

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

**Meeting of the Recreation & Leisure Committee
Held in Council Chamber, Shirehall
At 6.00pm on Wednesday 7 September 2022**

PRESENT

Councillors: E Roberts (Chair), B Bentick, P Gillam, C Lemon, A Mosley and D Vasmer.

IN ATTENDANCE

Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Gary Farmer (Head of Operations), Mike Cox (Outdoor Recreation & Asset Manager), Ruth Jones (Office Manager), Stuart Farmer (Projects Manager) and Michelle Farmer (Committee Officer)

18/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED:

That apologies be accepted from Councillors Pardy and Wall.

19/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (PECUNIARY & NON-PECUNIARY) IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CODE OF CONDUCT

Shropshire Councillors	Those twin-hatted members declared a personal interest in any matters relating to the Town Council's relationship with Shropshire Council.
Councillor Bentick	Had set up the South Shrewsbury Youth Partnership but did not envisage this would have any effect on Council Business.

20/22 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Recreation & Leisure Committee meeting held on 6 July 2022 were submitted as circulated and read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Recreation & Leisure Committee meeting held on 6 July 2022 be approved and signed as a correct record.

21/22 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

09/22 – River Safety – Staff were still awaiting the Risk Assessment from WSP which once received would go to a future meeting. There would be a more detailed discussion later in the meeting.

10/22(iii) – Quarry Power – The Town Council were working with the Horticultural Society on mapping out utilities (water and electric). A lot had already been done but the roads and pathways were still outstanding. A definitive stance was required on where utilities were located in the park.

10/22(iv) – Quarry Security – Thanks had been sent out to Prosecure.

12/22 – Tree works – All tree works had now been completed.

22/22 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Town Clerk reported the following:

- Greenacres Play Area was now complete
- Stanley Lane Recreation Ground footpath works and lighting was now complete and the Town Clerk urged members to visit the solar lights as they were different to the Quarry Lights but impressive none the less. Once payments were finalised, they would see if there was anything left in the budget to complete any other requested works.
- Abbey Gardens Drainage work was scheduled for 26th September. Delays had been due to difficulties in sourcing a contractor.
- St Johns Hill tender quotes were due and information would be provided at the next Finance & General Purposes Committee.
- The draft Cycle Map was being reviewed by the Working Group and would hopefully go to print by the end of the year.
- Quarry War Memorial repairs were proceeding very slowly. Conservation Officers and the War Memorials Trust were on board, but they were duty bound to complete the repairs properly given the listed status of the Memorial.
- Kynaston Road Recreation Ground Project Plans were being drawn up and would all be tendered at the same time as all were intrinsically linked.
- Moston Road Wheeled Track tender would run at the same time as the Kynaston Road Wheeled Track tender.
- Radbrook Recreation Ground hut costings were being sought but officers were struggling to source available contractors.
- Beaver Licence had now been granted by DEFRA & Natural England. There was still a long way to go in seeking planning permission and getting all funds together. Shropshire Wildlife Trust were about to submit the Stage 2 bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund. Officers were working with the Shropshire Wildlife Trust on a Partnership Agreement – this would go to Finance & General Purpose Committee for approval.
- Bus Shelter tender was now live with the closing date of the 16 September 2022. This would be reviewed by the Finance & General Purpose Committee.
- County Ground cricket square had now been levelled and completed and recent drainage works completed at the County Ground were working well.

Councillor Vasmer joined the meeting

Councillor Gillam sought an update on the proposed Dana Footpath; the Town Clerk reported on lack of progress as approval was still being awaited from the Shropshire Horticultural Society. Councillor Mosley suggested that this needed to be discussed further by Council with a view to bringing a motion demanding the Horticultural Society take action.

Councillor Bentick thanked the Town Council for the work completed at Stanley Lane and asked if any further cycle days were planned and what was the progress on the cycle map. The Town Clerk

referred Councillor Bentick to the update she had just given regarding the Cycle Map. She reported that the Cycle Day had been a mayoral initiative and not a Town Council event.

Councillor Vasmer enquired on Upton Lane stating that he had received complaints regarding ASB issues and asked if there were any plans to fence off this area during the evenings. The Town Clerk reported that officers were aware of the ASB issues which had been raised with the Police who were patrolling the area. Logistically the Recreation Ground could not be fenced off. Officers were working with Councillor Moseley and the Youth & Community Manager to engage with the local young people. The ward Councillor was fully engaged with the project.

Councillor Mosley asked if the Working Group had met regarding the move to St John's Hill. The Town Clerk confirmed that the group had met, visited the building and fed ideas into the works schedule. Once costings are received the Group would be re-convened.

Councillor Mosley asked if there had been any progress on the Moston Road improvements. It was confirmed that all work was in progress with plans for meadow areas and tree planting in the winter/spring. Councillor Pardy was looking into the possibility of benches being placed.

Councillor Mosley also asked for progress on the Pavilion at the County Ground. The Town Clerk confirmed they were looking at alternatives as the original proposal was not cost effective.

RESOLVED:

That the Capital Programme report be noted.

23/22 FOOTFALL

The Projects Manager updated the Committee on footfall in the town. Visitor numbers had continued to remain stable in recent months and appeared to be following similar patterns as previous years. The expected increase in July and August was mostly due to the large events that occurred in the town and Quarry such as the Queens Baton Relay. The overall visitor numbers had started to increase in line with previous years.

RESOLVED:

That the Footfall Report be noted.

24/22 FISHERIES

The Outdoor Recreation & Asset Manager apologised to Committee that the incorrect report had been circulated prior to the meeting and he had provided Members with copies of the latest report at this meeting.

Mousecroft Pool - The three new fishing platforms had now been installed. The ever-spreading water lilies had now been thinned to keep them under control. If left unchecked the lilies would detrimentally affect the oxygen levels of the pool which become harmful to the fish and other wildlife.

Monkmoor Fishery - The fishing platforms have had all the grass around them cut, and all repairs and maintenance completed. Current focus in the area was removing anglers who had been parking on the riverbanks. New signage had been installed reinforcing the message that parking must be under the two bridges.

Oxon Pool - With the recent two heat waves, the water level had dropped significantly to the point that during the second heat wave the pool had to be closed. Oxygen levels and algal blooms became a concern and so the Fisheries Manager implemented an aeration pump to adjust the oxygen levels to a safe level to protect the fish stocks and the wildlife. The pool was still closed due to low water levels and the team were monitoring the situation on a regular basis. Whilst the pool was closed, it had given an opportunity to carry out additional maintenance work.

Reabrook fishery - New sign installation had commenced in stages. Water levels in the Reabrook were very low, with fish being trapped in various pools. Monitoring of the situation was ongoing.

Radbroke Pool - A very close eye was being kept on Radbrooke due to high fish stock levels, which would result in issues relating to oxygen levels. The Fisheries Manager had been liaising with the Environment Agency and it was anticipated that a dozen large fish may have to be relocated to the Mousecroft Pool to help with the situation. The invasive weeds were under control and with continual removal, it was hoped they would be eradicated over time. The surroundings of the pool had been strimmed and the fishing platforms maintained. Some tree work would be necessary in the Autumn.

County Ground and Quarry - Fishing platform maintenance and grass cutting would commence first week in September. There was still a lot of concern regarding fish stocks in this location due to the high influx of raw sewerage. An historic fishery renowned for its fantastic competitive fishing nationally was now sadly lacking.

The three-day festival this year had been postponed until next year providing some of the smaller competitions catch some fish and not unsavory products. The Fisheries Manager had personally put huge amounts of time to get the high-profile competitions back to Shrewsbury, but all that hard effort had been in vain due to the large amounts of pollution.

Emstrey Fishery - After three years of negotiation, an agreement had been reached to fence off an area, have stone laid and the ability to lock the car park for up to 25 cars. This would vastly improve access for anglers, which was critical. This project had become a priority over the other works moving forward. The works would hopefully commence in September.

Belvidere Fishery - New signs were to be installed in September detailing boundaries. Extra attention was being placed on litter and anti-social behavior in this location. Two new fishing platforms were planned, the materials had already been acquired, the work just needs to be prioritized.

Sydney Avenue - New salmon signs were to be installed on the weir featuring the new bylaws. This was being done in conjunction with the Environment Agency. Four new fishing platforms were to be installed in prioritised order. All materials had been acquired. Ongoing issues with overnight parking were being continually monitored. New signage and enforcement would hopefully resolve this issue.

Junior Academy - All sessions were filled very quickly, and three of the four events had been successfully completed. The last event would be on the 17th September. Next year the format will be changed to create additional spaces. Participants had enjoyed the experience.

Water Testing/Quality - Bailiffs continued to complete water quality tests in association with the Angling Trust as part of a pilot survey of the River Severn, to provide sample results as a minimum once per month on five different locations on the fisheries. These locations were the Quarry, County Ground, Sydney Avenue, Emstrey and Reabrook. In general, the Severn was not where it should be with levels influenced with sewerage discharge and agricultural pollutants.

Permit Sales - Permit sales remained strong but were slightly down. This was anticipated due to people going back to work after Covid, and life returning to normal. The higher cost of living would also have an adverse effect.

Throw Line Training - One of two throw line training sessions with Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service had been completed, with seven water bailiffs and the Fisheries Manager now trained. A further session was planned for the late autumn on higher water with more of the water bailiff team. They had been provided with two throw lines and shall be purchasing ten more throw lines as soon as they were available from the suppliers. As the bailiffs spend a lot of time on the river's fisheries, this would equip them should they ever discover anyone in the water, and it may save someone's life.

Heatwave - With the extreme temperatures and depleted oxygen levels in the rivers and pools, a lot of time had been spent monitoring and testing the fisheries to keep them safe. They had to close the river fisheries and pools in order to protect them when it was appropriate. The Fisheries Manager anticipated more of this would happen in the future. To date, by being proactive they have not encountered any problems that could not be addressed.

Enforcement - Three more bailiffs had recently been appointed. Two for Monkmoor/Sydney Avenue and one for the Quarry.

Radios - Head Bailiff had commented that radios were essential and asked if there was the possibility of having a few more as they were proving very cost effective. They would be put in to use in the higher risk areas of the town.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the report is noted;**
- (ii) That the work of the Fisheries Manager (Andy Jones) and his team be recognised and the Council send thanks to him and his team for the improvements and policing of the Town Council fisheries;**
- (iii) That the Town Clerk investigate the possibility of additional radios.**

25/22 TEAM SHREWSBURY

The Office Manager provided an update on Team Shrewsbury activities. The majority of issues had reduced compared to last month, however congregation, drug misuse and rough sleeper issues had

increased. Currently the Ark and Housing Options were dealing with issues which were occurring at the top of Mardol.

Partner meetings were taking place regarding the Safer Street 4 Funding. Taxi Marshals had now started their patrols and reports were being received on a weekly basis for the Quarry Security and Taxi Marshals. Any actions were circulated to partners if required.

Street Pastors were having a recruitment campaign as they were finding it difficult to recruit new members.

We Are With You had noticed that prescription drugs and alcohol is a main concern.

The Town Centre SNT Sergeant was moving on and a new sergeant, Gary Lansdale, would be joining the Town Centre Team, but a start date had not yet been confirmed.

Councillors asked the Office Manager if they could be sent further information regarding Street Pastors recruitment so they could share this information via social media and noticeboards.

RESOLVED:

That the Team Shrewsbury Report be noted.

26/22 QUARRY

(i) Quarry Events Programme for 2022

The Outdoor Recreation & Assets Manager reported on the events programme. Since the last Recreation and Leisure Committee meeting several large events had taken place including the Lets Rock 80s concerts, Queen's Baton Relay and Flower Show. Within the space of a week the Lets Rock & Madness Concerts, the Queens Baton Relay Event and the Flower Show had started build. Event Organisers had worked collaboratively to ensure smooth transition in such a short timeframe without disruption to the public or damage to the park.

Excessive heat had proved a challenge to all major events this summer and Hot Weather contingencies had to be put in place.

Councillor Bentick asked if the Town Council had attendance figures and income projections for the Flower Show. It was reported that attendance figures and income projections was held by the Horticultural Society and there was no requirement to provide them to the Town Council. He also enquired if the Horticultural Society would survey guests asking what they would like to see at the Flower Show. The Town Clerk reported that this year the Horticultural Society recruited a new Showground Manager and it was likely there would be more public engagement on future shows.

The Town Clerk also wished to raise the continuing broader issue of events and the need to have them well managed. Over the last couple of weeks, there had been events like the Balloon Event at Telford and the Reading & Leeds Festival being overwhelmed by crowd management issues due in part to security numbers and capacity that were not capable of dealing with the developing emergency and the emergency services were required to step in. It was essential that Event Organisers put measures in place within their Event Management & Security Plans measures to deal with matters that may arise. This issue was something that would be addressed in the events closed season with both event organisers in the park and the security companies they use to make sure

Plans were fit for purpose and meet the needs and conditions of the Premises Licence and if they did not, events would not take place.

(ii) Quarry Security

The Town Clerk reported that at the last Recreation & Leisure Committee held on 6 July, there had been a need to commission security to address the Health & Safety responsibilities in keeping both staff and the public safe; Prosecure, who have previously undertaken park security were re-appointed. During the last meeting the Town Clerk advised that the Committee would need to review the long-term sustainability of security in the park as it wasn't a problem that could be addressed in the short term. It had been resolved to have further discussions at this meeting.

Things had changed since the last meeting in that the Home Office had approved the Safer Streets 4 funding to expand the Quarry security provision and include Taxi Marshalling in the town centre. Due to time constraints of the funding, expansion of the service had been put in place.

Whilst a long-term discussion was not required at present, an Exit Strategy for this short-term funding was and a programme of monitoring was being set up including patrol reports, details of incidents, staff morale and public feeling about the park. The Town Clerk reiterated that the security staff had been a good thing in terms of the feeling of staff and public safety as they were engaging with young people and Town Council partners and were going some way to addressing some of the endemic problems. Issues had been uncovered that they hadn't realised were there and some were of a serious nature.

Councillor Mosley stated that the funding was only for two years and after which time the Town Council would be responsible and they needed to ensure they could sustain this after and look at the long-term case. He stated the answer laid with the Police, PCSOs and Community involvement.

The Town Clerk agreed and commented that there were no monitoring requirements from the Home Office, but it was important that data was collected. She was conscious of displacement so young people were not moved on to other locations and the problems not being solved; this was being discussed with Team Shrewsbury Partners.

Councillor Vasmer was pleased the issue of displacement was being looked at and if the Committee could be appraised regularly. The Town Clerk confirmed that Safer Streets Funding progress would be a standing item on future Recreation & Leisure Committee meetings.

Councillor Bentick enquired if security staff would be going out to the suburbs of Shrewsbury. The Town Clerk reported that this would not be able possible as the Home Office funding was location specific. Councillor Mosley commented that the Town Council cannot be held responsible for enforcing other areas as it was not within their powers. They needed to work in partnership with Youth Services as the funding was not available.

The Office Manager asked all Members present if they did have any issues in their wards to let her know so she can report back. Specific data is required so they can get partners involved.

RESOLVED:

(i) That the Quarry Events Report be noted;

(ii) That the Quarry Security Report be noted;

- (iii) That the Committee acknowledges and thanks Nick Billingham from UK Live and Laurie O'Shea from the Shropshire Horticultural Society for ensuring smooth transition between events, ensuring the Quarry was left in an excellent condition after the shows considering the time constraints and the extreme weather conditions.**

27/22 SHREWSBURY IN BLOOM

The Head of Operations reported that since the last meeting the Heart of England in Bloom Judges had visited Shrewsbury. The day was successful and was very much a team effort with the Mayor of Shrewsbury lending her support along with Councillor Halliday talking about the flooding in Coleham and Councillor Moseley supporting staff at Monkmoor. A different route had been chosen this year focusing more on Town Council outdoor spaces than just flowers. There was also a tour of the Town Centre and the Flaxmill Maltings. Abbey Gardens was also a highlight along with the visit to Monkmoor Meadows. Results of the judging would be confirmed on 15 September.

Councillor Vasmer asked for an update on traffic islands. He was informed that Shropshire Council were still insistent on corporate sponsorship and the Town Council did not agree with their choices. The Town Council would be contacting current sponsors as they had signed up for Bloom purposes and they also needed to look at all the roundabouts as they had invested in these heavily.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the notes of the Shrewsbury in Bloom Group Meeting held on 5 July 2022 and 19 July 2022 be accepted and approved;**
- (ii) That the update on the judging for Shrewsbury in Bloom 2022 be noted.**

28/22 SAFER STREETS 4 FUNDING

The Town Clerk provided Committee with an update on the Safer Streets 4 Funding Award. It was exciting to have received £548,000 to address public realm issues and in particular address the live issue of Violence Against Women & Girls. It was an ambitious programme, and she was pleased to say they were on track with the projects that the Town Council was leading on; these being the installation of solar lighting on all Throwline Boards and Lifebuoy Stations and the expansion of Quarry Security which also included Taxi Marshalling. They had started to target a slightly wider area than just the Quarry and town centre to try and address any displacement potential from targeting the town centre.

The Town Clerk had already mentioned that the security staff had hit the ground running and they were making an impact; monitoring that impact was crucial. From what they could see there was minimal feedback required to the Home Office, but they did need to understand what the cost benefit analysis was of the project and really start to develop Exit Strategies in readiness for the funding coming to an end in September 2023.

They had started a strategic scoping exercise with key partners which was helping to inform work programmes and priorities so that they could maximise benefit in terms of the finances they had and the skills and expertise they bring.

Councillor Mosley enquired about CCTV and mobile CCTV and had this been progressed. The Town Clerk reported that she had a list of hotspot areas and cameras in key locations and would be happy to send this out to all Councillors.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

29/22 LOCAL POLICING CHARTER PRIORITIES

(i) Revised Local Policing Charter

The Town Clerk informed Committee that they had received the revised Local Policing Charter which had been issued out to all Councillors prior to the meeting. The new charter was aimed to address issues raised and establish strong links between the Police and the local community.

(ii) Policing Priorities for the wards of Shrewsbury

The Office Manager advised Committee that the priorities for each Councillor ward were now required on a 6 monthly basis and the Police were requiring a more detailed priority. Those highlighted red were from the previous submission as no updates had been received. They would continue to work with the Police for feedback on previous actions. The next submission would require finalising at the January meeting.

RESOLVED:

(i) That the revised Local Policing Charter be adopted;

(ii) That the list of priorities from Councillor wards would be submitted to the Police.

30/22 TRAVELLERS

The Town Clerk reported that the Town Council staff had been addressing a traveller encampment at Shillingston Drive Recreation Ground (Battlefield Ward). Staff had continued to liaise with both Councillor Wall (STC) and Councillor Carroll (SC).

The necessary welfare checks were undertaken and Notices to vacate the site were issued. During the time the site was also visited by the Gypsy Liaison Officers at Shropshire Council and also a large Police presence but there was no attempt to exercise the powers of s61 Criminal Justice & Public Order Act 1994 and remove the travellers.

The travellers did vacate the site within the timescales that had been discussed with Town Council Staff and a programme of cleansing and repair work had been carried out. There however remained much detritus in the brook which is the responsibility of the Environment Agency who had been notified.

The travellers have subsequently relocated to various sites within Shrewsbury, on private land and Shropshire Council land.

Unauthorised encampments do take a lot of staff resource both in terms of time of dealing with the encampment, documenting what had been done should they need to go to court, issuing legal papers and ultimately the clean up afterwards.

The Town Clerk also raised changes to legislation which should make options for removal easier, but it still relied on the Town Council to have carried out the necessary welfare duties and issued the appropriate notices. The Town Clerk had been talking to the SNT Inspector about how they could formulate a unified response in terms of record keeping, messages to both the encampment and the public at large and the point where reasonable measures had been exhausted and where police powers take over.

Councillor Bentick had concerns regarding Church Road Recreation Ground and unauthorised encampments and asked if the Town Council could check Stanley Lane Recreation Ground following the installation of the new footpath. The Head of Operations confirmed that posts had been ordered for the site and were waiting to be installed at Church Road.

Councillor Lemon commented on an unauthorised encampment in Bowbrook area last year and enquired about using more substantial barriers to stop travellers getting on to land. The Head of Operations confirmed that the barriers used would come down to cost as the metal barriers were expensive and not a deterrent as the current unauthorised encampment removed metal barriers to gain access to the site. More planting may be an option to consider to deter, but he would talk to the Countryside Team further regarding this.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the report be noted.

31/22 RIVER SAFETY

The Town Clerk had circulated a report on River Safety ahead of the meeting; there were two elements to this report; firstly, the list of actions that key Team Shrewsbury Partners were doing to address river safety and secondly the piece of work that Shropshire Council and the Town Council had commissioned to risk assess the river.

A lot of work had already been undertaken to address river safety and they have, as a Team Shrewsbury Partnership, kept both the Make Our Rivers Safe Facebook Page and the bereaved families informed.

Shropshire Council commissioned WSP to carry out an assessment of issues relating to the river and recent river deaths. The Assistant Director of Homes and Communities was leading on the project and the Town Clerk had been involved in the commissioning process.

WSP had conducted surveys down both sides of the river; there had been meetings with elected members as well as operational staff to discuss infrastructure issues along the site. A draft report was currently being reviewed and it was hoped that the final report would be available for the Finance & General Purposes Committee later in September.

RECOMMENDED:

(i) That the Report be noted;

(ii) That the Finance & General Purposes Committee considers the WSP River Assessment Report once published.

32/22 RECREATION GROUND MATTERS

(i) Church Road Recreation Ground – Response from ROSPA following Councillor Bentick’s request to formalise the basketball ball hoops at the hardstanding

The Head of Operations reported that following Councillor Bentick’s request to formalise the basketball hoops on Church Road Recreation Ground, a report had been commissioned from ROSPA. The Town Council had been tasked with finding a suitable way forward for the Basketball Court and the hardstanding area to co-exist. At present the potential for clashes between the two groups was high.

Options that had been suggested by ROSPA were;

- Signage could be installed at the entrance to the car park warning drivers of the Basketball area.
- Drivers to be restricted from the car park at designated times
- The area is marked out into car bays, leaving the Basketball Area free from markings or in red chevrons to deter parking in that area
- The Basketball Area is removed, and the equipment located elsewhere.
- A designated area for the Basketball is marked out and fenced from the car parking area

The Head of Operations was looking for feedback from the Committee in what was the best course of action to take. As a risk had now been identified by ROSPA, it must be actioned.

Councillor Bentick stated that he had asked for markings to be done as the area is listed as a recreation ground and not a carpark. The baskets were donated and were regularly used. He commented that very few residents use the area as a carpark, and it was used by members of the public from outside of the area.

Councillor Mosley commented that the church used this area and if a proportion of the area were to be removed there would be complaints from residents. Highways issues would also become a factor as the hardstanding was heavily utilised by cars and if removed it would cause traffic issues along Church Road and restrict the width of the highway for emergency services. To take away some of the available space would displace vehicles to other areas.

Councillor Mosley suggested a half court instead which would lead to only four spaces being lost. The other basket could be moved to Stanley Lane. The Town Clerk commented that they would need to do costings for this proposal as new hardstanding would be required at Stanley Lane.

RECOMMEND:

That the Officers look at the potential option of a half at Church Road Recreation Ground with the other being relocated to Stanley Lane Recreation Ground with a view to further plans being submitted to a future Recreation & Leisure Committee.

(ii) Quarry Splash Park – Need to address the wear and tear of the facility

The Head of Operations reported that the Splash Park located in the Quarry was still a success story and regularly used by members of the public.

Recent inspections had taken place and the wet pour/anti-slip surfaces were in need of repair. This was caused by general wear and tear of people using the facility. Quotations were being sought and likely repairs would be funded from the existing Splash Park Reserve.

The Splash Park would close on 3rd October and Waterplay would decommission the facility for the winter.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That Committee approves the Splash Park repair plans;**
- (ii) That the winter closure of the facility be noted**

33/22 WILDFLOWER PLANTING

Jim Goldsmith (Countryside & Greenspace Manager) sent his apologies to Members as he was unable to attend the meeting to give his presentation on Wildflower planting, but he would like to attend a future Recreation & Leisure Committee.

In his absence, the Head of Operations provided the Committee with a short presentation on wildflower planting and verge management.

The Town Council had already taken the first step with wildflower planting and now it was time to take it to the next level using perennial planting.

Currently used were the designer mixes which are a valuable hit of pollen and nectar late in the year and support around 40 species life cycles. There were disadvantages to them though which included the requirements to 're-set' them annually, spraying them with Glyphosate, rotovating with heavy equipment causing soil disturbance and was expensive and time consuming to manage.

The Countryside Team would like to use native perennials on the next level as they contain 20% wildflowers and 80% grasses, typical of a natural meadow. They would support 1,400 species of insect that feed on the leaves, stems and roots. It would provide a food and nectar source early in the year and could be cut as hay in the late Summer and would only need to be sown once which leads to less soil damage.

Managing species-rich grassland is a brilliant way to improve biodiversity value of road verges and reduce long-term management costs. Verges rich in native wildflowers support more wildlife, are more resilient to environmental change, enhance ecological connectivity and provide better ecosystem services such as pollination.

Most verges cut by Shrewsbury Town Council are owned by Shropshire Council. There are options available for verge management which include:

- Short mow – 8-10 cuts April-September. Cutting too early and too frequently eliminates species, reducing diversity and the value of the road verge.
- "Buzz Cut" – this means to increase cutting height to around 6cm. Road verge vegetation doesn't have to be tall to be wildlife friendly. Species such as clovers, trefoils, dandelions,

selfheal, creeping buttercup and yarrow grow quite happily at ankle height and support a huge array of pollinators. This was something the Town Council already did as their mowers are set to around 7mcm.

- One cut in September/October with a 1m short strip along hard edges. It is vital that wildflowers can complete their full life cycle i.e., grow, flower and set seed. This replenishes the seed bank and allows populations to be maintained.
- Leave to grow wild – this is good habitat for nesting birds and some invertebrates. It is unsuitable for most verges. If grasslands and verges are left uncut even for just one year, their composition begins to change, and wildflower species begin to decline.

The next steps to take would be to improve the verges in Shrewsbury for wildflowers and wildlife, which is no simple task. To change wildflower planting from annuals to native perennials reduces chemical applications.

Councillors agreed that the public need to be educated on this issue and very strongly supported the use of native mix. They suggested signs were placed along the verges to inform the public that the verge is managed for wildlife and has not just been left unattended. Also, to add 'no litter' to any proposed new signage.

RESOLVED:

That the Countryside Team suggestion of perennial wildflower planting be developed

34/22 COMMUTED SUMS

The Town Clerk gave an update on negotiations with developers and transfer arrangements:

(i) Cophorne Barracks Play and Open Space – offsite contributions to play (£30,498 - £20498 for Shorncliffe Drive & £10000 for Silks Meadow – to be paid on 75% occupancy) and open space (£115,000 for sports pitches & associated facilities at County Ground – paid on 50% occupancy)

(ii) Barratt Homes/Bovis Homes – Mytton Oak Road – Phase 1 adopted; Snagging Phase 2/3 commenced. No identified date for transfer

(iii) Shrewsbury South Urban

1. Sutton Grange site – ongoing – likely transfer in 2021/22
2. Bellway Homes site – discussion on land adoption and adoption of acoustic fencing
3. Galliers site – early discussions on land adoption
4. Community Centre – location on the site

(iv) Crowmoor House – s106 agreement for offsite play & open space contribution to be used for Upton Lane & Monkmoor Recreation Ground – two-staged payments on trigger on percentage occupied properties. Council to bankroll work at Upton Lane Rec;

(v) Harlescott Infants/Juniors site – Offsite contributions to sport. Initial discussions have taken place with Sports Development at Shropshire Council on how the contribution might be spent. Further work is needed.

(vi) Radbrook College site – Open space adoption – officers met with Floreat Homes on site – likely adoption later in the 2021/22

(vii) Weir Hill – Agreements to adopt the land at a future time have been signed

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

35/22 CLOSING REMARKS

In closing the meeting, the Chairman thanked Councillors for attending and taking part in this Town Council meeting and thanked the staff involved in this meeting. All papers related to the meeting could be found on the website www.shrewsburytowncouncil.gov.uk.