

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
Meeting of the Council
Held Virtually on Microsoft Teams
At 6.00pm on Monday 18 May 2020

PUBLIC QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

QUESTIONS RECEIVED ONLINE DURING THE MEETING

Question 1

Can you tell me what the Town Council are going to do to keep people safe when shops and restaurants open in the Town Centre?

Answered by Councillor Alan Mosley

Councillor Mosley reported that work was being undertaken by Shrewsbury Town Council, Shropshire Council and the BID in considering what could be done to maintain the space for people to walk and cycle, possibly the amount of road space would need to be limited as a consequence. Clear advice signage would be displayed around the town and he wished to assure the public that comprehensive plans were nearing fruition. All government advice was being followed and he was confident that the residents, visitors and people that work in and around the town would be satisfied with what would be done and feel safe to return to the town and make it the vibrant place that it should be.

Question 2

I have missed being able to go into the Dingle and sit and look at the lovely flowers. Will you be opening it up this Summer?

Answered by Helen Ball, Town Clerk

The Town Clerk reported that arrangements for the Dingle were currently being considered. It had been necessary to close the Dingle since lockdown as the pathways were quite narrow so the ability to social distance would have been extremely difficult. The team were in the process of taking out Spring bedding and would be starting to put in the Summer bedding after half-term next week. When the Summer bedding was completed it was hoped the Dingle could re-open. The Dingle has four entrances so it was intended that two would be entrances and two would be exits, thereby enabling social distancing. It was likely that the benches would be out of action because of their close proximity to the paths, which made it impossible to retain the two metre distance. There may need to be some restricted access but it was hoped that it could open for the enjoyment of all.

Question 3

Will you be opening the play areas and splashpark soon?

Answered by Helen Ball, Town Clerk

The Town Clerk reported that the Town Council follow Government guidelines as to what and when assets are re-opened. Following the Government announcement last week, this week some sporting facilities had been opened such as the Golf Course, Tennis Courts,

Bowling Greens and Croquet Lawns with significant social distancing rules and those rules had been enforced by the governing bodies of those sports. The Government guidelines so far specified that play areas were to remain closed so those would continue to be closed until such time as Government guidelines enabled them to re-open. This also included the Splashpark. Ordinarily the contractor would have been commissioned to prepare the Splashpark for opening at the beginning of May but as this had not been possible, he was on standby to potentially open when restrictions were lifted. Necessary measures would be put in place at that time.

Question 4

We were really glad that the Town Council declared a Climate Emergency last year. What have you done to make sure you are meeting your targets?

Answered by Councillor Alan Mosley

Councillor Mosley was proud that the Town Council had been at the forefront of Councils in Shropshire and in fact around the country in declaring a Climate Emergency. Since then a number of number of reports had been produced for the Finance & General Purpose Committee, which recorded the tremendous progress that had been made in investigating the Council's carbon footprint and measures to mitigate that carbon footprint. There had been two public meetings involving a large number of people from the various pressure groups and interested parties. The Council had just last week finished drawing up a number of Terms of Reference for a Standing Advisory Group which they were going to establish. This group would advise the Council as it moved forward with its action plan and those terms of reference, under the request, had gone out to a number of organisations in the town asking them to nominate their representatives for that group.

He re-assured the public that the Town Council were taking Climate Emergency very seriously and hoped to give a progress report along with an action plan with clear targets and timescales at the next Council meeting and it was hoped to convene another public meeting sometime in the future to further discuss.

Councillor Becky Wall reported having seen the electric bus within her Ward in and around Battlefield and wondered if it were possible to lobby Arriva to get more electric buses.

Councillor Mosley responded that the bus had been on trial and in operation in various areas of the town for quite some time now. The public transport was a matter for Shropshire Council and he was aware they were further considering this.

Councillor Phillips requested that the recovery group that was talked of earlier in the Agenda be asked to consider green growth. Although the lockdown had not been enjoyable, one of the advantages had been cleaner air and other environmental advantages and he felt it would be a missed opportunity not to address green growth as a part of a recovery agenda.

The Town Clerk confirmed that green growth was definitely on the agenda and she also reported that the Town Council had seen a significant increase in attendance in it's countryside sites and parks and open spaces over the last two months, due to people exercising. A lot of the work was already being undertaken and really coming into the full with regards to the recovery task group. It was not just about having temporary measures to bring the town back into recovery but actually looking at focusing on adaptations to have continued usage.

Question 5

I don't have any questions but wanted to echo how impressed that I am that so much grounds maintenance is still going on. Thankyou

Comment responded to by Councillor Alan Mosley

Councillor Mosley acknowledged the compliment and congratulated the Town Council staff and operatives on their good work despite the challenging situation.

Question 6

The sale of Greenfields Recreation Ground has been legally determined as unlawful at the Judicial Review Dec2019 (document upon which the PIR is based and Town Council Accounts YE 18). The monies unlawfully allocated from this disposal in the Town Council Accounts YE18 need to be reallocated as Greenfields Recreation Ground. The Greenfields Community Group requests that this is done at the earliest opportunity, today 18 May 2020. The money is held in trust? We further request the Town Council reviews the actions of Senior Officers under the Code of Conduct in these unlawful; actions. We ask that these breaches in this Code require sanctions and that those who have acted unlawfully in this sale are sanctioned. Can the above be conformed at the meeting 18 May 2020?

Answered by Councillor Alan Mosley

Councillor Mosley responded that the Council would not confirm anything this evening and would not dispute or agree with any of the allegations within the question. This would be dealt with in a very transparent, open, rigorous and honest way.

Council recognised what the Auditor's report said about its actions relating to the sale of this land and it was intended to investigate all aspects of that sale. Terms of reference had been publicised for an investigation that would be entirely independent of anyone that had hitherto been involved in the sale or made decisions thereon and hence it was intended to get this independent thorough enquiry underway. He assured that the findings therein would be publicised and it was hoped that a meeting to present those findings could be convened in an open and thorough manner in due course.

There would be further discussion during Item 14 of this evening's Agenda.