

Clerk's Report to Haigh Parish Council

16 April 2018

Haigh Windmill

Soon after the meeting in December Mr K Battersby contacted the Parish Council to report that he had delegated the work of trying to establish maintenance priorities with respect the windmill to one of his staff. The officer contacted me to let me know that he will be in contact again once he has more information. So far this has not happened.

However, I have been contacted by Alan Kay, the former Secretary to the Friends of Haigh Windmill, who has informed me that Wigan Council had contacted Wigan Civic Trust (of which he is a member) asking if The Friends were still active, as they were concerned about possible disrepair to the Windmill. Mr Kay described the 'Friends' as a dormant organisation, but, as he had kept all the records, he still considered himself as the Secretary.

According to Mr Kay's records, after the Windmill was last refurbished, the 'Friends' were left with funds to put towards future refurbishments. £737.63 was passed over to Wigan Civic Trust and remains in a special account at RBS. In 2009 Mr Kay passed over £217-85 to the Parish Council to assist with any expenses that might be incurred with the windmill.

Mr Kay was advised 9 years ago by the man who constructed the sails that they should be turned every three months. He passed this on to Wigan Council at the time, but nothing was ever done as far as he is aware. As they own the windmill, it was their responsibility to ensure that this was done.

As the Parish Council have a windmill repair reserve which now stands at £750, it would seem that there is a total of £1,487.63 available towards repairs and maintenance of the windmill. This makes funding the condition survey (quoted at £1,350) a realistic possibility.

Mr Kay made contact with the Chairman of the North West Mills Group (NWMG) to find out if he knew of anyone who could undertake the turning of the sails and suggested that, if a suitable contractor could be found, he might be able to indicate the cost of any urgent repairs as well as the sail turning.

The Chairman of the NWMG has come back with one or two suggestions – so far none have been local. They are based in places like Bristol and Lincolnshire.

Meeting with Keith Bergmann of Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles

Following the meeting with the Assistant Director (Finance) a meeting was arranged with Keith Bergmann of Inspiring Healthy Lifestyles to discuss alternative possibilities with regard to raising funds for the Parish Council. The discussion focussed on raising funds for specific projects.

Mr Bergmann suggested

- (a) making applications to Brighter Borough via the District Councillors and the Community Investment Fund;
- (b) crown funding;
- (c) the use of the crazy golf facility at Haigh Estate for a fundraising event;
- (d) speaking to Chris Essex-Crosby, a Wigan Council officer who has a good understanding of funding sources;

- (e) approaching the owner of the field in which the Windmill stands;
- (f) applying for a grant to refurbish the information board associated with the windmill.

It seems that every two months volunteers deliver newsletters to properties on the Haigh Estate. If the Parish Council wishes to raise its profile, he was willing to help by asking the volunteers to deliver information about Parish Council projects at the same time.

Mr Bergmann was willing to come along to a Parish Council meeting to explore things further.

Precept Information on the Council Tax Letter

When the Council Tax officers at Wigan Council were finalising the Council Tax letters they noticed that in the information that we wanted to be included for Haigh it was stated that the precept had gone up by 3%. Because there were 3 fewer properties in Haigh this year, the actual precept increase per household was 4.1% which was what showed on individual bills. In view of this they had to remove the reference to 3% on the letter in case it caused confusion.

Internal Auditor

The Internal Auditor has written to say that this is the last year that he will be carrying out parish council audits, so we will have to identify another suitably qualified individual to replace him in future years.

HMRC Employer Registration

We now have a new registration, which was used to make the returns for 2017/18 and will be used in future years.

K.M.P.: 09.04.18