

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee Held in Committee Room, Livesey House At 6.00pm on Monday 13th July 2026

PRESENT

Councillors: R Wilson (Chair), B Bentick, R Dartnall, J Dean, A Fejfer, A Mosley, D Vasmer and A Wagner

IN ATTENDANCE

Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Clare Turner (Deputy Town Clerk), Andy Watkin (Head of Resources) and Heather Phillips (Committee Clerk)

21/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED:

There were no apologies.

22/26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Bentick	Portfolio Holder for Health & Public Protection, Shropshire Councillor. Dispensation relating to 36/26 Community Centre for Meole Estate as Director of MECA (Meole Estate Community Action)
Councillor Dartnall	Shropshire Councillor. Group Leader – Labour Group, Shropshire Council. Dispensation relating to 36/26 Community Centre for Meole Estate as committee member of MECA
Councillor Fejfer	Shropshire Councillor
Councillor Mosley	Shropshire Councillor
Councillor Tandy	Shropshire Councillor
Councillor Wagner	Shropshire Councillor Deputy Leader of Shropshire Council Dispensation relating to 13/26 Service Delegation Update.
Councillor Wilson	Shropshire Councillor Portfolio Holder for Transport & Economic Growth. Dispensation relating to 13/26 Service Delegation Update.

23/26 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 1st June 2026 were submitted and circulated as read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on 1st June 2026 be approved and signed as a correct record.

24/26 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

There were no matters arising.

25/26 PAYMENT SCHEDULES

Prior to the meeting, the Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) circulated the Schedule of Payments for the period 23rd May to 3rd July 2026. These had been agreed by two signatories before the RFO and Town Clerk uploaded for payment. No comments or concerns were raised.

RESOLVED:

That the schedule of payments passed for payment for the period 23rd May to 3rd July 2026 be approved.

26/26 QUARTER 1 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

The Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) circulated a report on the Quarter 1 (Q1) Management Account 2026/27 which demonstrated the financial position of the Council for the first quarter of the 2026/27 financial year, for the 3 months to 30th June 2026 and added the following:

- Overall, for the quarter there was a positive variance of £248,991.
- There was a positive variance for Q1 on expenditure of £64,345, the majority of which was due to a cumulative underspend on salary costs of £94,309, otherwise there would have been a deficit (£29,964). Other variances were due to Million Hours project costs (£18,899), insurance premium increases (£8,086), vehicle hire £6,986 (lower than predicted) and professional fees (£15,182) consultation costs.
- Income in Q1 was also positive at £184,646 but was distorted by grants and Neighbourhood Fund receipts of £160,021. If discounted, there was a positive variance of £24,825. Other income streams were broadly in line with the budget.
- When comparing this Q1 with the first quarter of 2025, there was an overall positive variance of £2,143,966 due to increase in the Precept. But each year was different and this was likely to balance out over the course of the year.
- When comparing this Q1 with the first quarter of last year, expenditure was a negative variance of (£441,173), which was expected due to Streetscene being added to the budget, and spread across nominal codes new for 2026/27.
- The Balance Sheet continued to be strong and there was sufficient working capital due to the Precept having been received in one payment which had been invested.
- Looking to the future, it was too early to forecast an outturn – this was to be done in Q2. Overall, there was nothing of significance to note.

Councillor Wilson noted that the Q1 Accounts were under rather than over budget. The Town Clerk added that the pay differential for Streetscene sweeper drivers had not been taken into account and fuel costs were expected to remain volatile due to world events. The RFO said that, on the positive side, vehicle hire costs were lower than budgeted.

Councillor Dean asked how much the recent application for Town of Culture status had cost. The Town Clerk replied that this was all done in-house with contributions to the application from voluntary members of the team involved. The BID had funded the consultant to complete the overview of the submission.

Councillor Mosley asked where the costs for the Street and Quarry rangers were shown as well as money for the four successful Cost of Living Grant Fund applicants. The RFO said that expenditure on the rangers was included under Casual/temporary staff and the Grants figures appeared as £67,409.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted, net Income and Expenditure broadly in line with budget.

Councillor Vasmer joined the meeting.

27/26 INTERNAL AUDITOR 5 YEAR PLAN

The RFO circulated a report on the Internal Auditor 5 Year Plan together with a strategic 5-year plan (detail in hours) prior to this meeting.

The RFO said that a new 5-year plan for the auditor was required due to the increased Precept in the budget for 2026/27 for service devolution and with these services there were regulatory conditions to be adhered to such as the Defra code of practice on litter and refuse. The costs for the auditor would rise by approximately £4,000 a year. The next audit was due in September where the auditor was to be informed of new activity and learn what checks would be required in terms of complying.

Councillor Dartnall agreed that it was sensible to review the plan for the auditor to scrutinise the Council's service management. It would also tie in with the Medium-Term Financial Plan. The Town Clerk suggested that the auditor could carry out a review the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Internal Auditor be informed of new service provision and to produce a revised 5-year plan incorporating new services including checking their regulatory reporting.**
- (ii) That the budget be increased to include the new plan.**

28/26 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

The Medium-Term Financial Plan 2026/27 to 2028/29 (MTFP) was circulated prior to this meeting. It had been discussed in a meeting between the RFO and Councillors Bentick and

Mosley. Further information had been added together and more numerical notes. The RFO summarised as follows:

- A table was added to paragraph 7.28 indicating estimated Precept for each year to 2030/31.
- The Balances and Reserves paragraph 7.29 was left untouched, but this was to be discussed via a separate paper presented to Full Council. A Plan for Balances and Reserves was to be tabled at a future meeting of this Committee. It was noted that it was against the normal standards to increase the Precept to increase Reserves.
- More figures had been added to the Revenue Budget paragraph at 8.5 showing estimated expenditure for each year to 2030/31.
- Paragraph 9.4 now included a table listing the programme of capital expenditure for 2026/27.
- Paragraph 9.10 was added to provide the balance of the Neighbourhood Fund.
- Appendix 1 provided details of the Revenue Budget from 2026/27 - 2030/31 (which had previously been only a summary).

Councillor Mosley asked about CIL and Section 106 monies, and spending projects in the Capital Programme. The RFO said that these were included under Neighbourhood Fund but that Section 106 monies had been spent. The Neighbourhood Fund would be spent in future years. Councillor Wagner added that the Capital Programme had been completed, and it had been suggested that there should be a review of the Capital Strategy with a focus on projects outside of the town centre. Visioning sessions had been scheduled but Councillor Wagner said that it would be useful for members to carry out some public engagement beforehand. Small and medium scale projects in wards were to be included in the Plan.

Councillor Mosley said that the income in paragraph 8.5 showed Streetscene income was rising by 2% each year. It was agreed that the inflationary increase would be removed.

Regarding the Neighbourhood Fund, Councillor Bentick remarked that some services eg large household item removal and installation of inclusive play equipment across all areas might apply to all wards. Councillor Wilson replied that these issues were not suitable for inclusion in the MTFP.

Councillor Mosley reminded members of discussions around the style of consultation questions and that not every member of the public reacted positively to a doubling of the Precept.

Thanks were given to the RFO and Councillors Bentick and Mosley for their work on the MTFP.

RESOLVED:

That the revised MTFP be noted and the changes/alterations detailed in the minutes were included.

29/26 SHREWSBURY BIG TOWN PLAN

The Town Clerk reported that there were no updates. The next meeting of the Partnership wasn't until 10th August 2026.

30/26 SERVICE DELEGATION UPDATE

The Town Clerk reported that additional information from the Culture Leisure & Tourism Team at Shropshire Council concerning potential support for the Museum and Library was still awaited. A meeting was being convened with CCTV partners to discuss improvements and so utilise the unspent Safer Streets funding.

The Shropshire Association of Local Councils Shrewsbury Area Committee had met to discuss wider devolution: Councillors Wilson and Wagner were in attendance. There was a discussion on whether the Town Council's operational arrangements could be expanded to support some of the 32 parish councils in the Central Area. It was hoped that an agreement in principle would be established to further discussion on this. A report was to be brought to the next meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee.

It was noted that detailed information was an item on the agenda in private session.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

31/26 QUARRY CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN (CMP)

The Town Clerk reported that the initial public consultation phase had taken place and that there were two dimensions to it: an online survey and a number of face-to-face consultation events in the park organised by Camlins.

The consultation by Camlins was broken down into 10 priorities:

1. Improve public toilets and essential facilities
2. Protect the unique character of The Quarry
3. Improve safety, lighting and visible park presence
4. Resolve conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists
5. Invest in children's and teenagers' recreation
6. Improve accessibility, seating and inclusive access
7. Prioritise maintenance and repairs over new development
8. Enhance biodiversity while respecting the historic landscape
9. Better manage dogs and shared use of the park
10. Keep events balanced with everyday enjoyment of the park

The public consultation responses were collated and sent to members prior to this meeting. The key messages from the responses were:

No.	Question
1	<i>How often do you visit The Quarry?</i> The majority visited daily (34%) or weekly (48%).
2	<i>What are your main reasons for visiting The Quarry?</i> The majority used for walking or relaxation (86%), enjoying nature or scenery (56%) and exercise or fitness (43%)
3	<i>What do you value most about The Quarry?</i>

	Many respondents mentioned green space, riverside setting, mature trees, scenery, the Dingle ie how it physically looked.
4	<i>In 3 words, how would you describe The Quarry?</i> A word cloud was produced for this question and “beautiful” was used the most.
5	<i>Overall, how important is The Quarry to Shrewsbury’s identity?</i> 87% responded that it was Extremely important.
6	<i>Which best describes you? (a list of answers was given to choose from)</i> 89% were Shrewsbury residents, 13% Shropshire residents.
8	<i>How safe do you feel in The Quarry?</i> The majority felt Very safe (76%) or Mostly safe (22%) during the daytime. After dark only 13% felt Very Safe and 40% Mostly safe.
9	<i>What factors most affect how safe or welcoming The Quarry feels?</i> The factors most cited were Lighting (72%), Visibility and sight lines (40%) and ASB (53%).
10	<i>Are there particular areas of The Quarry that feel less safe or less welcoming?</i> Responses were summarised under the following headings: 1. The Quarry is generally perceived as a safe and welcoming place. 2. Poor lighting is the most common concern. 3. Women were more likely to mention feeling vulnerable at night. 4. Certain bridges and underpasses attract concern. 5. Anti-social behaviour affects perceptions of safety. 6. Some riverside paths feel isolated. 7. Public toilets were repeatedly identified as unwelcoming. 8. Most concerns relate to evenings and winter months. 9. Maintenance influences perceptions of safety. 10. Respondents generally want targeted improvements rather than major changes.
11	<i>Do you or people you know experience barriers using The Quarry?</i> Toilet access was the most often mentioned barrier at 57%, with Cycling/pedestrian conflicts at 44% and Poor lighting at 32%.
12	<i>What improvements would make The Quarry feel more inclusive and welcoming?</i> Improvements in toilet facilities, increased and improved lighting and more seating were the top three, together with a desire to maintain the natural quality of the park.
13	<i>How well does The Quarry currently meet the needs of the following groups?</i> Generally, the public thought that the need of children, teenagers, families, older people and visitors were being met. However, the needs of Disabled people were regarded as less adequately met.
14	<i>What do you think of the current play facilities?</i> Most respondents said that facilities were Very good (38%) or good (43%).
15	<i>What improvements would you most like to see for play and family use?</i> (respondents could select up to 3) The top four were better toilet facilities, natural play areas, and then more seating and facilities for teenagers.
16	<i>Are the play facilities currently in the right location?</i> 74% of respondents said that they were in the right location.
17	<i>If no, where would be better?</i> Respondents said that the play facilities would be better located out of the flood area ie on higher ground.
18	<i>How do you usually travel to The Quarry?</i> Most respondents walked (87%) or cycled (28%).
19	<i>Which entrances or routes do you most commonly use?</i>

	The graph of responses showed that visitors were using all access routes concluding that the Quarry was a main part of the town's transport network.
20	<i>Are there any entrances, routes or areas that should be improved?</i> Most respondents felt that the entrances did not need improving.
21	<i>Do conflicts occur between different activities in The Quarry?</i> 53% of respondents said that these conflicts occurred sometimes.
22	<i>Please tell us more.</i> Cyclist/pedestrian conflicts were mentioned most together with dogs off leads or on long extendable leads. Some of the larger events were also sometimes the subject of conflict.
23	<i>Are there places where additional seating or resting areas are needed?</i> More seating along the riverside and on the main walking routes were mentioned most.
24	<i>Is it easy to understand how The Quarry connects to surrounding parts of Shrewsbury?</i> 90% of respondents said that it was very or fairly easy.
25	<i>What would improve this?</i> Respondents suggested more signage, wayfinding maps, walking distances etc.
26	<i>Which landscape features do you value most in The Quarry? (select up to 3)</i> 74% responded that they most valued the riverside setting, 68% said trees, open lawns 59% and The Dingle 56%.
27	<i>How important are the following to the future of The Quarry?</i> Of the features that were voted as very important, 85% of respondents said protecting mature trees, 65% said supporting wildlife and 56% preserving the historic character. Biodiversity and climate resilience were also seen as important. Notably, only 32% said that maintaining formal planting was very important.
28	<i>Some trees in The Quarry will need replacing over time due to age, disease, safety and climate pressures. What approach would you support most?</i> 38% said replace trees like-for-like where possible and 31% said they would like to see gradual change with a wider variety of species.
29	<i>Would you support more areas being managed primarily for wildlife and biodiversity?</i> The vote was split mostly between 64% that supported or strongly supported this, but it was noted that 27% were neutral about this issue.
30	<i>Please tell us why?</i> Protecting and enhancing biodiversity received widespread support.
31	<i>How do you use the river and riverside areas?</i> Notable was that 96% used it for walking, 65% for sitting/relaxing and 32% for wildlife watching.
32	<i>Have flooding issues affected your use of The Quarry?</i> 53% answered that flooding occasionally affected their use of the park and 32% said rarely.
33	<i>If yes, how?</i> Unsurprisingly, respondents mentioned that it restricted the pathways that were used for travelling through the park. Porthill Bridge route was mentioned the most.
34	<i>The Quarry will need to adapt to increasing flood and climate pressures over time. Which approach would you most support?</i> A gradual approach received 56% of respondents' votes. Largely preserving the park as it was reached 33%.

35	<i>The Lower Quarry toilets are sometimes affected by flooding. What should happen in future?</i> The vast majority (44%) wanted the toilets to be replaced and situated elsewhere.
36	<i>Are there any other issues or opportunities relation to the river and flooding?</i> The most common view was that flooding was a natural feature of the River Severn and that The Quarry's role as a floodplain should be protected rather than trying to prevent flooding entirely. Improving flood resilience, rather than preventing flooding was also a common view.
37	<i>How do you feel about events in The Quarry overall?</i> 64% were either very positive or positive about the events.
38	<i>Which events or activities do you currently enjoy in The Quarry?</i> Respondents were split on this but generally music events, river events, Parkrun and the Food Festival were the most popular.
39	<i>What benefits do events bring to The Quarry? (Select up to 3)</i> 68% said tourism, 64% said entertainment, 51% community spirit and 49% economic benefits.
40	<i>What concerns, if any, do you have about events? (Select up to 3)</i> Litter, damage to the grass/landscape, noise and restricted access came up most frequently.
41	<i>What balance should The Quarry aim for in future?</i> 60% said a balanced mix of quiet space and events.
42	<i>What food, drink or visitor facilities would you like to see improved, if any?</i> Improved public toilets were mentioned most along with improved café/refreshment facilities, increased seating/shaded areas as well as a concern that the park should avoid becoming over-commercialised.
43	<i>Looking ahead 20 years, what should be the highest priorities for The Quarry? (Select up to 5)</i> 86% of respondents selected Protecting green space. The next most popular was Nation and biodiversity (52%) and Quiet recreation (46%).
44	<i>If you could change one big thing in The Quarry, what would it be?</i> The top 4 were as follows: 1. Improve Public Toilets 2. Review Scale & Impact of Events 3. Improve Accessibility and pathways 4. Refresh the planting & horticultural approach.
45	<i>If you could change one small thing in The Quarry, what would it be?</i> The toilets came out top of the list again for this question.
46	<i>What is your biggest hope for The Quarry's future?</i> The answers to this question demonstrated that residents were focussed on stewardship of the Quarry rather than major transformation. These findings suggested that the Conservation Management Plan should prioritise conservation-led enhancement, ensuring any future improvements strengthen rather than fundamentally alter the qualities that make the Quarry so highly valued.
47	<i>What is your biggest concern about The Quarry's future?</i> In summary, perhaps the strongest message across the consultation was that residents did not fear a lack of change—they feared the wrong kind of change. People generally supported investment and thoughtful improvements, but they wanted every decision to reinforce the Quarry's identity as Shrewsbury's premier historic park, balancing conservation, recreation and community use for future generations.

The results of the face-to-face survey that Camlins undertook were similar to the above.

Information gathered from these surveys would start to inform the next stage which was to include more in-depth consultation with key partners ahead of developing the CMP. The Committee was to be kept updated.

Councillor Wilson observed that the public were starting to understand the need for a plan for the Quarry and the reason behind it including the benefits.

Councillor Bentick said that several people had pointed out the need for shade, specifically in the play area, and sails had been suggested as a solution. Councillor Dean agreed that this would be a valid improvement.

Councillor Dartnall noted the dichotomy between cyclists and dogs on leads but added that if regulation was imposed then the Quarry might lose its relaxed feel. The park was used by many as a thoroughfare and sometimes people grumbled about other groups using it but this was not a reason to impose regulation. Councillor Wilson agreed that most of the time there was no conflict. Councillor Dean said that this was a very important point and it was beneficial if everyone rubbed along. Councillor Mosley added that visitor numbers could fall if dog walking or cycling was restricted.

Councillor Dean asked if the colours for the graphs on the QMP could be altered as they looked political. He also noted that there were perhaps too many questions as there was an increase in respondents skipping questions towards the end of the survey.

Councillor Dean also asked for consistency as to what we call the Quarry (Park). The Town Clerk said that the word Park was added to avoid confusion with just using The Quarry as its name.

Councillor Mosley was pleased to see that the majority of the public wanted to maintain the Quarry rather than change it. He acknowledged, however, that some aspects still needed change particularly the toilets which were in need of urgent attention.

Councillor Wilson noted the difference between how safe people felt during the day as opposed to the evening. Residents felt safer when more people were around.

Councillor Wagner noted that most respondents mentioned the public toilets as in need of attention and thought it was important to solve any identified problems as well as carry out ambitions for the park. Some feedback he had received focussed on the ASB that occurred on a particular sloping field – he suggested that perhaps this area could be transformed into a wild meadow or biodiversity area. For lighting, he suggested twinkling lights.

Councillor Wilson added that the Quarry Depot also needed urgent attention and that work on this could be coupled with work on the toilets.

RESOLVED:

That the results of the initial public consultation be noted and sent around to all members.

32/26 MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

A report on the Management of Land on Development Sites was circulated prior to the meeting. This was a discussion document for Shrewsbury Town Council to consider in

response to the increased use of private estate management companies on new developments, and to recommend actions. The Town Clerk had listed some of the concerns raised about the existing arrangements of developers organising their own management of the public open space on new development sites as follows:

- Developers were routinely opting for private management companies rather than adoption of open space by the Local Authority/Town Council
- Residents faced open-ended and escalating service charges
- There was a strong perception of “paying twice” (Council Tax + estate charges)
- The Town Council currently had limited formal influence over these arrangements

The Town Clerk said that whilst some developers did engage with the Town Council on land adoption, others sought to just establish Management Companies without any prior discussion and then charge every resident for the maintenance of that public open space. The discussion paper set out suggestions on actions that the Town Council could take as well as actions for Shropshire Council, as the planning authority, could be encouraged to do, potentially through the emerging new Local Plan, and lobbying the Government through the MP.

This report had also been sent to Eddie West, the Local Plan Manager, and the MP for their considerations. For the Town Council to consider local options, there was a finance implication, and there was a need for the Council to consider whether it was more valuable to have wider public open space under Town Council guardianship rather than to have some public open space with a commuted sum. Whilst this did not change the arrangements that were in the past, it was a start in terms of changing arrangements for the future.

This matter had already been discussed at a recent Communities & Environment Committee meeting and Councillor Wilson reminded members that it was thought that developers might be more interested if the Town Council changed its 15-year requirement. The Town Clerk said that a reduction was offered to Taylor Wimpey and they expressed interest. She added that a new step be proposed for the planning system that would ensure that open space management was passed first to the Town Council before being offered to a management company.

When considering the cost of the Council taking on new open spaces, Councillor Mosley said that some are just small areas of land, whereas others could potentially be very expensive to maintain if they included play areas etc. The Town Clerk said that the 15-year maintenance contribution for larger sites, eg Bowbrook Meadows, was £0.5M, whereas the smaller ones were around £50K. Councillor Wilson was concerned that residents were paying twice ie Council Tax and the maintenance fees for their area.

Councillor Dartnall welcomed this report, especially considering the comments from Wiltshire Council’s formal Public Open Space Adoption Policy, which recognised that there was “significant consumer detriment” from private estate management and that it wanted to align with national recommendations to reduce “fleecehold” arrangements. Also, play areas had become contentious as people used them who were not from the area. She agreed that it would be good for residents, not only to avoid paying twice but that some management companies did not always care well for the spaces.

Councillor Wagner agreed that the economics were important but that the Town Council did receive a good share of Council Tax and he was supportive of the proposals.

The RFO added that now the Town Council's Precept was higher, the financial risk was reduced as each new household (resident) pays a higher amount than previously ie Band D so additional Precept covers the additional costs. The Town Clerk also said that the Town Council could influence the shape and quality of the town's open spaces and make them more meaningful and more efficient to maintain.

Councillor Dartnall mentioned that the play area at the Weir Hill development consisted of only 2 logs and that if these proposals were agreed then a proper play area could be installed.

The Town Clerk said that these proposals would be added into the Local Plan Policy letter and that this item would be brought forward to the next meeting of this Committee. Councillor Wilson requested some actual figures for the members' consideration.

RESOLVED:

That Shrewsbury Town Council:

- (i) Adopts this policy position on estate management and land adoption;**
- (ii) Engages with Shropshire Council to develop a joint adoption protocol;**
- (iii) Advocates for changes to S106 processes to formalise Town Council involvement;**
- (iv) Supports development of an SPD on adoption and estate management;**
- (v) Undertakes a local evidence-gathering exercise;**
- (vi) Makes formal representations to government on national reform;**
- (vii) Adds financial detail and brings back to a future meeting.**

33/26 DEVELOPMENT OF FLOWER FESTIVAL

A report by the Town Clerk on the potential for re-establishing a Flower Festival in the town was circulated to members prior to this meeting.

The Town Clerk reported that there continued to be a public wish for a Flower Show, previously organised by the Shropshire Horticultural Society, to be re-established. Discussions had taken place with the Horticultural Society and these suggested that, if it was to return, that it wouldn't take the same format nor return anytime soon.

Although the size and scale of the show would pose too much of a corporate risk for the Town Council to take on, the Town Clerk suggested that it could, however, start to develop the potential for a different celebration of flowers and horticulture, similar to that in other towns, for example Manchester, Harrogate and Chelsea, which have all embraced public open space to celebrate flowers. The Horticultural Society had said that they would contribute to a Flower Festival of some kind. This could include:

- A Floral trail with public displays, floral installations, bloom competitions
- Celebration of the Dingle and encourage wider gardening

- Expansion of Shrewsbury in Bloom competitions
- Food, nature and sustainability initiatives including community composting, wildlife gardening, community orchards, allotments etc
- Family initiatives including Forest Schools, Bug Hotels, Children's gardening
- Floral Arts & Culture including illuminations of buildings, photography competitions, art & poetry competitions

The Town Council had past experience of developing festivals through the Big Town Plan Partnership and the Darwin Festival bringing experts in the field to Shrewsbury to speak on key topics. It had also had international experts in the town on cartoons with Charlie Adlard and lighting with Andy McKeown and utilising their skills on the same theme would be fabulous. The Town Clerk reported that she had already spoken to Andy McKeown about the potential of doing illuminations on the bridges, as he has previously lit up the bridges florally, and potentially using St Mary's Church where he did a successful stained glass window light display with a floral theme. There was also potential for the Town Council to do something in St Mary's Church this summer as an introduction, possibly in mid-August, which could then be expanded on for the following year. A budget of about £3,000 was required. Andy McKeown would be available to do a lighting show.

Councillor Dartnall liked the idea that the festival would be less competitive in nature and more educative and wholesome.

Councillor Wilson said that if the Festival took place in the Town Centre then it wouldn't conflict with any events taking place in the Quarry.

Councillor Bentick said that the organiser of the town centre arts trail, who also had experience in illuminations, might be interested in helping take this forward as well as the organiser of Shropshire Festivals. He also added that he had contacted the person who had reinvigorated the Southport Flower Show and they would be willing to lend their experience and expertise to assist in Shrewsbury's flower event for free. He would send the Town Clerk their contact details.

Councillor Dean was very supportive of this initiative and noted that it might be worth contacting Gardeners' World as they had recently moved out of the NEC for this year's event and might be interested in supporting Shrewsbury's Flower Festival. Councillor Vasmer added that the town's links with Percy Thrower might also be of interest to them.

Councillor Vasmer gave his support to an initial small event this year with a view to a larger one being planned for next year. Councillor Fejfer thought a flower carnival could also form part of a future event.

The Town Clerk said that the Festival could have elements of it taking place during a specified time period and not necessarily be just one event.

A staff resource was needed to organise the event and any funding from the SHS would help with this. Councillor Wilson said that an external staff resource could also work as it did for the Movement Festival.

The Town Clerk asked that £5,000 be budgeted for this year's event and noted that this would have taken place before the next meeting of this committee. Councillors were in support of an introductory event this Summer 2026.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the report be noted;**
- (ii) That the Council supports the development of a Flower Festival for 2027;**
- (iii) That the Council allocates a resource to commence development.**

34/26 MERESIDE COMMUNITY CENTRE LEASE EXTENSION

Prior to this meeting, a report on Mereside Community Centre was circulated. The lease for the Community Association's lease of Mereside Community Centre had expired. The original lease from 2000 had been difficult to locate so the need had arisen to progress a new lease, which would follow the standard lease agreement from ACRE (the National Association for Villager Halls).

The Town Clerk was seeking authority to enter into discussions with the Community Association and instruct legals. The Community Association were good tenants. Councillor Dartnall was particularly supportive as the Community Centre was an amazing place buzzing with activities.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the report be noted;**
- (ii) That the Council supports the renewal of the lease of land at Springfield Recreation Ground for the continued use by Mereside Community Centre;**
- (iii) That Officers instruct the necessary legal support to establish a new lease.**

35/26 WATER TESTING IN THE RIVER SEVERN

The Town Clerk had compiled a report to consider supporting the continued testing of the River Severn's water quality and this was circulated prior to this meeting.

The Town Clerk met with the Environment Agency (EA) on a monthly basis to receive updates on testing and this year that invitation had been extended to Councillor Halliday. Statutory testing had been discussed but 15 tests during the bathing water season (May to September) was not sufficient to thoroughly understand the health of the river.

Last year, the EA received Defra funding for all of Shropshire's bathing water sites to undertake regular testing and those results were added to the Swimfo Website. This year they hadn't been successful in securing funding for this but had received funding to test further upstream at the tributaries of the Perry and Vyrnwy. Although this would ultimately assist in determining any upstream pollutions, having localised testing allowed bathers and water users to make a more informed decision on whether to use the river.

However, there was a possibility that the EA could install testing equipment back at Welsh Bridge within a week if members agreed to support. Annual testing for bacterial pollution would cost in the region of £20K per year and would have to come from General Reserves as

there was no budget. It was noted that a deeper understanding of the River was enhanced when it was known what happens to it under adverse conditions.

Councillor Dartnall supported this for bathers and users of the River. Councillor Bentick also gave his support and added that it would have the additional benefit that any adverse test results could be taken to Defra and Severn Trent Water to pressurise these organisations to keep the waters clean.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the report be noted;**
- (ii) That the Council supports the funding of additional training;**
- (iii) That the Town Clerk liaises with the EA on delivery options.**

36/26 COMMUNITY CENTRE FOR MEOLE ESTATE

Councillor Bentick reported that a grant of £50K had been allocated to a feasibility study for building a community centre on the Meole Estate. The original building had burned down in 1999. The Town Council owned the site.

A concept design had been drawn up and a Steering Group organised but progress was slow. The 3 schools in Meole were sending out another survey of local residents to all parents.

He asked if members would either agree to pay Community Resource to do this work or if Town Council officers could help. Community Resource wanted a payment upfront in order to provide the costings.

The Town Clerk suggested that officers could create a brief on the basis that it could then be developed into a feasibility study and subsequently put out to tender, rather handing over to Community Resource. Councillor Dean said that there was Cil money available for this. The RFO suggested that Councillor Bentick's Local Councillor Grant Fund could help with the costings but these were already partly designated to the Meet Place.

It was agreed that the Town Clerk would draft a brief for invitation to tender to be considered by members of this Committee in time for the next meeting in September.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That Councillor Bentick's verbal report be noted;**
- (ii) That a draft a brief for invitation to tender be brought to the next meeting.**

37/26 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That in accordance with s1(2) Public Bodies (Admission of Meetings) Act 1960, members of the public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that the following items being considered involve the disclosure of confidential information.

38/26 SERVICE DELEGATION UPDATE

The Town Clerk referred to the report on Service Delivery that was circulated to members at the last meeting of this Committee and referred to subsequent conversations that had taken place with Shropshire Council's Assistant Director of Leisure & Recreation.

Shropshire Council was preparing a paper to be tabled at either the September or October Cabinet meeting in order to start a public and staff consultation re service delivery. Some notable services were under pressure. Discussions had taken place for the potential for the Town Council to be involved in a Strategic Partnership covering leisure, culture and heritage which tied into its vision for a Cultural Strategy and the Heritage Lottery Fund's encouragement of a Heritage Strategy for the town. The Town Clerk was seeking members' views on the Town Council contributing towards the costs as outlined on the basis of an established Partnership.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the report be noted;**
- (ii) That further updates and information be provided at future meetings when available.**

39/26 CLOSING REMARKS

In closing the meeting (prior to 19/26), the Chairman thanked Councillors and all staff involved in the meeting. Unfortunately, due to technical issues, it was not possible to broadcast this meeting live.