

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
Meeting of Council
Held in the Council Chamber, Shirehall, Shrewsbury at
6pm on Monday 13 November 2023

PRESENT

Councillors B Wall (Mayor), B Bentick, R Dartnall, M Davies, J Dean, P Gillam, K Halliday, C Lemon, P Moseley, A Mosley, K Pardy, A Phillips, E Roberts & R Wilson.

IN ATTENDANCE

Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Amanda Spencer (Deputy Town Clerk), Andy Watkin (Head of Resources), Stuart Farmer (Acting Operations Manager), Michelle Farmer (Committee Clerk) and six members of the public.

56/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED:

That apologies be accepted from Councillors Vasmer and Wagner.

57/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CODE OF CONDUCT

Shropshire Councillors	Twin hatted members declared personal interests in matters relating to the Town Council's relationship with Shropshire Council
Councillor Alex Phillips	Declared an interest in the Greenfields item on the agenda as he is the ward member

58/23 MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL

The minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 25 September 2023 were submitted as circulated and read.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Full Meeting of Council on 25 September 2023 be approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

59/23 MATTERS ARISING

There were no Matters Arising for consideration.

Councillor Wilson enquired whether the public consultation for the Visioning exercise was going ahead at Livesey House. The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that there was a public questionnaire out until the end of November and the 20 November and 23 November had been set and advertised for the public consultation at Livesey House.

60/23 ANNOUNCEMENTS

60.1 MAYORAL ENGAGEMENTS

Details of the Mayor & Deputy Mayor's engagements for the period 1 October 2023 to 30 November 2023 were circulated and noted.

The Mayor reported that since the last meeting she had a full diary and had attended several activities including Remembrance parades and wreath laying ceremonies. The Mayor thanked councillors who had attended the Remembrance Sunday Parade and Service.

60.2 TOWN CLERK ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Clerk reported to Councillors that the Christmas Lights Switch On event would take place on Wednesday 22nd November and Carols in the Square would be held on Wednesday 13th December.

61/23 PUBLIC QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

The Town Clerk reported that standing orders had been followed in seeking questions ahead of the meeting, but she had accepted questions up until 4pm on the day of this meeting.

Councillor Mosley would be answering the public questions as the Leader of Shrewsbury Town Council.

Three questions had been received from David Kilby, on behalf of Shropshire Playing Fields Association.

Question One: "In a recent report (July 2023) following 'pitch power' quality testing FA, Shropshire Playing Fields Association noted that the pitches at the Sundorne Sports Village had been downgraded from 'Standard quality to poor quality'

225	Shrewsbury Sports Village	Central	Seven adult, one youth 11v11, one youth 9v9, two mini 7v7 and two mini 5v5 pitches deteriorating from standard to poor quality.
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Could Shrewsbury Town Council explain their role in maintaining these pitches and the reason for this deterioration in pitch quality and the likely impact this would have on future demand for these pitches."

Councillor Mosley replied that the Town Clerk had made enquiries with Officers at Shropshire Council. It was understood that the document referred to was a confidential report which had only been distributed to the Sporting Governing Bodies and the Shropshire Playing Fields Association to make comment. The report had not been shared with Shrewsbury Town Council; therefore, they could not comment on detail as they did not know the content or context.

Shrewsbury Town Council maintained the Sports Village Pitches to a standard as set out in their Service Level Agreement with Shropshire Council.

They were aware that the Play Pitch Strategy was being updated following a new process of pitch assessment called Pitch power facilitated by the Football Association – this was a more

detailed process which may account for the difference between the visual observation which had previously been undertaken. Town Council staff had been having ongoing discussions with Shropshire Council, Shropshire FA and the Football Foundation to ascertain how they could best determine the quality of all of their pitches and whether they may qualify for external funding.

Question Two: “Does Shrewsbury Town Centre have an alcohol problem impacting on anti-social behaviour levels?”

Recent research shows that over 110 retail outlets within the river loop sold alcohol, and that if this count was extended to districts just on the verge of the river loop like Frankwell, Coleham, Abbey Foregate, Castlefields and Coton Hill then the number of outlets selling alcohol tops two hundred. Could this town centre alcohol excess be impacting on the recent rise in anti-social behaviour within the river loop? and what impact was this having on the visitor economy to town, particularly those visiting with young families?

Councillor Mosley replied that the Team Shrewsbury Partnership was aware of increased Anti-Social Behaviour within the town centre but there was nothing to suggest that there was any correlation with the number of premises that had Premises Licences.

Any business with a Premises Licence was required to take appropriate measures to promote the four licensing objectives:

- the prevention of crime and disorder;
- public safety;
- the prevention of public nuisance; and
- the protection of children from harm.

ASB can be a feature in any one or more of these licensing objectives.

If the Shropshire Playing Fields Association had reason to believe that a specific business was not taking adequate measures to properly address the licensing objectives, this could be reported to Shropshire Council’s Licensing Team. Where appropriate, advice would be provided on applying for a review of an existing Premises Licence. Further information and guidance was available on Shropshire Council’s website.

Councillor Mosley also referred the questioner to the attendance of Inspector Tanfield at a recent Recreation & Leisure Committee held on 8 November and the minutes of the meeting following his report and his response to a variety of questions from members.

Question Three: River Gating Safety

“River levels were once again dangerously high, why had the river safety team and Shropshire Council repeatedly ignored Shropshire Playing Fields Associations plea over the past 12 years regard improving the gating system of the towpath between Greyfriars Bridge and the Weir at Sydney Avenue.

There were currently ten access points between the Weir and Greyfriars Bridge, four had no gates in place, six had gates that were locked in times of flood.

This meant individuals could access the towpath at four points in times of flooding with no knowledge of whether they could exit safely at a particular exit point. (Example access towpath from St Mary's Water Lane but not able to exit at Greyfriars or at the Weir).

Does the committee agree that all ten access points should be gated allowing all ten to be locked at the same time when deemed necessary or allow specific sections to be closed off when in flood."

Councillor Mosley replied that the Town Council had very little to do with the gating of the river in the event of flooding. Some gates had been long-standing; others were added as part of a Risk Assessment of the River which was undertaken in 2010/11. The Town Council had worked with Shropshire Council on commissioning a new Risk Assessment and the recommended actions were being worked on through the Team Shrewsbury Safe Rivers Task Group. The Shropshire Playing Fields' concerns about gating would be referred to that Task Group when they next met.

Councillor Mosley also read out a response from Shropshire Council which stated that River safety along the various paths along the River Severn in general was being considered by a joint working group and had been subject to a detailed examination of the specific and wider issues, including access and guarding of the tow path. Further work was currently under way to consider the most effective means of managing safety including access to the tow path when the river was in flood and would reference other initiatives and measures generally. When a conclusion was reached any works necessary would be considered against available and earmarked budgets and timetabled accordingly.

Councillor Mosley added that in a general response to all of these questions, Shrewsbury Town Council was not best placed to answer these questions and they should really have been directed to Shropshire Council. They had answered them as best they could, but they recommended that Mr Kilby referred these to more suitably qualified officers at Shropshire Council.

Question Four - Restoration of Greenfields Community Park from Greenfields Community Group

"On the 17 October Greenfields Community Group held an Extraordinary Meeting where a new Chair for the group was elected.

The mandate for the new Chair and Committee is to:

Update the constitution, build a local vision for integrating the newly restored land to existing parkland and ensure close and productive partnership working with Shrewsbury Town Council. The Group will organise a Community Consultation to discuss future uses of the restored land – could a representative of the Council please attend this event? A date will be arranged to suit the Council."

Councillor Mosley replied confirming a representative of the Town Council would attend the event. He had met with the new Chair of the Greenfields Community Group and the meeting was amicable and constructive. He was looking forward to working with the group and coming to a successful conclusion.

Councillor Mosley also added that leaflets had been circulated as promised to residents in the Greenfields & Herongate area. The Town Council fully committed to a resolution to repurchase the land and make it available to the public.

Question Five - Greenfields Recreation Ground from Peter Day

“How many times have the Town Council and Town Council legal representatives met with the developer since the Supreme Court Judgment? There was a concern that there is some drift here in reaching an agreement over eight months. Can I make a request therefore not for any content of meetings or communication but simply the dates and times of all meetings and an agenda? Can I additionally make this request as a freedom of information request.”

Councillor Mosley replied stating that they had met with their solicitor on the following dates: 5 June, 25 July, 1 September and 25 October. The next meeting was scheduled for 14 November. There had also been plenty of email correspondence in between. There had been a number of informal phone calls between Carl Elson and the Deputy Town Clerk. Any formal correspondence was via solicitors and so therefore confidential.

62/23 MOTIONS FROM MEMBERS

There were no motions from Councillors.

63/23 SMITHFIELD ROAD CONSULTATION

The Town Clerk informed Members that there was currently a Shropshire Council consultation on the Smithfield Riverside regeneration, but the consultation would end on 15 November. She further advised members that Councillor Mosley sat on the board for the Big Town Plan and there was plenty of information on the website and interpretation boards at the local Shropshire Council office within the town centre.

Councillor Mosley proposed a response stating Shrewsbury Town Council welcomed, and fully supported, the proposals for the first phase of the Riverside redevelopment proposals including the demolition of the Riverside shopping centre and former Riverside medical practice, the preparation of the land for further development and the creation of public space alongside Rousehill.

Furthermore, they welcomed the presentation of a draft Masterplan for the area aimed at creating space for modern offices and homes, as well as a new leisure offer including restaurants and a cinema. The opportunity for the creation of a series of interlinked and accessible new lanes and public spaces would also help shape the area’s new identity and were welcomed. They looked forward to being able to contribute to the further proposals as future phases were developed and trusted that these were fully coordinated to complement the emerging Movement and Public Places Strategy.

Councillor Dean commented that he was concerned that this consultation came before the Movement Strategy, and he was in two minds about welcoming the proposal. It had been concerning that Shropshire planners and the majority of the Northern Planning Committee

had ignored the views of both the Town Council and the Big Town Plan partnership and many others when it came to the hotel development proposal. He believed that what they had failed to do was to give due weight to developing masterplans of the area and needed to be pushing for some more robust support for master planning in Shropshire Council, so they didn't get sudden applications that simply didn't fit with proposals that had been heavily consulted and discussed in the town. He was not entirely comfortable giving an unqualified support to the proposals as they stood.

Councillor Phillips commented that there was good substance within the plan, but he had concerns regarding sequencing and where it would fit in particularly as there were a number of expected strategy documents in the New Year which needed to inform such a significant development as this for the town centre.

Councillor Wilson agreed with Councillor Dean stating he had raised good points and he raised concerns about the addition of a new park in the town given the revenue issues of Shropshire Council. He also commented that they had the Quarry which was high quality green space, and this could turn into something that was below standard.

Members made it clear they were not objecting to the proposal from Councillor Mosley, but with some councillors voicing concerns about what might appear to be unequivocal support, a suggestion was made that the statement of support should be reworded.

RESOLVED:

That Shrewsbury Town Council welcomes and supports the proposals for the first phase of the Riverside redevelopment project including the demolition of the Riverside Shopping Centre and former Riverside Medical Practice, the preparation of the land for further development and the creation of public space alongside Roushill.

Furthermore, the Council welcomes the presentation of the phased draft Masterplan for the area aimed at creating space for modern offices and homes, as well as a new leisure offer including restaurants and a cinema. The opportunity for the creation of a series of interlinked and accessible new lanes and public spaces will also help shape the area's new identity and are welcomed.

The Council recognises that these proposals have been presented ahead of the awaited Design Code and Movement and Public Places Strategy but expects that the emerging policies from those documents are embedded in the principles of this major development with planners taking cognisance of such documents in the determination of this and future associated proposals.

The Council welcomes continued engagement with this project so as to maximise the vibrancy and vitality of the Town Centre and Shrewsbury as a whole.

64/23 POLICIES

The Deputy Town Clerk reported to Members that as an employer the Town Council had a number of HR (Human Resources) policies which they reviewed on a regular basis. The Town Council also created new HR policies as required.

The Deputy Town Clerk presented the following Policies for approval:

- Capability Procedure
- Disciplinary Procedure
- Flexitime policy
- Grievance procedure
- Job Evaluation Policy
- No Smoking Policy
- Pensions & Retirement Policy

The Deputy Town Clerk outlined the process for both renewal of existing policies and creation of new policies. The Deputy Town Clerk reviewed policies alongside advice and templates from both ACAS (Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service) and trade unions as well the Council's contracted HR advisory service, Work Nest.

Once the Deputy Town Clerk was content with the drafted policy, it went through the following process for consideration and approval:

1. SMT (Senior Management Team)
2. JCC (including union reps) (Joint Consultative Committee)
3. Staff consultation for 30 days
4. Personnel Committee
5. Full Council

Councillor Dean thanked all concerned who had devised the draft policies.

RESOLVED:

That the policies as presented to Council be accepted and adopted.

65/23 ANTI RACISM CHARTER

The Town Clerk informed Council that the Anti Racism Charter was an equality policy from Unison where organisations pledge to introduce ongoing commitments within 12 months of signing the charter. The charter had been presented to the Personnel Committee already who were happy to support but approval was needed by Full Council.

RESOLVED:

That the Town Council adopts and signs the Anti-Racism Charter.

66/23 RECREATION & LEISURE COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the Recreation & Leisure Committee held on 8 November 2023 were circulated as read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Recreation & Leisure Committee meeting held on 8 November 2023 be received and adopted.

67/23 PLANNING COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 10 October and 31 October 2023 were submitted as circulated as read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 10 October and 31 October 2023 be received and adopted.

68/23 CLIMATE EMERGENCY & NATURE RECOVERY COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Climate Emergency & Nature Recovery Committee held on 12 October 2023 were circulated as read.

In presenting the minutes, Councillor Dean informed Council that work had started on the Shrewsbury Great Big Green Week and letters would be going out shortly. He would like to see widespread community involvement.

Councillor Parry informed Council that he had sent his apologies for this meeting, but they had not been recorded. The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that the minutes would be amended to show his apologies.

RESOLVED:

That upon the inclusion of Councillor Parry's apologies in the minutes of the Climate Emergency & Nature Recovery Committee meeting held on 12 October 2023 be received and adopted.

69/23 WORKING GROUPS

69.1 JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Joint Consultative Committee meeting held on 4 October 2023 were circulated as read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Joint Consultative Committee meeting held on 4 October 2023 be received and adopted.

69.2 CLEAN RIVER WORKING GROUP

The minutes of the Clean River Working Group meeting held on 4 October 2023 were circulated as read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Clean River Working Group meeting held on 4 October 2023 be received and adopted.

69.3 CITY OF SANCTUARY WORKING GROUP

The minutes of the City of Sanctuary Working Group meeting held on 30 October 2023 were circulated as read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the City of Sanctuary Working Group meeting held on 30 October 2023 be received and adopted.

69.4 QUARRY WORKING GROUP

The minutes of the Quarry Working Group meeting held on 20 October 2023 were circulated as read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Quarry Working Group meeting held on 20 October 2023 be received and adopted.

70/23 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.

The Mayor advised that live streaming of this meeting would now stop. She thanked members of the public for logging in. All papers relating to the meeting could be found on the website www.shrewsburytowncouncil.gov.uk

71/23 PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Personnel Committee meetings held on 28 September and 12 October 2023 were circulated as read.

In presenting the minutes, Councillor Mosley commented that on Min 24/23 of 12 October 2023 minutes, the resolution stated that a further Personnel Committee meeting to discuss the report would be set up for 30 October 2023. This meeting date had to be cancelled and another was being rescheduled.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on 28 September and 12 October 2023 be received and adopted.

72/23 GREENFIELDS RECREATION GROUND

Members were provided with an update on the re-purchase of Greenfields Recreation Ground and its interim maintenance. It was recognised that further discussion was required once the Leader, Deputy Town Clerk and RFO had again met with the legal adviser.

RESOLVED:

That an Extra-Ordinary Meeting of Council be held on 4 December 2023 to seek formal proposals from the Council in relation to the re-purchase of the parcel of land adjacent to the Greenfields Recreation Ground.

73/23 CLOSING REMARKS

The Mayor thanked members and staff for their attendance and closed the meeting.