

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

**Meeting of the Recreation & Leisure Committee
Held in Shrewsbury Room, Shirehall
At 6.00pm on Wednesday 10 May 2023**

PRESENT

Councillors: P Gillam (Chair), J Dean (substitute for C Lemon), A Mosley, E Roberts, D Vasmer, A Wagner, B Wall and R Wilson (substitute for B Bentick).

IN ATTENDANCE

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

01/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED:

That apologies be accepted from Councillors Bentick, Lemon and Pardy.

02/23 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.
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03/23 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Recreation & Leisure Committee meeting held on 15 March 2023 were submitted as circulated and read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Recreation & Leisure Committee meeting held on 15 March 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

Councillor Roberts joined the meeting

04/23 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

76/22 RESET Project – Members were provided with an update from the Town Clerk from Terry Warburton who was leading the RESET Project. He continued to engage with the Town Clerk and

the Office Manager, and he said he was happy to return to Committee once the Project had found its feet. They were seeing some quick wins with certain individuals, so they remained hopeful.

79/22 Rowley & Fenemere Angling Association – The Town Clerk reported that at the last meeting the Outdoor Recreation & Asset Manager presented a report on what they knew of the Angling Association and their recent purchase of the Fishing Rights. The minutes of the last meeting went to Council which resulted in a motion of no action being taken on proposed tree works. The Town Clerk provided some additional clarification.

Fishing rights were established in 1972 when the Corporation bought the land from the estate of Mr Dekin. All rights to the land were purchased by the Corporation with the exception of the Fishing Rights to the river; they were retained by the Estate and subsequently sold to the Ditherington Anglers. That club had since folded, and those rights were sold on to the Rowley & Fenemere Angling Association so predecessor Councils to the Town Council had never owned those rights.

The original conveyance which saw the purchase of Castlewalk Recreation Ground provided certain rights including rights to fish, right to install pegs, rights to clear vegetation & trees around those pegs and rights of access. This could not be challenged as they were conditions of that 1972 Conveyance, even if fishing hadn't taken place on that site for some years. There had been suggestion from the public that fishing hadn't taken place on site for forty years. Fishing ceased in 2013 and for a number of year the Town Council would remove the Himalayan Balsam from the riverbank so the Angling Club could fish.

Last year, officers met with the new owners of the rights to discuss tree works and a minimal amount of work was required; whilst they would do that, all other trees were reviewed as part of the Council's Tree Management Plan and a schedule of works was prepared with a view to seeking Conservation Area Consent to prune and fell. The schedule was reviewed by Stephen Shields of Shropshire Council; he added some additional limbs and the application was submitted and approved with a view to undertaking the works in the winter programme.

95% of that work was for Health & Safety grounds and not for supporting the anglers. That work had been reviewed under the Quantified Tree Risk Assessment model and had been flagged as a priority. The work could not be deferred any longer; the fact that the works had been identified as a risk and a priority would leave the council with an undefendable claim were any injury to be caused from those trees. The majority were cracked willows and pollarding willows which allowed the trees to thrive and if the work was done now, they stood a chance of summer growth. Additionally at Full Council there was a request to seek talks with the Club to determine whether those rights could be purchased; the Town Clerk had a meeting arranged with the club the following week and she sought permission to undertake the works as proposed last year for which there was an existing planning permission for.

Councillor Wilson commented that under Health & Safety the proposed works had to be completed. The Town Council could issue a press release explaining the tree work that would be taking place, so the public are fully aware.

Councillor Mosley reported on local opposition to the fishing rights and necessary tree works. He and Councillor Vasmer had only recently been made aware of these rights and was disappointed this had not been raised by officers. He expressed his concern about the devastating effects the work on ten trees would have to the area but realised there was no alternative but to accept the works on Health & Safety grounds.

RESOLVED:

That Council agreed to the tree works at Castlewalk Recreation Ground as proposed for which planning permission had already been agreed.

82/22 Martyn's Law – The Town Clerk reported that the Draft Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill had been published and would be reviewed by the Home Affairs Select Committee ahead of its travel through the parliamentary process. The Town Clerk, having read the bill, as it stood, stated it had implications for:

- The Market Hall
- Castlefields Community Centre
- Ditherington Community Centre
- The Grange Youth Centre
- Springfield Community Centre
- The major ticketed events in the Quarry
- Council meetings that could have more than 100 people in attendance and there had been a number over the last year
- The Mayor's Award Ceremony with over 100 people in attendance

There were a number of questions that had been raised about terminology and the Town Clerk had been going through these with the Head of Policy at the National Association of Local Councils who hoped to make representations to the Select Committee on Member Councils' behalf. It would also be wise to raise this with the MP as he would have access to the Select Committee.

Whilst there was a way to go before it reached the statute book and there was likely to be an implementation phase, the Town Clerk advised that this was not an excuse to not do anything. If the legislation was required to counter terrorism, then council should be adopting the principles sooner rather than later. The Town Clerk was to organise a Desktop Exercise involving Quarry major event organisers and key staff and stakeholders to understand the vulnerabilities of the park and start to test the robustness of existing Security Plans. The Town Clerk would come back to the next Recreation & Leisure Committee with a plan. She hoped that Members were supportive of them starting to make moves and the Town Clerk giving up a bit of her time to help the National Association to shape guidance for the Parish & Town Council sector nationally.

05/23 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Town Clerk reported on the following:

- Work at Livesey House was all complete except for a few snagging issues with the builder and the IT in the Council Chamber. Certainly, by this Committee's next meeting they would be holding meetings there
- The Cycle Map had been picked up and would hopefully be going to print shortly
- Memorial Repairs – There was impasse between what Conservation Officers wanted and what the Stone Masons were recommending. That had now been resolved and a contractor had been appointed
- Plans for the Castlewalk Nature Trail had finally been signed off and the Countryside Team would begin to deliver
- Kynaston Wheeled Track contract had been awarded but no start date as yet.

- Kynaston Play Area tenders were in and under review
- Kynaston Drainage project had a preferred tenderer
- Moston Road Wheeled Track had a start date of 31 May
- Radbrook Rec Ground Brick Building upgrades – staff had met with clubs and the schedule of works was being drawn up
- Monkmoor Rec Lighting of the tennis courts was still awaiting a start date
- Quarry Working Group had met and there would be proposals coming to the next meeting
- Beaver Project contract had been awarded. The Projects Manager did take a paper to Finance & General Purposes for additional funds. Adam Clifford in the Countryside Team had also met with Severn Trent, and he did a great job presenting the project, so much so Severn Trent had offered additional funding.
- Dana Path – There was a meeting for later in the month to discuss who did what – current thinking was that Shropshire Council sorted out the legal side and permissions and they cracked on with project management
- Bus Shelters – The project had been completed with the funds available and they were starting to look at the next phase. Finance & General Purposes did raise the issue of the quality of the glazing as one shelter had been hit twice. They were comfortable that the glazing was more robust than existing glazing panels and if it was smashed it was less of a public risk. However, Woodcote Way bus shelter had its glazing panel vandalised over the last weekend and Councillor Vasmer was requesting the Bus Shelter Programme was put on hold pending a review of the glazing. Woodcote Way was an old bus shelter hence their wish to replace with new alternatives.

Councillor Mosley queried the County Ground and also when Neighbourhood Fund money had to be used by.

There was a requirement to spend Neighbourhood Fund money within 5 years or have a strategic plan to show why not. If the money was not spent it would return back to Shropshire Council. There had been no representations from the cricket club regarding the County Ground, so this would be raised doing the visioning exercise. Councillor Mosley asked whether funds could be reallocated to Shorncliffe; the Town Clerk advised that they could.

Councillor Dean requested to be included on any discussion regarding the County Ground and Shorncliffe as the locations were near/within his ward. He also commented on the lack of bus timetable displays and if they could fit them to the new shelters installed. He also enquired on behalf of Councillor Lemon if there was a timescale on Bowbrook Meadows and if the work had been completed.

The Town Clerk advised that contact would be made with Shropshire Council's Passenger Transport Team regarding the displays. The Projects Manager was looking at the next batch of bus shelters proposed for refurbishment, funding dependent.

With regards to Bowbrook Meadows the snagging list had not been completed; 600 trees were still to be planted and there were still some underlying issues. If requested, Officers were happy to meet with local members on site to discuss further.

Councillor Roberts asked if her constituents could be involved in the decision making on the proposed play designs for her ward of Harlescott and that there was a surface water issue at present. The Project Manager confirmed that they were currently compiling a tenderer shortlist

from the tenders received which she could consult with residents about. Drainage problems were also being addressed.

Councillor Vasmer commented on the new bus shelters and asked if more information could be shown that the Town Council had installed them. The Project Manger confirmed that they were looking at wording and not just the logo which they had at present. Councillor Vasmer also asked about Monkmoor Recreation Ground on the Capital Programme and if there was any progress on the football pitch improvement. The Town Clerk commented that this needed to be put in the Place Plan when reviewed and the Head of Operations commented that any improvements would not be major as the pitches were already some of the best in the town. No major drainage would be required but they would look at the drainage around the outside of the pitches.

Councillor Wagner enquired about the decisions of the Quarry Working Group. He was informed that as only one Councillor had been in attendance at the meeting. The Town Clerk reported there had been a discussion with that Councillor and the Officers present and a report for further discussion would be presented to the next Recreation & Leisure Committee in July.

RESOLVED:

That the Capital Programme report be noted.

06/23 FOOTFALL

The Projects Manager updated the Committee on footfall in the town. Visitor numbers throughout the town had been fairly stable over recent months. He explained to Committee that he had only provided figures for the Quarry as requested at the last Recreation & Leisure Committee. Whilst the visitor numbers for 2023 were down compared to 2022, they had started to follow a similar pattern to those seen in 2019. It was expected that this patten would continue throughout 2023 with a full programme of events planned.

Councillor Mosley asked if they could also see Year on Year comparisons in future meetings and this was agreed.

RESOLVED:

That the Footfall Report be noted.

07/23 FISHERIES

The Outdoor Recreation & Asset Manager updated the Committee on Shrewsbury Town Fisheries.

Mousecroft Pool - The Fisheries team had completed a clean-up around the pool and thinned some of the invasive lilies to maintain water quality.

Monkmoor / Belvidere Fishery - The new boundary signs had been installed in both locations.

Junior Academy - Four dates had been added to the website for coaching sessions for junior members for the summer. The last event would be a competition with prizes for the winners. The coaching would be run with their eight qualified angling coaches at Mousecroft Pool.

Fisheries Permit Fees - All fisheries new fees had been implemented from the 1 April in accordance with the scale of charges.

Water Testing on the River Severn and Reabrook - Water testing results up to April this year for the River Severn in Shrewsbury had been shown to Committee along with an invertebrate sample survey for the Reabrook. The Reabrook survey was implemented by the Rivers Trust. The survey scheme with the Angling Trust was to look at parameters over a long period of time of which would be a minimum of two years, but they planned to continue beyond the two years. The results could change over the seasons throughout the year.

Over time they should be able to see a pattern and whether the River Severn's water quality was improving or getting worse. Where results were way over the permitted limits, these would be reported to the Environment Agency and logged with Fish Legal to investigate. The testing was implemented by six volunteers on a regular basis in fixed locations on the Severn and its tributaries.

All Fisheries - Within the next two weeks the fisheries team would be grass strimming around the fishing platforms around all their fisheries in preparation for the new river fishing season on June 16.

County Ground - A new small strong metal gate had been installed near to the swing gate on the river path above the cricket ground. The gate was locked and protected by a combination lock for Shrewsbury Town Council and fisheries staff only. It could be unlocked by fisheries staff during competitions to allow easier access and for river maintenance.

RESOLVED:

That the report is noted.

08/23 TEAM SHREWSBURY

08.1 Team Shrewsbury and operational impacts from crime & anti-social behaviour

The Office Manager provided an update on Team Shrewsbury activities. A number of incidents had increased in particular Alcohol Related behaviour which was a mixture of the general public and rough sleepers, mainly within the Town Centre.

Congregation was predominantly youths & rough sleepers, mainly under the Old Market Hall, The Quarry and Pride Hill and Rough sleepers were mainly on Pride Hill. As previously advised the effects of the Town Rangers and Quarry Security patrols were starting to reduce the issues that they had been encountering and the Security Teams were picking up an understanding of the persistent problems and they were engaging with individuals on a daily basis.

Councillor Dean asked if they could see a Year-on-Year comparisons at the next meeting to which the Office Manger agreed.

RESOLVED:

That the Team Shrewsbury report be noted.

08.2 Shrewsbury Town Centre Public Space Protection Order

The Town Clerk reported on Shropshire Council's Consultation into the extension of the Shrewsbury Town Centre PSPO. The Shrewsbury Town Centre Public Space Protection Order (No1) 2017 was approved by Shropshire Council in June 2017 and became effective on 1 August that year. The order implemented four prohibitions relating to anti-social behaviour in a public space; these being:

- Urinating & Defecating
- Leaving Personal Belongings
- Wider enabling powers to require a person to stop drinking if causing ASB
- Wider enabling powers to require a person to leave an area and not return for 48 hrs if causing ASB (Anti-Social Behaviour)

The Order, which runs for a period of 3 years expired in August 2020 and was again renewed. Shropshire Council was therefore consulting on a further extension together with additions as requested and supported by Team Shrewsbury Partners; these included:

- To extend the person able to enforce the PSPO to "any person authorised by Shropshire Council"
- To include wider provision to require a person to stop sitting or lying on the ground if causing ASB
- To include wider provision to require a person to leave a public toilet if causing ASB
- To include a wider provision to require a person to stop using a sound amplifier if causing ASB

Shropshire Council was required to seek comments on proposals and provide evidence to support the continuation and expansion; these would be collated into a report to Cabinet. It was officers' intention to utilise the Town Council's ASB logs which had captured incidents relating to ASB in all matters highlighted above.

Officers had worked with the Police, Shropshire Council and the BID to provide the necessary evidence to support all aspects of this proposed order.

The PSPO had been written in such a way to give powers to the authorising officer to require a person to stop a course of activity which was either contributing to or likely to contribute to ASB and it was only then when they refused that more punitive measures of penalty notices and banning orders be used. The PSPO was therefore one of a number of tools open to the Police and other partners to maintain order within the town centre. They were not used readily and freely but of late there had been a surge of usage.

The Order was used either as a warning tool or an enforcement tool to address rough sleeper ASB particularly around their consumption of alcohol, their left belongings strewn in the town centre and particularly shop door fronts and their use of the open space to urinate and defecate. At times their behaviour declined to such an extent that they were banned under this order from entering the town centre for 48 hours to help calm heightened tensions. These matters had been regularly referred to in ASB logs and collated onto the Town Council's master log.

Additionally, individuals regularly attempted to utilise public conveniences for the purpose of drug taking and it was not uncommon for officers to have to force entry to find multiple individuals in the facility and at times so poorly that emergency services had been called. These facilities could be frequently out of use for hours a day for the general public who wished to use them genuinely. Individuals often resorted to sitting and lying on the floor and frequently for the purpose of begging

and whilst the Vagrancy Act 1824 was somewhat influx by recent statutory provision to repeal the act, there was no other course of action to address the levels of harassment alarm and distress caused by such activity. Of late the town centre had been blighted by individuals taking to the use of amplification whilst busking. Whilst busking was generally welcomed and added colour and sound to the area, the amplification caused intrusion to both the public in carrying out their tasks as well as the retailers who had to withstand the noise for long periods.

The Order sought extension for usage beyond just officers of Shropshire Council and the Police; this would allow the Town Rangers and Quarry Security to make use of the powers without having to resort to contacting the Police & Shropshire Council when their existing powers had been exhausted. It was not envisaged that this would see increases in the issuing of notices, more the capacity to use the wider enabling powers to address ASB before it escalated.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Report be noted;**
- (ii) That the extension and expansion of the PSPO for a further 3 years be supported;**
- (iii) That the Town Clerk be authorised to comment on the consultation exercise on behalf of the Town Council**

08.3 Community Safety Partnerships & ASB Powers

The Town Clerk reported that Government was seeking comments on the role and function of Community Safety Partnerships, their relationships with Police & Crime Commissioners and the role of both organisations in tackling ASB. Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) were introduced by the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 to bring together local partners to formulate and deliver strategies within their communities to tackle crime and disorder. Responsible authorities that made up the CSP were the Police, Fire, Local Authority, Health & Probation. In the case of Shropshire, this wasn't a standalone CSP but was merged with the Safeguarding Board. The consultation exercise was posing questions around expanding that relationship between the CSP & OPCC through the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014 a number of tools were provided to both the Police and Local Authority's as to respond quickly to ASB; these included PSPOs, dispersal powers and closure powers.

This consultation sought to expand those powers including:

- Extending the power to disperse for 48hrs to 72 hrs
- Extending powers to test for drugs outside of the custody suite
- Extending powers to issue PSPOs to the Police
- Extending the length it took to apply for a Closure Order to 72hrs from 48hrs after the Notice was served
- Extending the Power of arrest to Civil Injunctions
- Expanding the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme to include the provisions within the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014.

Whilst the Town Council may not wish to comment about all of these matters it did raise a number of questions locally:

- What role did the CSP play in addressing ASB and how did it communicate that. Previously there were staff allocated to servicing the CSP including ASB Officers; these posts had been deleted but efforts to address civil matters relating to ASB had become ever more complex. This might be something that the Town Council may wish to raise with Shropshire Council to understand how it could engage at a micro level.
- Generally speaking, the Police & Local Authority worked exceptionally well together, and this was enforced through the partnership working of Team Shrewsbury. The Town Council may wish to comment on the delivery of a very bottom-up approach to partnership working to address localised ASB.
- This partnership working had generally meant that in the case of the PSPO creation and renewal the Police and Local Authority were of one voice.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (i) That the Report be noted;**
- (ii) That no comments be submitted to the Government consultation.**

08.4 Policing Charter

The Office Manager provided an update to Committee. Submissions had been requested for the next quarter and in some cases numerous e-mails had been sent. She had previously advised that this submission was for June, however she confirmed that it was July. Speaking to the Inspector updates from the previous quarter would be issued at the end June.

Looking through the submissions, additional information from Councillors maybe required, as much more information to the Police as possible was needed. Where priorities had been made advising ASB / drug dealing across areas, they did need to be more specific with locations times and what the ASB was. Also, some instances didn't seem to fall under the Policing remit for example 'abandoned trolleys'. The Inspector had agreed to review the report and if there were any changes to be made details would be forwarded back to Councillors.

Councillor Dean apologised that he had not submitted but if the information was not coming in from residents it was hard to report them.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) That the Report be noted;**
- (ii) The Committee approves the priorities for the July 2023 submission.**

09/23 SAFER STREETS 4 FUNDING

The Town Clerk updated Committee on Safer Streets 4 Funding.

Members were aware that Officers worked with the Problem-Solving Team at West Mercia Police to submit a bid to the Home Office for Safer Streets 4 Funding. The fund, designed to address Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG) allowed for bids to be prepared in defined areas which could show underlying concerns about VAWG supplemented by concerns locally. In excess of £500,000 was

awarded as a suite of initiatives that were designed to create safe places for women and girls to access the town both during the day and night. Different agencies had been involved in promoting different strands of the funding award; these had been detailed in previous reports.

The Safer Streets project continued in earnest with the predominance of the funding supporting Town Rangers (promoted by the BID), Quarry Security & Taxi Marshals (promoted by the Town Council). Funding would continue until the end of September after which match funding takes the project to the end of March 2024.

Discussions had commenced with both the Police & Crime Commissioner and the Chief Executive of Shropshire Council to potentially secure the OPCC (Office of Police & Crime Commissioner) Safer Community Fund to sustain this project further. The PCC had also been made aware that the Home Office intended to release a Safer Streets 5 fund, details of which were not yet known.

Town Rangers, Quarry Security & Taxi Marshals continued to be exceptionally busy addressing ASB matters. They worked closely with the Police and were able to triage matters that began to unfold to maximise Police resources in the town.

Intelligence from the Rangers was invaluable and had resulted in apprehension and prosecution. Much of the intelligence had also helped to inform the work around the continuation and extension of the Public Space Protection Order.

As they were now heading into the summer months, the Quarry Security were reverting to extended summer hours with personnel being onsite until 20.00hrs daily with Fridays & Saturdays until 22.00hrs. Activity was also increasing, and officers would continue to monitor.

It could not be underestimated how much of a sense of confidence the Rangers had to the public using the town centre and the park both during the daytime and at night. The town centre and the park had the largest collection of licensed premises and the biggest event calendar of any town in the West Mercia Police Area attracting many people from outside of the town as well as Shrewsbury residents. The need for the public's continued safety was a necessity.

RESOLVED:

That the Report be noted

10/23 QUARRY

The Outdoor Recreation & Asset Manager updated the Committee on the Quarry Events for this year. Events to date had gone very well. The fun fair was pleased with the opening week of the season and no issues arose from their visit. Whilst on site the Amusement Device Inspection Procedures took place to ensure all rides were correctly maintained and constructed.

The charity circus had caused some issues as the vehicles were not provided with the maps to indicate the route to take to enter the Quarry and this caused some congestion in town, also they caused some damage during the construction and take down of the big top. Work had been done to rectify the situation and once the final work had been done, the cost would be deducted from their deposit, and the remaining balance returned to them.

Sadly, UK Live had to cancel the Friday night event on the 14 July due to logistical reasons. There had also been slight damage at Burrsfield made by the Shrewsbury Regatta, but this had now been sorted.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the Quarry Events report be noted.

11/23 SHREWSBURY IN BLOOM

11.1 Summer planting for 2023

The Head of Operations updated the Committee that since the last meeting, operational staff were progressing well in the Nursery as this was the busy season for planting. Staff were also working on the Sedum roofs for the bus shelters. They were focussing on more grasses and plants this year and working in Partnership with Climate Change. The tree nursery was progressing well, residents had brought in seedlings, and these were developing well.

The Greenhouse Open evening would be on the 25 May, and this was an opportunity for the public to see what the Town Council did at their Weeping Cross Depot. All councillors were welcome to attend the event if they wished.

There was a Shrewsbury in Bloom meeting scheduled for next week and there would be new Councillors in attendance. If there were any community projects that Bloom could get involved in, then it was asked to feed this information back to the Working Group. The route for the Britain in Bloom Judging Day was also being looked at and a provisional route would be provided at the next meeting.

Councillor Dean asked if the Greenhouse event could be re-instated a social occasion as it had been a few years back. The Head of Operations would put this suggestion to the Bloom Group, but they did have to be careful on numbers.

Councillor Wilson commented that the trees within planters on Shoplatch looked really good and requested more trees around the town. It was confirmed that they were looking to expand the tree planters with the plan being to extend up to Pride Hill. All the trees had been sourced from the tree nursery.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

11.2 Shrewsbury in Bloom Group meeting

The notes of the Shrewsbury in Bloom Group meeting held on 18 April 2023 were submitted as circulated and read

RESOLVED

That the notes of the Shrewsbury in Bloom Group meeting held on 18 April 2023 be accepted and approved.

Councillor Mosley informed Members of the Committee that this was the last Recreation & Leisure Committee Meeting for the Head of Operations as he was retiring after 45 years of service. His charisma, knowledge, awareness and commitment to the town had been immeasurable.

The Operations Manager thanked the Committee for their kind words. He had had a fantastic career in local government. He had always been an advocate of having a direct workforce and it had been proven with the Town Council operating lean and mean and cost effective. He left behind an excellent team and he was confident the Town Council was in safe hands.

12/23 RECREATION GROUND MATTERS

12.1 Shorncliffe Recreation Ground

Councillor Wilson provided a report to Committee to set an ambition for Shorncliffe Recreation Ground as a destination open space for the wider community

The Shorncliffe Recreation Ground was a former Ministry of Defence facility which included past remnants of the facility including the old parade ground.

The land was accessible off Shelton Road (along which the Nation Cycle Route 81 runs) and a footpath which linked Mytton Park with Larkhill Road.

The site currently featured: a community woodland football pitch, a pump track, a MUGA, two old skate ramps, and a large area of hardstanding that was previously a parade square. Whilst having a number of valuable features on site they were not well connected and did not work as a comprehensive multi-use facility. The topography of the site was such that the public didn't necessarily walk through it but choose to access which ever individual facility they used without knowing the extent of the recreation ground.

The land was in mixed ownership with the football pitch and pump track owned by Shrewsbury Town Council, and the remainder owned by Shropshire Council. There was also a parcel of open space still owned by the Ministry of Defence. The land was previously designated as a future school site, but this had now been discounted as building work had commenced on the Bowbrook Meadows site off Mytton Oak Road.

This parcel of land formed part of the land transfers with Shropshire Council. Terms of the long-term lease had now been agreed and documents were awaited for signing and sealing.

Currently £10,000 had been allocated in the Capital Programme for preliminary feasibility work and Redkite had been appointed to begin scoping the works. There would need to be a number of surveys carried out to determine potential use and any restrictions to development. Initial meetings had been held on site and online between the Town Clerk, Head of Operations, Local Member and Red Kite landscape architects to determine a process for planning and development.

Previous Council discussions had considered the lack of a destination recreation ground in this part of the town, especially with the level of development in Radbrook, Bowbrook and towards Bicton

and even in countywide play and recreation strategies there was mention of a Monkmoor Recreation style facility in the west of the town.

Headline ambitions discussed included:

- a. Ensuring all genders were equitably provided for any development, especially teenage girls.
- b. Use the site to improve walking, wheeling and cycling in the area.
- c. Providing facilities that were not available elsewhere in Shrewsbury.
- d. Develop a 21st Century park for the future, considering the work of Tim Gill ([URBAN PLAYGROUND | Rethinking Childhood](#)) and Make Space for Girls ([Home \(makespaceforgirls.co.uk\)](#)).

Public consultation would be key to developing a plan that provided for the community of south-west Shrewsbury and beyond.

The Town Clerk had been in long talks regarding the transfer as they needed control of the land before they could go any further. Many areas had good recreational grounds, but the West was lacking in outdoor facilities. Committee were asked if they would support this ambitious plan as something was needed in this area of the town.

All Councillors present were in support and Councillor Mosley added that this scheme should also be part of the Visioning exercise regarding priorities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. That the report be noted;**
- 2. That the Town Council support an ambitious development of Shorncliffe Park into a destination open space similar to Monkmoor Recreation Ground;**
- 3. That the Town Council support the allocation of capital funding to achieve this;**
- 4. That the Town Council seek external funding to aid the development.**

One member of the public joined the meeting.

12.2 Fields In Trust

Councillor Wilson asked Committee to consider the registration of Recreational Assets under the Fields in Trust Scheme.

Fields in Trust was a Charitable organisation set up in 1925 as originally the National Playing Fields Association. Its aims were to protect playing fields and had done much to improve the standard of play through the Six Acre Standards which the Town Council continued to operate all of its play areas under.

The charity had developed a legal means of protecting playing fields and there had been various iterations recognising past monarch's involvement.

To protect playing fields under this organisation required a Deed of Dedication signing; this was in turn registered against the title of the land and remained in perpetuity.

Nowadays the Deed was far more flexible than previous schemes and allowed for flexibility of control for day-to-day management of the site including erection of fencing and structures to meet the recreational purposes of the ground. The only difficulty would be where sports clubs required security of tenure for lease grounds.

This request has been promoted by the Greenfields Community Group recognising their wish to retain the Greenfields Recreation Ground as a recreational facility in perpetuity, but there was no reason why other facilities could not be registered in this vane given the Town Council's continued wish to support and enhance recreational land. Telford & Wrekin Council went through a similar process recently. In determining sites however, members would need to be mindful of the sporting use of these sites and consider any future proposition for the need for sporting clubs to seek security of tender to support sporting aims within sites.

The Town Clerk had a meeting with officers of Fields in Trust later in the month to look at the possibilities in more detail. A Frequently Asked Questions sheet had been provided to Councillors to give further details of the scheme. The Town Council could look at all of their land to see which sites would work. Legal advice would be required but big recreation grounds would be a sensible option.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (i) That the Report be noted;**
- (ii) That the Committee support the principle of exploring the Registration of Recreation Grounds with Fields In Trust;**
- (iii) That the Committee consider this further once officers had the opportunity to digest the process and consider suitable locations;**
- (iv) That a proposal be brought to the next meeting.**

13/23 PLAY

13.1 Long Term plan for play area improvements and upgrades.

The Head of Operations informed Committee that the Town Council managed fifty-six play locations of which two neighbourhood teams maintained.

He had a list of locations that he said should be fed into the visioning exercises and put onto the list of priorities. The priority sites were:

- **Sutton Farm** – This required a complete/major refurbishment as larger items of equipment were 20/25 years old with signs of corrosion and the wet pour surfacing was in a poor condition.
- **Oakfield Drive** – This required a complete/major refurbishment as larger items of equipment were 10-20 years old. A popular large embankment slide was corroding and

would need replacing soon. Some welding repair had been carried out but would become beyond repair at some point.

- **Raby Crescent** – This required a complete/Major Refurbishment. Most of the equipment was approx. 20/25 years old with signs of corrosion. Wet pour surfacing was in poor condition.
- **Castlewalk** – Required a Major Refurbishment. One multiplay unit was approx. five years old, other equipment 20+ years of age with signs of corrosion. Would retain the multiplay unit and replace other items and add to woodchip safety surfacing.
- **Shorncliffe Drive (subject to consultation)** – Here was the potential for the addition of a new play area. Removal of old skateboard ramps could free up space for a new play area. Ministry Of Defence play area was removed several years ago so there was a gap in play area provision in the area.
- **Stanley Lane** – This required a Complete/Major Refurbishment (dependant on MUGA decision). The equipment was approx. 20 years old, and the play area was in need of an update. Short aerial runway within the fenced site was taking up a lot of space which could be used to improve play value.
- **Kynaston Rec** - Vision required for tarmac pad following the removal of the skate ramps.
- **Douglas Way** - Minor Refurbishment – could add onto another play project as an extra
- **Springfield** - Potential for addition of an aerial runway on site. Site lacking equipment for older children – request from a local resident for more.
- **Additional Works had also been identified at;**
- **Greenacres** – relocate and improve the footpath along side of rec away from trees/tree roots.
- **Boiler House Pitch** – create access path to play area.
- **Upton Lane** – improve pathway access to new play area

Councillors accepted the updates that had been provided to Committee.

Councillor Roberts commented that there was one negative regarding the area in Waincott and that was the basket swing. This attracted a lot of Anti-Social Behaviour and she asked if there was a smaller version that would reduce the issue. The Head of Operations informed that play was all inclusive and the shell nest seat could incorporate several users at a time. It was something that could be looked at but there was a fine balance.

Councillor Dean asked if they could consider adult/older play areas, crazy golf etc and they should bear in mind older play. Was this something that could be taken to the visioning sessions to discuss further.

Councillor Wilson commented that variety in play areas was vital, and they should be steering away from 'standard' play areas and make them more exciting for young people to use. He also commented that a map of play areas would be a useful tool for families.

The Town Clerk commented that over the last few years all new play areas that had been installed had been different. Recycled materials were now being used and the areas had improved greatly.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted and the detail be submitted to the Visioning process for further consideration

13.2 Confirmation of Play value criteria to be used in future tender submission

The Head of Operations updated Committee on the play value criteria that would be used in future tender submissions for play areas. They needed to show transparency and they would score and look at criteria such as;

- Balancing
- Crawling
- Rocking
- Swinging
- Rotating
- Sliding
- Sensory
- Gliding
- Social
- Imaginative
- Educational
- Hanging
- Climbing
- Agility
- Gymnastics
- Challenge
- Competition
- Ground graphics

The tenderer would score their own submission using this criteria and this would then be clarified by officers and altered accordingly when needed. The play value scoring was currently being worked on at present but would then be shared with the relevant councillors.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted

Councillor Dean left the meeting

The Town Clerk commented that she had recently met with the Head of Estates and his team about how Shropshire Council intended to rollout the Community Allotments Project. It was originally suggested community groups could follow the CAT route but that had proved too complex, so alternative solutions were being considered.

In determining scope, it was clear that Shropshire Council wished Parish & Town Councils to play an active part in sponsoring any application, carrying out some of that historic context of a chosen site and ultimately reviewing activity and reporting back to Estates where a Group was not conforming to prescribed conditions. Town Council Officers had shared the work they had done in the hope that there could be a collective process regardless of whether a Community Group wished to use Town Council land or Shropshire Council land.

It had been suggested that officers test the evolving process with a live example, and Rocke Street was suggested. The Town Clerk sought permission from Committee to utilise that request to test the process. In terms of Rocke Street, officers had expressed concerns about the usage of that land given that it did form part of the railway line that entered Abbey Foregate Station. Officers arranged for soil to be tested and the recommendations from those tests were that any propagation should be done in raised beds with soil brought on site rather than by digging the ground. This was quite a costly exercise, and it wasn't something that would like to be done for every application. The Town Clerk requested that Committee noted the update and grant permission to proceed with using Rocke Street as a test case to help to support the rollout of cross council application and guidance.

Councillor Gillam asked to be kept updated on progress as this was in his area/ward.

RESOLVED:

That Rocke Street be used as a test case to help to support the rollout of Shropshire Council's application and guidance process.

15/23 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) - funds in relation to landscaping at the County Ground have been drawn down

- (ii) *Barratt Homes/Bovis Homes – Mytton Oak Road*** – Phase 1 adopted; Snagging Phase 2/3 commenced. No identified date for transfer. Developer has request early transfer but certain works need to be completed ahead of transfer

- (iii) *Shrewsbury South Urban***
 - 1. Sutton Grange site – ongoing – likely transfer in 2023/24 – recent meeting with Taylor Wimpey to discuss logistics for transfer
 - 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 – forms received for drawn of funding
- (v) Harlescott Infants/Juniors site** – Offsite contributions to sport. Approvals for use of the funds at Kynaston Road Recreation Ground for drainage works – form received for drawdown of funds
- (vi) Radbrook College site** – Open space adoption – officers met with Floreat Homes on site – likely adoption once all phases are complete
- (vii) Weir Hill** – Agreements to adopt the land at a future time have been signed -meeting with Taylor Wimpey looking at the possibility of the countryside land to be transferred ahead of the POS on the development site

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

16/23 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.