

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

**Meeting of the Climate Change Committee
Held in the Shrewsbury Room, Shirehall
At 2.30pm on Thursday 27 October 2022**

PRESENT

Councillors D Vasmer (Chair), J Dean, A Mosley, P Moseley (substitute for Councillor Halliday) and E Roberts (substitute for Councillor Dartnall).

With Tom Endacott (Gfleet), Alex Grant (Shropshire Wildlife Trust) Frank Oldacre (Friends of the Earth).

IN ATTENDANCE

Amanda Spencer (Deputy Town Clerk), Michelle Farmer (Committee Clerk) and Alan Jameson (Climate Change Officer).

13/22 APOLOGIES

That apologies were received from Councillors Bentick, Dartnall, Halliday.

Apologies were also received from Dan Wrench (Shropshire Council), Chris Bainger (Environment Agency), David Sharpe (AECB) and Kevin Oubridge (Shropshire Climate Action Partnership).

The Deputy Town Clerk commented that David Sharpe may have left AECB, but she would confirm this.

14/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Shropshire Councillors	Twin hatted members declared personal interests in matters relating to the Town Council's relationship with Shropshire Council.
Councillor J Dean	Declared a personal interest in the Marches Energy Agency

15/22 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Climate Change Standing Committee meeting held on 21 July 2022 were submitted as circulated and read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Climate Change Standing Committee meeting held on 21 July 2022 be approved and signed as a correct record.

16/22 MATTERS ARISING

The Deputy Town Clerk informed the Committee that all matters arising were on the agenda.

44/21 Councillor Vasmer enquired on progress regarding Mark Fermor and the E Cargo Bikes. The Town Clerk provided an update stating that it had been reported to the Finance & General Purposes Committee and agreed that further clarification was required. The proposals had been sent to the Mini Holland Team to seek further guidance. This item would go back to Finance & General Purposes Committee in December.

10/22 Councillor Dean enquired if there had been an update on the Marches Energy Agency. The Deputy Town Clerk advised that this item had gone to Full Council and Finance & General Purposes, and they had been given the go ahead to support the scheme. The Agency had now asked the Town Council to wait until the end of November to meet, at which point an agreement would be drawn up with the Town Council.

17/22 CLIMATE CHANGE OFFICER

The Chairman introduced the newly appointed Climate Change Officer, Alan Jameson, who joined the Town Council in September. He would be working in the Town Council office four days of the week and attend college for one day.

The Deputy Town Clerk had already introduced Alan to the workings of the Committee and the Climate Change Action Plan. His role would be split by supporting the Town Council and the Climate Change Committee.

18/22 BUS SHELTER SEDUM ROOFS FUNDING

The Town Clerk provided an update following the completion of the bus shelter sedum roof tender. Shrewsbury Town Council had been out to tender for the replacement of 35 bus shelters across the town as part of the first wave of replacements. An aspiration from the beginning of this process had been to have sedum roofs installed on the shelters as a way of not only reducing the carbon footprint but to also attract pollinators and increase their feeding areas.

An initial budget of £150,000 was set for the replacement of the 35 Shelters and a contractor had been identified as the preferred with a tender close to the £150,000, however once the Sedum roof provision was added to the shelters an additional cost of £950 was added per shelter and this put the figure over budget.

The figure of £950 included all necessary drainage and growing trays that were required, and Shrewsbury Town Council would grow the Sedum at the Weeping Cross Greenhouse and install during the installation process of the shelters.

Each roof would be approximately 6m² giving an estimated 30kg of CO₂ sequestered per roof, per year. By doing as many sedum roofs as possible this number would increase significantly. The 19 shelters combined would sequester an estimated 570kg of CO₂ per year.

Not all shelters would be suitable for the sedum roof provision, the main reason for this was the depth of the footpath available behind the shelter. To meet DDA requirements a minimum of 1.2 metres (1 metre in extreme cases) must be kept to abide by the Highways Act.

Following a meeting with the contractor the number of bus shelters they were able to accommodate a sedum roof was 19, giving an additional cost of £18,050.

The current estimated project completion date was the end March 2023 for all 35 shelters to be installed and to include all possible sedum roofs.

Several questions were raised by committee members regarding the proposal. It was asked how long the shelters would last, to which the response was 15-20 years as they would be made from stainless steel which was less revenue cost and maintenance.

It was asked if the shelters already in place with sedum roofs were working well. The Town Clerk reported that they were, they had weathered well, and the public were in support of them.

Queries were also raised about the volume of carbon sequestered and what this equated to in real terms. Tom Endacott said that he had followed up on the proposal with the supplier and they had advised that there were assumptions made in the calculations which might not apply in this scenario. He did however support the initiative on the basis of its ability to increase biodiversity rather than dramatically reduce carbon emissions.

Councillor Dean commented that he was supportive of the project, and it should be promoted to encourage the public to do this on their own properties/sheds. It was suggested that the Town Council run an initiative to promote this and offer advice to the public. The Town Clerk confirmed that the Britain in Bloom Committee would be looking to promote this on a smaller scale, and it would be promoted through the newsletter and website and through Greenhouse Open Days. Information could also be placed on the new bus shelters informing members of the public of the development and benefits.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (i) That the cost of additional works of £18,050 for sedum roofs be met from the Climate Change fund.**
- (ii) That the proposal would go to Finance and General Purposes Committee for approval**

19/22 BEAVER PROJECT

The Town Clerk reported that the Town Council were working with Shropshire Wildlife Trust to develop a compound to accommodate two beavers in the Old River Bed. They had submitted a proposal to Natural England and Defra, which had now been granted.

They were currently working on a flood risk assessment. Members of the committee were invited to visit a compound in Cheshire to understand what was being proposed and the significant benefits of introducing beavers to the land. It was hoped that construction would start in February/ March 2023 with the hope of having the beavers in place by the end of 2023. Alex Grant explained some of the benefits of reintroducing beavers and the Town Clerk commended the work done with Shropshire Wildlife Trust.

20/22 GREEN ADVANTAGE – SKILLS BOOTCAMP IN SUSTAINABILITY

The Town Clerk explained that she had recently started this free course, funded by West Midlands Combined Authorities, and taught at Aston Business School. The programme was designed for business leaders, managers and professionals who want to consider the implications of climate and environmental challenges for their business or workplace. The work would sit alongside the Action Plan and Visioning Exercise.

NOTED:

That the Town Clerk would keep the Committee updated and that the Deputy Town Clerk would hopefully be able to undertake a future round of the programme.

The Town Clerk left the meeting.

21/22 CLIMATE EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN 2020-2024

The Deputy Town Clerk presented an updated version of the action to the Committee.

22/22 SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL INSETTING AND OFFSETTING INITIATIVES

The Deputy Town Clerk explained that at the previous meeting they had briefly discussed the difference between inseting and offsetting. She had been through the Action Plan and other actions taken by Shrewsbury Town Council to indicate what they currently did, and it was clear that the vast majority of actions were offsetting carbon emissions. The Action Plan also included a number of actions that would do neither inseting nor offsetting but would still have a significant impact on the way the Town Council operates. The Action Plan did not yet reveal the quantities of carbon that each of the activities would either inset or offset, but the Carbon Footprint Audit currently being undertaken would shortly reveal some of the data.

The Committee were in support of moving forward on the larger actions/activities and in places where they could make bigger savings. The Carbon Audit would see where they were at the present time.

There was a discussion around the terms inseting and offsetting and Tom Endacott explained the difference between the two.

RESOLVED:

That the Deputy Town Clerk would contact Adrian Cooper at Shropshire Council to discuss how they were carbon accounting and mirror the terminology they were using.

23/22 SHROPSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST

The Chairman introduced Alex Grant who provided the Committee with an update on Shropshire Wildlife Trust's progress in assessing its emissions, the measures taken to date and their impact and future plans.

Alex Grant was a Trustee and Honorary Secretary at Shropshire Wildlife Trust. Shropshire Wildlife Trust along with other Wildlife Trust's, RSPB, National Trust were driving towards "Net Zero".

He stated that it was firstly important to put your own house in order before presuming to influence others. In 2019 AGM Members declared a Climate Emergency to address Climate Change, Loss of Biodiversity and Disconnection from Nature. Trustees subsequently agreed a strategy to meet net zero by 2030 and establish baseline emissions using model established by their national body.

They reported the following figures to their AGM to show their progress:

- In 2019/20, they had 317 tonnes of carbon emissions.
- By 2021/22 this had been reduced to 270 tonnes.

Several measures had been taken by the organisation to date which included

- Installation of a new efficient gas boiler
- Installation of EV charging points
- Reduced vehicle fleet size and conversion to electric vehicles wherever possible
- Introduced flexible working practices which result in a reduction in commuting
- Going paperless with a degree of 'hot-desking'

Difficulties had also been encountered and were:

- Heating an old Listed Building – air source prohibitively expensive
- Availability of suitable electric cars
- Conservation grazing – the model does not currently allow for lower impact of grazing Dexter cattle.

In association with others, there were positive achievements which were the re-wetting of peat land at Wem Moss and around Whixall Moss, the plans to introduction of Beavers in the Old River Bed and natural flood management was being investigated.

If and when it was found to be impossible to eliminate, reduce or substitute emission sources any further, they would seek to offset residual emissions, where possible through increased sequestration on their own land. Any offsetting would off course be additional as a result of measures taken and must themselves be sustainable and durable.

Members thanked Alex for his update and commented that more companies should be promoting what they are doing and asked if there was any learning that had been shared with organisations that could be taken on

24/22 CARBON LITERACY ACTION DAY – 7 NOVEMBER 2022

The Deputy Town Clerk informed the Committee that Carbon Literacy Day would take place on 7 November so it had been bought to Committee not only to promote the day but to enquire if there were any actions that should be taken on behalf of Shrewsbury Town Council to promote it.

Information about future dates for training would be circulated to members. It was also suggested that a question about how Carbon Literate organisations were be added to the tendering process.

25/22 COMMONPLACE

The Deputy Town Clerk explained to Committee that the Climate Change Officer had taken on the responsibility for the Commonplace climate change website and that they were hoping to launch this site before Christmas.

RESOLVED:

The Deputy Town Clerk would send a link to members showing progress through the next stages.

26/22 NEXT MEETING

The next Committee meeting would take place on Thursday 12 January 2023.