

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

**Meeting of the Climate Change Committee
Held at 7 St Johns Hill
At 2.30pm on Monday 17 July 2023**

PRESENT

Councillors J Dean (Chair), R Dartnall, A Mosley, K Pardy, and R Wilson

Alex Grant (Shropshire Wildlife Trust), Chris Bainger (Environment Agency), Dan Wrench (Shropshire Council), Frank Oldacre (Friends of the Earth), Martin Sutton (Shropshire Council), and Tom Endacott (Gfleet)

IN ATTENDANCE

Amanda Spencer (Deputy Town Clerk) and Alan Jameson (Admin Apprentice/Climate Change Officer)

01/23 APOLOGIES

That apologies were received from Councillor B Bentick, Councillor D Vasmer, and Kevin Oubridge.

02/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Shropshire Councillors	Twin hatted members declared personal interests in matters relating to the Town Council's relationship with Shropshire Council.
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03/23 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Climate Change Standing Committee meeting held on 27 April 2023 were submitted as circulated and read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Climate Change Standing Committee meeting held on 27 April 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

04/23 MATTERS ARISING

There were no Matters Arising for consideration that were not already included in the agenda.

Councillor Dartnall agreed to temporarily chair the Committee as Councillor Dean had been delayed.

05/23 CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN 2020-2024

There were no updates regarding the Climate Change Action Plan.

06/23 MARCHES ENERGY AGENCY

The Deputy Town Clerk informed the Committee that the project had been officially launched, and a commitment of £75,000 was pledged to the project by the Town Council. She reported that there were already enquiries from the public, and that there had been plans of a press release in the near future.

The Deputy Town Clerk highlighted that much work had been done before the winter by the |MEA from other funds available including those from Shropshire Council, and that a similar scheme had already been implemented by Oswestry.

Alex Grant asked how many people would be covered with this scheme and was notified that it would depend on a variety of factors such as cost and needs.

Sharuff Morsa enquired if there were any limits on individual awards that could be made. He was informed that at the time there were not any limits but that the MEA would look to maximise the number of Shrewsbury residents who could benefit from the scheme.

David Sharpe asked if there was any way to monitor the energy use of households; he raised a concern that the scheme could be used in a way that did not save energy, and instead be primarily used as an energy discount.

The Deputy Town Clerk informed him that it would be possible to collect data usage, and that she would make enquiries relating to possible abuses of the system.

Councillor Dartnall stressed the importance of monitoring the energy use before and after the adoption of the scheme.

Councillor Mosley highlighted the Town Council's £75,000 contribution but enquired how much money the agency was putting in, and who the secretariate was. The Deputy Town Clerk Informed Councillor Mosley they were using funds from other sources such as Shropshire Council, and that the secretariate was the agency.

Councillor Dean and Frank Oldacre arrived. Councillor Dean took over as Chair of the meeting.

Councillor Dean further added that the main funding came from Government, and that the Town Council's plan was to top up what they were lacking.

Frank Oldacre stressed that while the main objective was to combat climate change, it was important to consider the health benefits that recipients of the scheme would receive, and to not disregard such a factor when it came to monitoring the success of the scheme.

07/23 CARBON LITERATE STATUS

The Deputy Town Clerk gave an update to the Committee about the number of members who had undertaken the Carbon Literacy training, which by then was a total of 8 members, including the leader of the Council. Once he had completed the assessment, then the Town Council would be able to apply for silver status. She further explained that several internal staff had also undertaken the course with there being further opportunity for others being able to start in September.

The Deputy Town Clerk concluded with information of the plan to provide Carbon Literacy training for those who could not afford it. There had also been talks with the B.I.D for sponsorship.

Councillor Dartnall enquired how many Town Council staff had undertaken the training. She was notified that around 10 members of staff already completed the training.

08/23 E-CARGO BIKES

The Deputy Town Clerk gave an update to the Committee about the Town Council's plan of purchasing E-Cargo bikes to be run by Shropshire Cycle Hub, and assured the Committee she would keep them updated.

Councillor Dartnall raised the possibility of using second hand bikes. The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that she was waiting for an opportunity to explore the option. However, she raised concerns about the quality of cheaper bikes.

Councillor Wilson shared with the Committee his experience of seeing cargo bikes being used at the Kidical Mass Bike Ride, where he highlighted the increased use of them.

Councillor Dean asked if there was a specific target market. He was informed that there was no specific market, and that the scheme would be open to everyone.

Sharuff Morsa enquired if the bikes would be electric or green. He received confirmation that they would be electric.

Councillor Dartnall stressed the importance of encouraging use once the scheme was up and running. She also mentioned how she met a member of the public with a cargo bike who was inspired to use it because they heard about School Streets.

09/23 EXTERNAL ATTENDEE PRESENTATION

Position statement from Dan Wrench on climate change activity at Shropshire Council

Dan Wrench introduced his presentation by informing the Committee that he was part of team of five, who were focusing of carbon reduction, carbon saving, and sequestration.

He laid out the some of the challenges Shropshire Council were having to deal with, which included the issue of Shropshire Council not being able to achieve zero carbon emission by 2023 if indirect emissions were part of the equation. Therefore, under these terms Shropshire needed to find ways of compensating for these emissions, which included prevention and greenhouse removal.

Dan Wrench outlined several possibilities of reducing carbon such as tree planting, storing carbon in soil, enhanced rock weathering, habitat management, and biochar.

He went on to say that Shropshire Council was interested in a waste system, and were in talks with Veolia, seeing it as a way to manage countryside sites better.

Councillor Dartnall enquired as to the size of investment for biochar production. Dan Wrench explained that unite spent around half a million to reach 620 tonnes of annual

production, and that the investment Shropshire was looking for would be around 1.5 million. He also informed the Committee that Shropshire purchased a small open kiln for biochar production, and that the price for a decent sized one would be around £3000.

The Deputy Town Clerk suggested that the Town Council's Countryside & Greenspace Manager could pay a visit to the kiln.

Chris Bainger proposed a discussion between Shropshire Council and the Environment agency as they had lots of biomass and dead timber, and he emphasised the possibility of a collaborative opportunity.

Dan Wrench moved on to tree planting, and informed the Committee that Shropshire was looking for extra funding that year. He mentioned the Trees Outside Woodland project, and that there was ongoing work with the community tree scheme.

Frank Oldacre enquired if the Town Council was still taking in trees. The Climate Change Officer informed him that the Tree Nursery would reopen to donations by late October at the earliest due to staffing.

Councillor Dean asked if Shropshire Council had identified places where they could plant trees and get them watered. Dan Wrench replied that it was something he was interested in looking at.

The Deputy Town Clerk emphasised her approval of the model involving the community watering the trees.

Councillor Dartnall proposed that Councillors could suggest areas of planting. She explained that within her ward they had a community WhatsApp group around one tree, which helped to bring the community closer together as it gave them a connection.

10/23 COMMONPLACE

The Deputy Town Clerk explained to the Committee that a decision had been taken to replace the use of the Commonplace website in favour of an alternative. The website had at times been inconvenient to handle and wasn't providing the service that staff wanted for the price. Therefore, she had spoken to Web Orchard about a custom-built website, which would allow for more flexibility and facilitate the creation of useful tools such as producing charts and maps within the Town Council's very own website.

The Climate Change Officer had previously sent a link to interested members to test the website for some feedback. He also mentioned that there had been issues with the links the website provided, which had not always allowed access; the issue had been resolved for some members, but not all of them.

Tom Endacott offered to provide feedback. He observed that there was an inconsistency with the information provided on the website; some sections were highly detailed, whereas others had far less content in comparison. He further added that some of the issues highlighted on the website would be more appropriately dealt with by other organisations specialising in matters relating to Climate Change and suggested that it would be more appropriate to primarily focus on the Town Council specifically.

Sharuff Morsa enquired how often the new website would be updated. The Deputy Town Clerk informed him that it would be updated regularly, when necessary and appropriate.

Councillor Mosley asked Dan Wrench if Shropshire was doing something similar. Dan Wrench replied that Shropshire was not currently undertaking a similar initiative.

11/23 INTERNAL CLIMATE CHANGE MEETING.

Councillor Dean updated the Committee of the meeting between himself, the Deputy Town Clerk, Councillor Dartnall and the Climate Change Officer where they discussed several issues.

Councillor Dean highlighted the plan of moving the location of the Committee to different locations each session. This would allow the Committee to be closer to staff based at Weeping Cross and the Youth Service. The proposal of renaming the Committee "Nature Recovery and Climate Change Committee" was also discussed and supported by members present. Councillor Mosley suggested that the name "change" be altered back to "emergency". This would be taken forward to the next meeting of Full Council for approval.

Councillor Mosley proposed micro-actions such as the booking of facilities, and for the Committee to actively promote and influence.

Councillor Dartnall suggested a public water supply that could be produced with the Council's assets to reduce the use of plastic bottles. She also suggested a weekly social media post or newsletter to inform the public what they could do to help with the climate crisis.

There was a discussion of how to fund this type of project, resulting in the Deputy Town Clerk suggesting the possibility of the Council using its own funds.

Councillor Wilson informed the committee that he had previously been in discussions with the former Head of Operations about reinstating the drinking fountains in the Quarry.

Sharuff Morsa suggested adding a counter to show how many plastic bottles were saved.

Councillor Dean responded by saying that this was part of the draft visioning exercise which would be agreed by Full Council.

Councillor Dartnall also suggested a weekly social media post or newsletter to inform the public what they could do to help with the climate crisis.

David Sharpe concurred with Councillor Dartnall's suggestion of getting the public involved, and commented on the need to spread the message that everyone has the ability to take action.

Frank Oldacre raised the point that many people were worried about the climate crisis but were unsure as to what to do. He informed that the quickest return comes from acting with nature, and that positive steps help boost the public morale.

Councillor Mosley proposed the possibility of setting up an annual competition among schools and providing them incentives to increase awareness among children.

Councillor Dartnall asked if Bloom would be returning the next year. The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that it was. Therefore, Councillor Dartnall suggested prizes for sustainable and wild gardens to be incorporated within Bloom.

Councillor Dean requested an update into the climate change school competition. The Deputy Town Clerk informed him that the Climate Change Officer was working on it, but that they were waiting for September when students would return from their holidays.

RECOMMENDATION:

To propose to Full Council that the name of the committee changes to Climate Emergency and Nature Recovery Committee.

12/23 VISIONING EXERCISE

The Deputy Town Clerk informed the Committee that the Town Council was going through a visioning exercise which included activities specifically relating to climate change. They planned to present the draft to external members in order to receive some feedback. She provided this information to keep the Committee informed of what was happening.

13/23 OTHER MATTERS ARISING

Mike Dineen wanted to bring to the attention of Committee of an exhibition to prevent the Shirehall's demolition. He informed the Committee that the exhibition was in its second week and was accompanied by signed petitions to prevent its demolition from members of the public surprised of its former presentation. He also mentioned that they had conversations with the last surviving member of the team who designed it and invited members to attend the exhibition.

Councillor Wilson commented that he thought the exhibition was excellent, and asked where the photos exhibited would be sent after its conclusion.

Mike Dineen informed that they were currently looking for somewhere appropriate.

14/23 NEXT MEETING

The next Committee meeting will be held on 12 October 2023 at 2.30pm. External attendee presentation to be given by Tom Endacott.