

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

**Meeting of the Recreation & Leisure Committee
Held in Committee Room, Livesey House, St John's Hill
At 6.00pm on Wednesday 5 July 2023**

PRESENT

Councillors: P Gillam (Chair), B Bentick, C Lemon, A Mosley, K Pardy, E Roberts, D Vasmer, A Wagner and B Wall

IN ATTENDANCE

Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Stuart Farmer (Acting Operations Manager), Ruth Jones (Office Manager), Mike Cox (Outdoor Recreation & Asset Manager) Danny Powell (Acting Operations Manager) and Michelle Farmer (Committee Officer) and eight members of the public.

17/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED:

No apologies were received.

18/23 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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19/23 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Recreation & Leisure Committee meeting held on 10 May 2023 were submitted as circulated and read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Recreation & Leisure Committee meeting held on 10 May 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

20/23 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Min 82/22 – Martyn's Law – The Town Clerk had mentioned at the last meeting that the draft Bill had been published and it had been going through pre-legislative scrutiny with the Home Affairs Select Committee. That had now concluded, and the Committee were preparing its recommendations to the Home Office. The Town Clerk suggested they awaited its presentation to the House, and she would come back to Committee with detail. At this stage, there was likely to be a lot of work needed but none more than expected.

Councillor Bentick joined the meeting.

21/23 OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT COVER

The Town Clerk reported to the Committee that Gary Farmer had retired from his role as Head of Operations at the end of May 2023 and the Town Council set to appoint existing staff into an acting up role. Both members of staff were present at the meeting. Stuart Farmer, as the Committee knew well, would continue to undertake his Project Management functions but would manage the non-grounds aspect of the Operations Team; this included physical assets and kit, toilets, Neighbourhood Wardens. Danny Powell would pick up all the soft landscaping aspects of their work, liaising with the three other teams. He would still sit in the Recreation Green Space Team, but Mark Preece had been appointed into the Team Managers role temporarily to take on much of that day-to-day functioning of that Team.

Councillor Mosley asked who would be responsible for the maintenance at Castlefields Community Centre. Danny Powell agreed to look into this for Councillor Mosley.

Councillor Bentick asked if this current arrangement was a substantive post? The Town Clerk explained that there had been a consultant with the Town Council this week, looking at the operational side of the Town Council to determine the best approach of managing and preparing for the future. The consultant report would be due soon. It was confirmed that Stuart and Danny would be in the acting up role post for twelve months.

22/23 SAFER PARKS FOR WOMEN & GIRLS

The Town Clerk reported that Safer Parks for Women & Girls was an item that Councillor Wilson asked to be put on the agenda. The theme of Violence against Women & Girls (VAWG) was a very live current theme and certainly a strong policing priority. The Council had received Home Office Funding to address VAWG issues and at the time that they applied for the funding the survey carried out identified Women & Girls concerns about the fear of crime, feeling safe and the potential barriers to being in the public realm.

Documents were shared with Committee that had been produced by the Safer Parks Consortium and had 10 principles across the three themes of:

- Eyes & Ears on the Park reflecting that the presence of others made women and girls feel safe;
- Awareness addresses design issues that could help women and girls feel more secure;
- Inclusion considers the importance of bringing a diverse cross-section of women and girls into our parks and designing spaces with their input.

These principles would be taken into the Town Council day-to-day management, tasking of Quarry Security and Council staff and making this an important string in play and park development including how the Town Council would structure play going forward.

Councillor Pardy was in full support stating it was a vital scheme and that women and girls should not be restricted.

All Members agreed that there was a need for better lighting in these areas.

Councillor Vasmer informed Committee that Keep Britain Tidy were running a similar campaign and was aimed at park managers, local authorities, police and community groups. He agreed to send further information to the Town Clerk.

The Town Clerk suggested that they should set up their own policy and go forward with what they do with the Quarry through a visioning exercise.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the update be noted;**
- (ii) That the scheme be incorporated within the visioning exercise**

23/23 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Town Clerk reported on the following:

- Cycling Map was complete and had tried to obtain the final version. This would be published as part of the Shrewsbury Moves Festival.
- Work to the War Memorial in the Quarry had been commissioned and they awaited a start date.
- Wheeled Track at Kynaston had been commissioned today.
- Infant Play Area at Kynaston had been commissioned and they awaited a start date.
- Drainage works at Kynaston had been commissioned and works would start after the school holidays in September.
- Upton Lane Play Area was out for tender with closing date of 4 August 2023
- Moston Road Wheeled track was complete and ROSPA reports had been received so the facility was now open.
- Monkmoor Tennis lights had been commissioned and they awaited a start date.
- Beaver Project needed a variation to the Natural England permissions as vegetation clearance was required in the nesting season on the SSSI – hopefully they would get approvals within 28 days otherwise they would start to head towards the 30 September moratorium for the salmon spawning season
- Nature Trail physical works would be undertaken in the Winter. Staff were currently working on the Interpretation Boards which they hoped to install in the Spring.

Councillor Pardy thanked all staff involved for the completed works at Moston Road.

RESOLVED:

That the Capital Programme report be noted.

Councillor Mosley left the meeting.

24/23 FOOTFALL

The Operations Manager updated the Committee on footfall in the town, providing comparison graphs as requested by Members. Visitor numbers throughout the town had been stable over recent months. Quarry visitors were expected to increase over the coming months with the summer events. Total visitors for May 2023 were 188,234 and June 2023 was 177,403, giving a total number of 371,764 for the two-month period.

RESOLVED:

That the Footfall Report be noted.

25/23 FISHERIES

25.1 Shrewsbury Town Fisheries

The Outdoor Recreation & Asset Manager updated the Committee on Shrewsbury Town Fisheries. The new river season commenced on June 16th and permit sales were brisk. In preparation, the fisheries team had strimmed around all the platforms at Sydney Avenue, Monkmoor and Emstrey. This was difficult work due to the high temperatures. The County Ground and the Quarry would be strimmed at the beginning of September when they began to be busy over the Autumn and Winter. Wherever they could, bankside vegetation would be left untouched for the wildlife and would only be trimmed if deemed necessary. During the hot weather, a ban was imposed on Pike fishing on all Town Council fisheries but unfortunately some anglers were removed from their locations only to fish along the tow path where they had no jurisdiction.

River Water Testing - The overall results from the River Severn were of concern. As at the end of May 2023, 360 samples had been recorded on Epicollect:

- Electrical conductivity results ranged from 50 to 1380 ($\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$)
- Temperature results ranged from 0 to 24.6 degrees centigrade
- Phosphate results ranged from 0.0 to 2.5(ppm). 141 samples exceeded the upper limit for phosphate, 39%.
- Nitrate results ranged from 0 to 20 (ppm), 201 samples were 5 ppm or over 56%.
- 118 samples exceeded both Phosphate and Nitrate limits, 33%
- 4 results exceeded the upper limit for Ammonia with 10 observed algal blooms and 35 observed pollution incidents.

Water Testing of Pools – With the long warm and dry summer periods, the pools were tested on a daily basis for dissolved oxygen levels as a precaution. Oxon and Mousecroft Pools had reasonable oxygen levels, but Radbrook Pool had been borderline. Recently the pool experienced a severe Oxygen crash, and the fisheries team deployed oxygen pumps to help improve levels. The Environment Agency came to assist with a more powerful unit that could run over the night-time period when levels tended to get worse. This greatly improved the oxygen levels in the pool but it remained closed to fishing until such time as the oxygen levels were stable. Six fish deaths were recorded; this could have been higher if the response had been slower. It was important to understand that all the fisheries including the rivers, pools and tributaries were under many different pressures with various effects from either pollution consequences or hot dry spells of weather, where water parameters could quickly change. The Bailiffs were very hands on every day to hopefully ensure they didn't experience mass fish loss and habitat damage by such events as had happened elsewhere in the country. It was indicated the problem at Radbrook Pool had been made worse due to the tree cover in the vicinity of the pool. Many trees were planted around the pool and not been thinned and as they had matured, they had created a wind break and so the water surface did not get stirred up as much. Work had been done at Mousecroft and Oxon to thin trees and these pools had not suffered to the same extent. Where you did open up the ground slightly, it would encourage other flora and fauna such as blue bells to come back, and it would create better conditions to allow air to pass over the pool.

Junior Coaching - The first Junior Coaching event took place on Saturday 3rd June and was fully booked, and very successful. All had a fabulous day, and some caught their first fish. Smiles all around.

New Platforms - They had recently started to install another ten river platforms partly funded by an angling improvement grant of which they were successful in winning, two were to replace flood damaged pontoons at Sydney Avenue, and three more at Monkmoor of which one had received a donation by late angler Darren Perkins of £500 and five pontoons at the Emstrey fishery.

Magnet Fishing - The Outdoor Recreation & Asset Manager reported that magnet fishing was causing issues and damaging spawning grounds and he asked Committee to consider what action to take regarding magnet fishing. Councillors were in agreement that this activity should be banned on the Fisheries.

RESOLVED:

- (i) **That the report be noted;**
- (ii) **That magnet fishing be banned on Shrewsbury Town Fisheries and bailiffs to enforce action.**

25.2 Rowley & Fenemere Angling Association

The Town Clerk reported that she and the Outdoor Recreation & Asset Manager) had met with the Chairman, Secretary & Treasurer of the Rowley & Fenemere Angling Association alongside their specialist, Bruno Broughton, who was an eminent Fisheries Specialist. They spoke about the rights they had purchased, what could and couldn't be done on site and they had come to an agreement that any works required on site would involve a discussion with the Town Council.

The Club didn't envisage any works taking place in this fishing season. Officers had forwarded details of required planning permissions and the necessary approach with the Planning Authority.

All tree works that the Town Council raised at the last meeting had been done. They did however, lose one of the trees they were trying to save as part of the tree works as it uprooted in the storms and fell into the river potentially affecting some of the adjacent trees, so staff would monitor. The Town Clerk had continued to receive representations from residents, and she had tried to respond in as full and frank a way that she could to advise on their proposed course of action. To try and give comfort to residents the Town Clerk asked whether the Angling Association would enter into a Memorandum of Understanding, and they had agreed.

Councillor Mosley commented that if the Town Council had known about the sale they would have stepped in and purchased but this was no longer an option available. The removal of trees and pollarding was being observed as part of the planning application over a year ago. All tree works were based on expert advice, and they would be wrong to ignore tree advice.

The motion previously proposed was to seek purchase and rights; the Club were not interested in selling the rights. There was nothing further that could be done regarding them fishing but need to control where they fished from. The land was rich in wildlife. The intention was to minimise disruption whilst not involving the Town Council with legal misunderstandings regarding rights. The Club would submit an application for Certificate of Lawful Development to the Planning Authority for the installation of swims.

Councillor Vasmer added that Castlewalk was well used, and they should ensure that residents were informed of the Memorandum of Understanding and have a full consultation with the residents to reassure them that their concerns were being taken into account.

RECOMMENDATION:

- (i) That the Town Clerk undertakes a discussion with Rowley & Fenemere to agree terms to be included in the Memorandum of Understanding regarding usage and rights at Castlewalk. This would then be reported to a future Recreation & Leisure meeting;**
- (ii) That the Town Clerk liaise with local members how they wished to engage with local residents regarding the proposed terms within the Memorandum.**

Eight members of the public left the meeting.

26/23 TEAM SHREWSBURY

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

The Office Manager provided an update on Team Shrewsbury activities. Over the past few months Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) issues were comparable. The month of May did see an increase in rough sleeper issues, which were primarily on Pride Hill. The Security teams were engaging with individuals on a daily basis and had an understanding of the persistent problems. At the last meeting Members asked for yearly comparisons. The Office Manager explained that as the rangers started in September 2022, the figures would not be comparable and with the Rangers reports there were far more incidents being reported.

The Office Manager reported that last month, there had been reports of potential contamination of a batch of Ketamine and a number of young people had presented to A&E for treatment. Team Shrewsbury Partners swiftly came together to discuss the way forward and details were cascaded to others and a public campaign presented across all media platforms.

Details of the HAF sessions for both the Town Council and Shropshire Council were shown and circulated at the meeting.

Councillor Bentick reported that over the last six months there had been an increase in ASB within the Meole Brace area which had been reported to the Police, but he enquired as to why they were not shown on the ASB graphs. The Town Clerk asked Councillor Bentick for further detail on the issues which he advised involved theft, knife crime and criminal damage. The Town Clerk advised that the incidents stated were 'crime' and not 'ASB'. All crime issues must be reported to the Police immediately and can also be reported to Team Shrewsbury via the Office Manger who can share any incidents with the Police, Youth teams, 101 etc.

Councillor Roberts stated there had been an increase in fires within the Harlescott areas. She said as a Council they needed to look at Youth within different areas and see what they could do to assist them as many youths are bored. The Town Clerk commented that there was only a finite youth budget but they were doing the best they could.

Councillor Bentick suggested that they re looked at Youth as they were only run by Town Council employees but there was the option of recruiting volunteers to assist. Obtaining volunteers would mean they could extend the range of youth activities. Many Councillors agreed that it was hard to get volunteers and that this avenue had been tried on more than one occasion.

RESOLVED:

That the Team Shrewsbury report be noted.

26.2 Policing Charter

The Office Manager provided an update to Committee. At the Recreation & Leisure Committee in May, the July priorities were agreed. However, after these were reviewed by the Inspector a number of the priorities had changed. The list presented to Members prior to the meeting had been forwarded to the Police for this quarter. The Inspector was currently compiling updates from the previous quarter.

The next quarter was required in October, so requests for new priorities would soon take place. These would be presented at Committee in November following submission in October. They did require to provide as much information to the Police as was possible. Where priorities had been made advising ASB / Drug dealing across areas, Members needed to be more specific with location times and what the Anti-Social Behaviour was.

RESOLVED:

That the Report be noted.

27/23 SAFER STREETS 4 FUNDING

The Town Clerk updated Committee on Safer Streets 4 Funding. At previous meetings she had done a report, but it continued to be business as usual. The Ranger Team were working well and making a difference in their areas. There would be a Safer Streets 5 process being launched shortly looking at VAWG (Violence Against Woman & Girls), ASB and Inquisitive Crime so the Town Clerk had contacted the Police about whether they would submit a bid on their behalf and they would start work on it.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

28/23 QUARRY

The Outdoor Recreation & Asset Manager updated the Committee on the Quarry Events for this year. Since the last update, they had managed to accommodate Zippo's Circus at short notice due to a sudden cancellation of another event. Zippos were delighted that they could

be accommodated and had asked if they could return next year, this would be subject to availability.

The Race for Life was another huge success with 730 participants and raising £74,000. The Location and route of the race was very good, being organised well and good atmosphere. There were no major issues relating to the Food Festival, and attendance appeared to have been good.

Bookings were coming in for 2024. There had been recent discussions with Krazy Races with the organiser looking to move the event away from Quarry Place and over to the arena area. There may be a small fee to enter the enclosed area and there was an idea of an after party for entrants with a small stage, local bands. All paperwork and costings were still to be completed and agreed.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the Quarry Events report be noted.

At this point in the meeting the Town Clerk addressed the Members as she needed to raise something with the Committee in relation to events but needed to do this in a private session as the nature of the information could not be made public at that moment. She requested a closed session at the end of the meeting which the Chairman agreed to.

29/23 SHREWSBURY IN BLOOM

29.1 Summer planting for 2023

The Town Clerk reported that summer planting was going well. They had a few features for the Flower Show to be prepared. Danny Powell confirmed that all baskets and floral poles were out. The main beds in the Dingle were finished and they were also trialling sustainable plants. All planting would be finished by the end of the week.

The Town Clerk explained to Committee that the decision had been made not to enter the Heart of England in Bloom Competition this year. The Town Council had too many key staff members off work to directly resource to the judging route, and in any event, the route was agreed so late in the day at the Shrewsbury in Bloom meeting on the 23rd May, that they couldn't possibly get matters ready in time. The Town Clerk had spoken to the Heart of England in Bloom Judges, and they understand the Town Council's decision.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

29.2 Shrewsbury in Bloom Group meeting

The notes of the Shrewsbury in Bloom Group meeting held on 23 May 2023 were submitted as circulated and read

RESOLVED

That the notes of the Shrewsbury in Bloom Group meeting held on 23 May 2023 be accepted and approved.

30/23 FIELDS IN TRUST

The Town Clerk reported that since the last meeting she had a really productive meeting with the Officer at Fields in Trust. She had shared with her the draft Trust document. Whilst it allowed for day-to-day management and even construction of infrastructure, it didn't really allow for leases, so Council would need to review the kind of locations to be put forward. They had spoken at length about Greenfields. They could not progress any application until such time as the land was transferred back to the Town Council. Council staff were undertaking a review of some of the park and recreation areas to determine which ones would fit the process and the Officer from Fields in Trust was happy to come to Shrewsbury and visit the sites to determine process.

Councillor Pardy asked if there were any financial implications with the Fields in Trust. The Town Clerk confirmed that there would be legal fees to sign and register the necessary documents with the Land Registry but other than that maintenance costs would be as present.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the update be noted;**
- (ii) That the Town Clerk would report back to a future meeting once the review by staff was completed**

31/23 RECREATION GROUND MATTERS

31.1 Wakeman School Field

The Town Clerk provided a brief update to Committee. Councillor Mosley and the Town Clerk met with the College again to discuss a potential short-term licence to occupy. The College was looking at what that might look like with their solicitors. They would also like the Town Council to consider some exclusive use of parts of Abbey Gardens to facilitate Safeguarding and their ability to provide open space to the students at the English Bridge Campus. The Town Clerk requested members opinion on this. She had been on site with Mike Pugh (Contracts & Arb Officer) and Jim Goldsmith (Countryside & Greenspace Manager), and they had been looking at options including access from Mousefield and into the new footpath on Castlewalk as well as the cycle path. They had looked at potential mowing regimes to create desired paths but maintain the ongoing naturalisation of the site. The Town Clerk would continue discussions with the College, and this was likely to be a project open to the public in the Spring of next year.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted

31.2 Moston Road

The Operations Manager updated the Committee on Moston Road Wheeled Sports Track. This facility was now open to the public as the ROSPA report had been received. They had a good experience with the contractor of the facility. The only potential issue at present would be the large numbers attending the new site at the same time, like the recent Upton

Lane refurbishment. The large numbers attending at once would start to fall but it had been arranged that the wardens would attend the site three times a week to litter pick the area.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

32/23 COMMUNITY ALLOTMENT

The Town Clerk reported that she had continued to liaise with Officers at Shropshire Council about their Community Allotment process. The Town Council had received a proposal from a community group to utilise land at Rocke Street owned by Shropshire Council. Officers had commissioned soil samples which advised that any planting would have to be in containers with soil from off site. The Community Group had provided examples of where community garden had been carried out on equally contaminated land and asked that fruit tree planting be considered. Shropshire Council had asked that the Town Clerk send all necessary details to them for consideration, and she would keep the Committee updated.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

33/23 WORKING GROUPS

33.1 Quarry Working Group

The notes of the Quarry Working Group meeting held on 9 May 2023 were circulated as read. The meeting had not been quorate, so no decisions were made at the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the notes of the Quarry Working Group meeting held on 9 May 2023 be received and adopted

33.2 Clean River Working Group

The notes of the Clean River Working Group meeting held on 21 June 2023 were circulated as read.

RESOLVED:

That the notes of the Clean River Working Group meeting held on 21 June 2023 be received and adopted

34/23 COMMUTED SUMS

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

- (i) *Copthorne Barracks Play and Open Space*** – offsite contributions to play (£30,498 - £20,498 for Shornccliffe Drive & £10,000 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.

35/23 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.

36/23 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

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

37/23 QUARRY EVENTS

The Town Clerk appraised the Committee on matters relating to the Council meeting the provisions of its Premises Licence for the Quarry and proposed plans to ensure that compliance was maintained.

RESOLVED:

That the Town Clerk undertake whatever actions necessary that ensure the Town Council remains compliant with the conditions of the Quarry Premises Licence