

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

**Meeting of the Recreation & Leisure Committee
Held in Committee Room, Livesey House, 7 St John's Hill
At 6.00pm on Wednesday 17 January 2024**

PRESENT

Councillors: P Gillam (Chair), B Bentick, J Dean (substitute for C Lemon), A Mosley, K Pardy, E Roberts, D Vasmer & A Wagner.

IN ATTENDANCE

Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Stuart Farmer (Acting Operations Manager), Ruth Jones (Office Manager), Danny Powell (Acting Operations Manager) and Michelle Farmer (Committee Officer).

72/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED:

Apologies received from Councillor Lemon.

73/23 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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74/23 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Recreation & Leisure Committee meeting held on 8 November 2023 were submitted as circulated and read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Recreation & Leisure Committee meeting held on 8 November 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

75/23 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Min 63.1 Play Area in the Quarry – The Town Clerk updated Committee that Danny Powell (Acting Operations Manager) had been having discussions with the Flower Show regarding operational logistics surrounding the park and the matter of the play area remaining open during show days was part of those discussions.

Min 63.3 – Long Term Plan for the Quarry – The Town Clerk advised members that they had been discussing this piece of work with Tim Pritchard (Shropshire Council) and the potential for tapping into the wider Smithfield Road Development Team. Tim was currently on annual leave but on his return, he and the Town Clerk would pick this up further.

Min 68 – Dog Control PSPOs – The Town Clerk advised that they had started discussions with the Dog Warden to understand how Parish Council Assets would be covered (in the Town Council's case this would be the Dingle, Play Area and Sports Pitches). Further information would be provided to Members when available.

Councillor Mosley asked if there were any dates for the start of operating these orders, but the Town Clerk advised that there was nothing in affect as yet.

Min 58.1 – Fees & Charges 24/25. Councillor Gillam asked for an update. Councillor Wilson had enquired as to whether the Town Council could advertise their facilities more (i.e., tennis courts, bowling greens). The Town Clerk confirmed that so far only social media posts had been done, there had been no formal adverts. The Town Clerk agreed they would look at doing a formal briefing for the Councillors newsletters.

76/23 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Town Clerk reported on the following:

- The Cycle & Walking Map had been finalised and would be part of the Shrewsbury Moves consultation.
- Quarry Memorial Upgrades – waiting for some dry weather before it could commence.
- Kynaston Road Rec Drainage was almost complete.
- County Ground Pavilion – Stuart Farmer (Acting Operations Manager) was meeting with the Cricket Club to ascertain their vision.
- Wakeman Playing Field – This now needed to be discharged from the Capital Plan as the College did not wish to proceed with any arrangement for public enjoyment of the site.
- Beaver Project – there was a bit more work and snagging to do but it was progressing well.
- Upton Lane Play Area had been completed but sadly the new area had been vandalised. The area was currently closed whilst it was made safe and was hoped to be re-opened within the next day or two.
- Kynaston Road Play Area had been completed.

RESOLVED:

That the Capital Programme report be noted.

77/23 FOOTFALL

Stuart Farmer, Acting Operations Manager, updated the committee on footfall in the Quarry, providing comparison graphs. Visitor numbers throughout the Quarry had continued with a similar trend over recent months. Quarry visitors had remained stable during November and December but were down on previous year's numbers. Figures focused solely on the Quarry and did not include the counters in the Square or Market Hall. Summer 2023 was not as warm and dry as Summer 2022 which had been reflected in footfall numbers. The very wet winter period covering October and November went some way to explaining why figures were lower for this year, this had included the cancellation of the Saturday Park runs

although the Christmas Day run did take place. It was expected that visitor numbers would increase throughout the Summer of 2024.

The counters that were located in the Market Hall and the Square were currently being investigated by the supplier due to intermittent power failures, the figures had not been included in this report as the data was incomplete.

Councillor Mosley raised concerns on the figures as there was a consistent low in 2023 but the figures were following national trends, but they would keep an eye on the figures going forward.

RESOLVED:

That the Footfall Report be noted

Councillor Bentick joined the meeting.

78/23 FISHERIES

78.1 Shrewsbury Town Fisheries

The Town Clerk reported that the Fisheries were a brilliant example of local people with a common interest working together to make that recreational asset even better. They still had a great Bailiff Team, and they looked out for maintenance and repair issues, the eyes and ears for wider Town Council work and ensured that there was no unauthorised fishing in their area.

River Levels had been high since October, so the team were looking at any flood damage and any needs for repair. They were also water quality testing and working with the Angling Trust on that wider quality of the River Severn work.

In terms of infrastructure improvements, much had been done. This year's improvements included work that improved the water quality at Radbrook Pool and improvements to security at Monkmoor Fisheries.

The Team continued to have a great relationship with the Angling Trust, the Environment Agency, the Wildlife Trust and the Severn Trent Rangers, so better partner working inevitably meant a better river.

Andy Jones from Shrewsbury Town Fisheries had also supplied a report to Committee along with a Shrewsbury Town Fisheries Water Monitoring Update which had been circulated to all members prior to the meeting. His report noted that the fisheries team were currently inspecting all fisheries for flood damage with respect to fishing platforms, signs, tree damage and riverbanks etc as the river levels dropped. A maintenance list of requirements would be drafted and implemented as required with appropriate personnel. With river levels being very high since the beginning of October, this had an impact on anglers being able to fish our river stretches and thus we had reduced day permit sales. Their season permits remain strong for the year. They had only one competition in the Quarry so far and the fish catch rate was very poor with only two anglers catching out of 14. Pollution was still seen during this competition and continued to be a problem.

Shrewsbury Town Fisheries were formulating improvements for Radbrook Pool of which would include new quality fishing platforms to replace the old worn-out platforms. These would be constructed in the same way to match the Mousecroft platforms to compliment the environment, blend in with the surroundings and respect the local residents. One platform would be relocated, and the obsolete area be rewilded. Also included would be an additional disabled platform to improve disabled access. Some new stone pathways would be added where the areas got very wet, with hidden french drainage to drain into the pool, as they had implemented with success at Mousecroft Pool. The pathway would not be included in the wooded area as this would be wood chip covered. This once again would improve access for anglers and the general public. Some trimming back of trees, of which had overgrown over the pool, in some cases by 12 feet, would help improve water surface area and provide a wind tunnel to help water surface movement. The reason for this was to improve water quality and oxygen levels as these had suffered badly on Radbrook Pool, especially during hot weather periods during the summer. They would remove any old obsolete signage and add some additional new replacement signage. An initial site visit and discussion has taken place with Jim Goldsmith from the Countryside Team. A further meeting would be planned to discuss an agreed phased implementation during appropriate periods to action the works. Andy had applied for an Angling Trust Environment Agency Angling Improvement Grant of which was match funded to help them fund this project.

They are awaiting the delivery and installation of the new anti-climb gate of which should happen very soon. They also wish to improve and strengthen the lane this year. When the weather was very wet, the lane gets badly broken up by the farmers machinery causing problems with access. The farmer does periodically help us with restoring the lane. He had managed to have contact with a manager in Shropshire Highways who had been very helpful with advice for a plan to improve and hopefully strengthen the lane. They would work jointly together, including the farmer, to hopefully improve the lane that will provide better access for anglers and the general public. As it was now, it's a wet mess and needs to be addressed. He had worked quite hard with the Police to solve the racing motorcycles that had been causing problems on Monkmoor fishery. They had now developed a much speedier contact response with the local police team and had managed to locate where the bike riders lived. The police had located and spoken to the individuals, and it was hoped this issue may now be resolved.

Councillor Mosley felt that some of the terminology used in the water monitoring reports were hard to translate and enquired if a member of the Angling Trust could attend a future R&L meeting to explain the reports more clearly to members.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the report be noted**
- ii) That the Town Council arrange for a representative from the Angling Trust to attend a future R&L meeting.**

78.2 Rowley & Fenemere Angling Association

The Town Clerk informed the Committee that Officers continued to liaise with the Rowley & Fenemere Angling Association and had met with Councillors Mosley & Vasmer regarding a Memorandum of Understanding. The initial Draft of the memorandum had been shared with the Rowley & Fenemere Club. This was the first time that they had ever been asked to enter into such an agreement, particularly as they owned the rights, so in effect could do

what they liked. Having said that, they had sent it to a national eminent Fisheries Consultant who had suggested a few amendments. They had also shared their ultimate vision for the site beyond the three swims they would like to develop this year and the three the following year. From continued discussions with the club, the Town Clerk sensed that they were keen to continue engagement and be good neighbours, but they had been insistent that the Town Council did not have any statutory rights to demand such an agreement as they had the rights to fish our land. The Town Clerk asked committee if she had authority to proceed with the agreement.

Councillor Mosley commented that there were still residential concerns regarding the number of pitches from the original proposal and requested that the Town Council did not yet proceed until himself and Councillor Vasmer could meet with the Town Clerk to discuss further.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted

Councillor Vasmer joined the meeting.

79/23 TEAM SHREWSBURY

79.1 Update on the work of Team Shrewsbury

The Office Manager provided an update on Team Shrewsbury activities. From the comparison charts shown to members, December had seen a slight increase in a number of the areas, however the majority were comparable. It had previously been mentioned about reviewing the yearly comparisons. The Office Manager had taken a look and it seemed incidents/issues during October – December 2022/23 had reduced, which represented the great work and support that the Town Rangers, Quarry Security and Taxi Marshalls were carrying out.

Since the last meeting the Quarry Security and Rangers had undertaken the PSPO training and they now had the ability to enforce when required. Currently the threat of issuing a PSPO was working.

Shrewsbury Town Council Youth Services were currently liaising with Schools for creating the Youth Council to represent the views of young people at a local level. Shropshire Council Housing were currently running the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP). This was currently taking place on the morning of 19 January, due to the weather forecast showing minus temperatures. Rough sleepers were required to arrive at 70 Castle Foregate between 10pm-11pm, until 8am the following morning.

The Office Manger advised members that the reporting of issues to the Police was very much encouraged and if they did require anything chasing from Team Shrewsbury, then to forward the Incident Number to her and she would look to liaise with the Police.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted

79.2 Policing Priorities

The Office Manager informed members of the Committee that the January submission was collated during December and issued to the Police in readiness for going live from 1 January. They were presented this evening as a final confirmation. The next submission would be required for 1 April and would therefore be collated in March in readiness for the next Recreation & Leisure Committee meeting on 6 March 2024.

Councillor Dean asked for an update regarding Operation Snap. The Office Manager agreed to look into this.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted

80/23 PLACE PLAN

The Town Clerk reported that they had previously received a presentation from Mathew Mead regarding their contribution to the Place Plan. This was an evolving document including all partners aspirations so that the needs of an area could be captured in one place. The Town Clerk had gone through the old document to make sure that they didn't lose any previous aspirations and included all capital-based activity from the Visioning discussions. She confirmed that they could continue to add detail. She asked for the Committee's permission to submit the list to Shropshire Council for inclusion in the Shrewsbury Place Plan.

Councillor Mosley questioned three submissions within his ward that he was unaware of. The Town Clerk informed him that they had resulted from the Visioning exercises and they were in there so they could be captured.

Councillor Gillam commented on a submission under his ward that was incorrect. It showed that Raby Crescent was in Sutton ward when it was actually located in the Belle Vue ward.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the update be noted**
- ii) That the current place plan list shown this evening be sent out to councillors via SharePoint for them to update. It was agreed that the place plan would be submitted by the deadline date.**

81/23 RANGERS PROJECT

The Town Clerk updated the Committee on the meeting that the Mayor had convened with the Police & Crime Commissioner at which she was able to stress the benefit of the Ranger Project not just to partners including the Police, Shropshire Council and the Business Improvement District but also the sense of safety they brought to the business community and residents and visitors alike. The PCC had visited the town to witness their work first hand and he had always been supportive of their work and was keen to support the project recognising the journey we had gone on but also some of the issues they had helped

uncover including Violence Against Women & Girls, drug activity, vulnerability of individuals on the streets, crime hotspots and heightened issues around shoplifting which had become more of a national priority.

The Police & Crime Commissioner was willing to help fund a four-partner project for three years which would develop a co-ordinated Ranger Scheme involving the three individual projects around the Quarry, Town Centre and the Night-time Economy. It would mean the Town Council commitment would be about £50,000 -£60,000 which the Responsible Finance Officer had managed to factor into their budget for next year. The Town Clerk now had to develop a more detailed brief that looked at the success factors so far and the intended outputs going forward, and she sought support from Committee in this way forward. They would also need to ensure good governance arrangements with Shropshire Council and the Business Improvement District, but she was sure that could be easily resolved given their ongoing partnership work with the Big Town Plan.

Councillor Mosley wished to see the project continue but that they needed to consciously patrol surrounding town areas like Coleham and Abbey Foregate.

Councillor Wagner also suggested that there were patrols of key pedestrian walkways i.e. Pig Trough at Coton Hill and Sutton Bridge.

The Town Clerk commented that the rangers did patrol Coleham, Dana, Castle Foregate & Frankwell but it would need to be checked how much further the patrols could extend.

82/23 QUARRY

82.1 Quarry Events Programme for 2024

The Town Clerk updated the Committee on the Quarry Events for 2023.

A draft list for 2024 events had been provided to Committee with some of the regular large events returning to the Quarry next year including the Food Festival, Lets Rock and Oktoberfest. Krazy Races were also returning to the Quarry this year. Some minor events were awaiting clarification. The Town Clerk informed Committee that there would be a different regime with large events, in how emergencies were being approached by organisers following the Flower Show bomb scare last year.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted.

82.2 Refurbishment of Queen Mothers Garden

Danny Powell, Acting Operations Manager, reported that The Queen Mother's Garden was first laid out in 2002 by students from Walford College and then Borough Council staff. It was financed by the Shropshire Star Newspaper and had been maintained since by the Quarry staff. Over the last 22 years, the Bay Trees and Conifer tree had grown to such a size that it had made the rear of the garden shady and gloomy and the view into the park had been obstructed. After a meeting with the Shropshire Council Tree Officer, the Bay trees and the conifer tree had been removed and their roots dug out. The paths had been cleaned and power washed.

The roses had been dying off slowly and the paths had required a good clean. The Top Quarry Toilets sewage pipe had a camera run down it and roots were found in the pipe at several locations. The roots had been catching the sewage and causing the pipe to block. The toilet sewage pipe was going to have the roots removed from it and would be relined to remove a number of problems in the pipeline. This work would take place in the next few weeks.

All available trees and shrubs within the park and Dingle, now had a memorial plaque assigned to them. More were required as we had a number of requests so this garden would now provide space for a number additional memorial plaques. The Rose beds had been refreshed with new soil and a box hedge had been planted round each plot. Standard roses had been planted to give height and each bed had been replanted with the same colour and variety of rose, from the original plans.

The garden had now reopened to the public and the view across the park had returned because it had a more welcoming look, and hopefully more people would start to sit in this area. All the landscaping work was carried out by Town Council staff.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted

83/23 RECREATION GROUND MATTERS

83.1 Boiler House Pitch – temporary relocation of the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital Helipad

Danny Powell, Acting Operations Manager, provided a report to Committee. In 2014 the Helipad for the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital was relocated to Boiler House pitch for a period of eight weeks. This was due to the refurbishment of the existing Helipad.

The Hospital had again approached the Town Council with a request to move the Helipad to the Boiler House pitch whilst major building work was being undertaken. The request had been approved by the Town Clerk on the basis that it was the nearest large enough open space to accommodate a helicopter whilst giving quickest access to the hospital.

Originally the Hospital wanted use of the field from May 2024 for eighteen months; this had now been amended to an earlier date in 2024 (yet to be decided) for a period of 3 years (mid to late 2027), this for the landing of Emergency Helicopters (Approximately 2 to 4 a month).

During this time the field would remain open to the public. It would only be closed 30 minutes before a helicopter landing and stay closed whilst the helicopter was on the field. The field would be cleared by hospital security staff and porters. It would be walked by security staff before landing, checking for any debris which could cause damage to people, houses and the helicopter. The field area would require weekly mowing as lying grass could be sucked into the helicopter engines. The field also required secondary drainage to be installed to remove standing water from the soil surface to the land drains quicker.

Work was already in progress with the Licence to occupy being worked on by the Head of Resources with Hospital contact. Royal Shrewsbury Hospital would be carrying out HLS plate survey, safe to land. The Hospital had agreed to pay for extra mowing and for the sand to carry out secondary drainage. The price for eighteen months occupation had been worked

out and sent, and the hospital had been informed that the price would increase because of the extra time. Talks with SAHA Football Club had begun with a view to relocating football fixtures elsewhere. The Hospital had also agreed to carry out letter drops to local houses.

Talks about relocating the Football Club to other locations needed to be finalised. They could still use the pitch, but should a helicopter need to land the game would be stopped for a considerable amount of time. The area would still be useable by the General Public and extra maintenance would be paid for by the Hospital. There was no other location in the area, which a helicopter could land on.

Councillor Bentick asked if the use of the pitch would continue after the three years stated with a risk of this agreement being permanent. The Town Clerk confirmed they would only have use of the pitch for the period stated as agreed on a short-term lease.

Councillor Bentick also enquired as to where the football clubs would be relocated to during this period. It was suggested that they would be relocated to Shorncliffe Drive and Church Road Recreation Ground, but this was still being organised.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report are noted.

84/23 SHREWSBURY IN BLOOM

84.1 Shrewsbury in Bloom judging date & route

The Town Clerk informed Committee that the Town Council would be entering Shrewsbury in Bloom this year with the date of the judging being 23 July 2024. The route had been established and had more community involvement including Meole Brace and Stanley Lane allotments.

Councillor Roberts asked if they could include more schools on the route and nominated Bowbrook school. The Town Clerk responded to say that at the date of judging most schools would be on school holidays and that they only had three hours with the judges so had to manage the route carefully and not go too far out as three hours goes very quickly.

Councillor Dean asked if it would be possible to visit the Grange and the new Street Allotment. The Town Clerk confirmed that this would not be possible on the day, but they could be added into the portfolio that the Town Council produce, showcasing the work that is done around the Town.

84.2 Weeping Cross Open Evening

The Town Clerk informed Committee that the Weeping Cross Open evening would be held on 23 May 2024. Advertising of the event would commence a couple of months before the event date. Committee were also informed that there was an open evening scheduled for the Shrewsbury Business Chamber on 22 May 2024 to promote what the Town Council do which would include the new Tree Nursery.

84.3 Flower Show Exhibit.

Danny Powell, Acting Operations Manager, reported that the council had been approached by the Shropshire Horticultural Society to provide an exhibit at this year's Flower Show. It would not be a marquee but an outside stand that would showcase what the Town Council does. Staff were asked to come up with ideas for the exhibit. It was confirmed that the opportunity to exhibit at the Flower Show would have no cost to the Town Council.

85/23 BEAVER PROJECT

The Acting Operations Manager, Stuart Farmer, reported on how the Beaver Compound Construction at the Old River Bed was progressing and to update members on any issues that the contractor had made officers aware of since starting construction.

Prior to the Christmas break, the contractors vacated the site following completion of some key tasks and were currently programming their return following fabrication work of a required trash screen.

Tasks completed included the Boardwalk from Hubert Way, Fencing and the installation of ground skirts (dry areas).

Works to be completed on return included the Installation of trash screen, the Installation of Pedestrian proof fencing and the Installation of Gates.

A snagging visit was completed by the Countryside and Greenspace Manager along with the Beaver specialist from the Wildlife trust. This had flagged up some issues with the ground skirt within the wet areas however, the contractor remained confident that these snags could be completed once they returned.

Ward members would be kept up to date with programmed works once Shrewsbury Town Council were in receipt of it.

Once the boardwalk had been finished, a decision was made to allow public access across it, this had proven extremely popular with residents and there had been many positive comments over social media regarding a new walking route. During the height of the floods in January, the board walk went underwater for a brief period at the eastern end (Heath Farm Side) but was still passable with the correct footwear.

Cadent had attended site for the installation of the fencing along the Hubert Way site, close to the gas main, as this was only possible to be completed under supervision. This work was completed as expected and all parties involved were pleased with the outcome. Shrewsbury Town Council had convened a face-to-face meeting with all parties that were involved in the project in December 2023 to iron out any possible future issues. This resulted in positive outcomes from all involved and a clearer idea of future progress.

Due to weather conditions and production times the completion had slipped, and they currently couldn't give an accurate indication of completion until the fabrication of the trash screen had been completed.

Councillor Dean praised the beaver project stating it was a fantastic feature. The only observation he had was that it was quite difficult to get on to the boardwalk. It was

confirmed that in time this would be developed and that the Countryside and Greenspace Manager was looking at this.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted

86/23 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 Shorncliffe 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 requested 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. Money had now been received and his could be discharged from the list.
- (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. This item could also now be discharged from the list.
- (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.

87/23 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.