

(a) CVRA Community Projects

Mr Peter Collins, the Project Manager for Miles Lane Primary School development, had reported to a Parish Council meeting in October 2023 that money was available for "Community Projects". The CVRA had decided to put forward 4 potential community projects they wished to be considered. The projects to be taken forward would be selected by M&Y and were to be completed by M&Y or their sub-contractors before the Miles Lane development had been completed in September 2024.

The 4 CROOKE projects were sent to Peter Collins in November 2023. After a considerable period of silence contact with M&Y was re-established on 19 February 2024 after Dist Cllr Paul Collins asked M&Y to act on the CVRA's projects. Dist Cllr Collins had emailed the M&Y Maintenance Team and a member of the team had provided the CVRA with a positive response on 20 February 2024, saying that they would be in touch with a planned way forward soon.

The CVRA requested a site meeting, but heard nothing further until 14 March 2024 when M&Y's liaison had emailed again to say a plan for the Crooke Projects would soon be forthcoming. This email had also included the information that Dist Cllr Collins had nominated the CVRA to receive 50% of the funds raised from a charity / community football match organised by M&Y. The CVRA had thanked M&Y, but, to date, had heard nothing further.

This had not been chased since then, because at its meeting on 6 March the Clerk had been asked by the Policy & General Purposes Committee to write about the lack of progress with regard to the proposed Crooke Village projects to the Director of Housing Services.

The Clerk advised that she had written to the Director of Housing Services soon after that meeting. The Director had passed on her email to Mr Peter Collins, who would be attending the Council meeting on 24 April with a representative of M&Y. The matter could be raised again on the 24th.

(b) Missing Bench

It was now 18 months since Wigan Council removed the bench for repair at the CVRA's request, i.e. October 2022. After a considerable time Wigan Council had agreed, with encouragement from Dist Cllr Vicky Galligan, to replace the bench using Brighter Borough funds. On 23 March 2024 Dist Cllr Galligan informed the CVRA that the bench was due to be replaced. It was not replaced on the date arranged and still remained missing, despite Dist Cllr Galligan telling the CVRA that all the paperwork and money have been signed off by the Wigan ward councillors. The Clerk would make further enquiries, but advised that previous enquiries she had submitted with regard to this matter had not always met with a response.

(c) CVRA Gardening Club

The CVRA had received a gift of 15 substantial fruit trees from Environmental Officer, Martin Smith. Members of the Gardening Club had planted the trees on Crooke Park on 23 March 2024. They had been planted on the edge of two of the seven 'City of Trees' sites in the Park. Both the fruit trees and the 'City of Trees' trees are flourishing.

(d) City of Trees

The trees had recently been counted and inspected. There were approximately 50 trees in each of the seven sites that were now 2ft tall and were beginning to leaf.

(e) Shevington Fete

The CVRA would be applying for a stall at the 2024 Shevington Fete.

(f) Annual Beer & Charity Festival

The festival, organised by the Crooke Hall Inn, would be held from 23 to 26 August. The CVRA would not be getting involved with the parking or any other aspect of the event unless approached directly by the pub management.

Standing Orders were suspended.

Friends of Stockley Park

The FOSP reported:

(a) Wall Planters

More wall planters were needed at Stockley Park and sought advice about whom they should approach about acquiring some. Several avenues for exploration were suggested by members present.

(b) Fruit Trees

The FOSP had received a donation of 10 fruit trees from Wigan Council. They needed to be planted as soon as possible and needed volunteers to help them with this. The Co-opted Committee member for Crooke Village offered to ask members of the CVRA Gardening Club if they would be willing to help with this.

(c) Park Sign

A few months ago the group had been sent designs for new signs for the park. They thought that they would receive more than one, but had heard that they had only been allocated one. They were chasing Wigan Council for more.

Standing Orders were re-instated.

4. Minutes of the Last Policy & General Purposes Committee Meeting (6 March 2024)

Resolved: The Minutes of the Policy & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 6 March 2024 were approved as a true and correct record.

5. April Newsletter

The newsletter was due to be published on 24 April 2024. The Committee received and discussed the proposed text. The Clerk reported that the text for the Spring Show due to be held on Saturday would only become available on Sunday.

Resolved: The text for the April edition of the newsletter was approved.

6. Parish Council Email Address

During the Committee meeting in March it was agreed that the Clerk would discuss the setting up of a .gov.uk email address with the domain hosting provider for the Council's .gov.uk website.

The external auditors had advised in 2023 that, in order to answer 'Yes' to Assertion 3 in the 2023-24 Annual Governance Statement the Council should ensure that it had an email address that complied with this requirement and, if it did not already, it should comply with it urgently, as this was mandatory for the financial year 2023-24.

Permission was needed from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to use a .gov.uk domain for the website and official email addresses. The Parish Council already owned a .gov.uk domain and had that permission. The old website used a .gov.uk domain.

The domain hosting company were contacted and, because of the mandatory requirement that a .gov.uk or .org.uk email address should be set up by the end of the financial year, a new email address - clerk@shevingtonpc.gov.uk – had been set up. This was at no cost to the Council. Moreover, unless the volume of emails stored on the company's servers exceeded the basic allocation, there would be no additional charges. This was identical to the way that the charging for the website worked.

The Clerk advised that for the time being both the .gov.uk and the yahoo.co.uk email addresses would need to be in use simultaneously and the way in which the new email address was used would need to be monitored in order to gauge the volume the emails would take up on the hosting company's server without incurring additional charges.

The new email address had now replaced the old one on both websites and on Wigan Council's website.

Resolved: The Committee noted the above information and recommended to the Council that the new email address should be approved. The Committee also recommended to the Council that, to enable the work of the Council to continue, a method of accessing passwords, etc (as referenced in the template Financial Regulations) in the unexpected absence of the Clerk should be adopted.

Some members expressed the view that the new email address should be put to use and the old one phased out as soon as possible.

7. Places For Everyone Joint Development Plan Document – Notification of Adoption of the Plan

In accordance with Regulation 26 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, the Planning and Housing Team at the Greater Manchester Combined Authority had written to notify the Council that each of the nine authorities, Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan had now adopted the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan Document with effect from 21 March 2024. A copy of the adoption statement for the nine authorities had been circulated to members.

The Committee noted this information.

8. Planning Applications

At the time that the agenda for this meeting was prepared there were no new applications to bring to the Committee's attention.

Several previously approved or rejected applications were discussed:

Wood Farm, Appley Bridge

In reply to a question from a Co-opted Committee member a councillor reported that both of the applications submitted had been refused. Since then the house and fishery had been put up for sale. The stables and the rest of the property did not appear to be included in the sale.

Owd Barn Service Station

It was reported that the service station had been sold with outline planning permission to a new owner, who intended to continue running it as a service station. He also intended to introduce a car sales showroom to the site and employ the old owner and staff in appropriate posts.

The Baby Elephant

A member reported that she had heard that the Baby Elephant might be sold soon. The potential new owner intended to use the building as offices.

9. Dates of Next Meetings

24 April (Council); 22 May (Annual Meeting of the Council)

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

Resolved: That, in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it was advisable in the public interest that the press and public be excluded and they were instructed to withdraw.

The members of the public left the meeting.

10. Problem Allotments

The condition of several allotments at Forest Fold was originally discussed by the Council at the end of November 2023. The tenants of most of the allotments had been given a deadline of 24 March 2024 to introduce improvements.

The allotments were inspected after 24 March and a report on their condition was prepared and circulated to Committee members. The way forward in each case was discussed and agreed.

Resolved:

- (a) The enforcement process was to cease with regard to two allotments.
- (b) An informal request for action would be sent to the tenants of two plots.
- (c) The tenant of one plot would be sent a Second Warning - deadline of 10 May 2024.
- (d) The tenant of another plot was to given Notice to Quit – deadline 10 May 2024 – and informed that an appeal against the decision had to be made in writing by 26 April 2024.

Cllr Chris Horridge withdrew from the meeting when one of the allotments was discussed and then returned.

The Clerk was asked to write to each tenant and advise them of the Council's decision.

11. Employer Discretions Policy Amendment

At the request of the Greater Manchester Pensions Fund Cllr Mike Grimes had reviewed the Council's Employer Discretions Policy.

Resolved: The Committee agreed that the Parish Council would not generally make use of the discretion - under 'Benefits Regulation 31 – to give extra pension. The amended Policy document was approved.

12. Community Ownership Fund

It was reported that the Expression of Interest in making a bid for a grant from the Community Ownership had been successful and the Council had been informed that they would be invited to submit a bid for a grant when the window opened. A report prepared by Cllr Mike Grimes was discussed.

Resolved: The Committee recommended to the Council that

- the full application for a grant of £150,000 should be submitted to the Community Ownership Fund when the application window opened;
- an application should be made for permission to access a loan of £21,000 (repayable over 5 years) from the Public Works Loans Board;
- use funds within the Memorial Park Development Fund for contingencies and any other improvements the Council wished to make.

There being no further business, the Meeting closed at 8:03 pm.

Chairman