

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Meeting of the Council Held Virtually on Microsoft Teams At 6.00pm on Monday 22 March 2021

PRESENT

Councillors Mrs G Burgess (Mayor), P Adams, J Dean (Deputy Mayor), P Gillam, N Green, Mrs H Fraser, Ms K Halliday, I Jones, J Mackenzie, A Mosley, P Nutting, K Pardy, A Phillips, K Roberts & D Vasmer.

IN ATTENDANCE

Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Amanda Spencer (Deputy Town Clerk), Gary Farmer (Operations Manager), Andy Watkin (Responsible Finance Officer), Ruth Jones (Office Manager) & Carol Pullen (Committee Clerk).

92/20 WELCOME FROM THE MAYOR

The Mayor welcomed Councillors, Officers and members of the public tuning in to the Council's virtual live-streamed meeting and ran through a few house rules. She also noted that the meeting was not being recorded and the Minutes would be published on the Town Council's website in the usual way.

93/20 APOLOGIES

RESOLVED:

That apologies from Councillor Mrs P Moseley be accepted.

94/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Shropshire Councillors	Twin hatted members declared personal interests in matters relating to the Town Council's relationship with Shropshire Council.
Councillor Green	Declared a prejudicial interest in Item 19 as the company he works for is now professionally involved with someone who is interested in the land in question

95/20 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Town Council meetings held on 25 January 2021 & 1 March 2021 were circulated as read.

Councillor Dean referred to Minute 77/20 and the Motion put forward by Councillor Halliday regarding flooding, whereby he had sought an amendment to the motion to include Severn

Trent in any discussions between the Environment Agency and Shropshire Council because of the issues of drains causing some of the household flooding rather than the river level. Councillor Halliday clarified her recollection of this amendment being agreed.

RESOLVED:

- (i) **That the Resolution of Minute 77/20 (1.) 25 January 2021 be amended to: ‘The Town Council therefore requests that Shropshire Council work with the Environment Agency and Severn Trent to urgently develop short, medium and long-term plans to prevent flooding in these areas’.**
- (ii) **That upon the minutes of the Town Council meetings held on 25 January 2021 & 1 March 2021 be approved and signed as a correct record.**

96/20 MATTERS ARISING

Minute 77/20 – Flooding – The Town Clerk reported that she had sent the Motion about flooding to Shropshire Council and the response from the Director of Place had already been circulated to members. She had also sent details to the MP and had received a response from his Researcher who was co-ordinating activity relating to flooding.

Minute 79/20 – relating to Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee:

- **Min 35/20 (ii) –Hydro Scheme at the Weir** – The Town Clerk reported that she had had a really productive meeting with Adrian Cooper at Shropshire Council. Whilst the project was still on his radar there were a couple of other large projects they are working on which have the potential to mitigate greater carbon so they hoped to look at this project further in the summer. He had been in touch with the previous project and had got all the reports that were commissioned.
- **Min 43/20 – Combined Sewer Outflows** – Pete Lambert from Shropshire Wildlife Trust had been picking up on the liaison with Severn Trent and the possibility of a meeting, but this had moved on somewhat given the Government’s commitment to look at CSOs.
- **Min 44/20 – Website** – The new site was up and running and whilst there was still some additional functionality to sort out, it was working really well and people were engaging with it. The Town Clerk wished to place on record thanks to Ruth Jones the Office Manager and the rest of the Admin Team who had done so much work to assist in getting this sorted.

Minute 81/20 – relating to Minutes of the Planning Committee

- **Min 41/20 – Shropshire Local Plan Review** – The Town Clerk had forwarded the letter as part of the consultation exercise and she had spoken at length to Eddie West, Principal Planning Policy Officer at Shropshire Council. He had found the content and structure of the Town Council’s submission helpful. He had also clarified that Shropshire Council did have a Green Infrastructure Strategy [green-infrastructure-strategy-main-report.pdf \(shropshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/green-infrastructure-strategy-main-report.pdf).

97/20 ANNOUNCEMENTS

75.1 MAYOR & DEPUTY MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

The Mayor reported that the previous Friday evening she had carried out an engagement outside Theatre Severn when it had been lit up in purple to launch the start of the Census weekend. She hoped to be able to attend more engagements throughout the Summer as restrictions were eased.

75.2 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR AND TOWN CLERK

There were none.

98/20 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. No questions had been received.

99/20 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

None received.

100/20 FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 2 February 2021 were circulated as read.

In proposing the minutes Councillor Mosley encouraged members to visit the Town Council's new website. He congratulated all those involved in its development.

Councillor Mosley reported that Group Leaders had received a large number of member requests for works within their Wards which were not scheduled in the budget. Officers had assessed these requests and Group Leaders were due to meet with Officers to discuss these and refer their recommendations to the Finance & General Purposes Committee but, unfortunately due to unavoidable staff absences, this meeting had been delayed. He assured members the recommendations would be completed in the near future.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 2 February 2021 be approved and signed as a correct record.

101/20 RECREATION & LEISURE COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the Recreation & Leisure Committee Meeting held on 27 January 2021 were circulated as read.

In proposing the minutes Councillor Pardy referred to the presentation given by the Countryside & Greenspace Manager about the introduction of beavers in Shrewsbury. He thought this was really exciting for the town and particularly the opportunity for youngsters to be involved and learn about beavers within their local community.

Councillor Mosley referred to Minute 43.2 and the Management Plan for the Quarry and asked for an update on plans to demolish the greenhouses and create a contemporary garden, which had been included in the 2021/22 budget proposals notwithstanding the proposals for a wider management plan.

The Town Clerk reported that tenders for the demolition of the modern greenhouse were being sought. She was still clarifying the position with planners regarding the curtilage listed greenhouse because it may be necessary to seek permission to demolish it and this may form part of the wider management plan.

Councillor Mosley sought an update on the Dana Footpath following the reported meeting and expectation of news in mid Feb.

The Town Clerk reported that she and the Operations Manager had met with the Shropshire Horticultural Society in early January and there had been a constructive discussion about the Dana Footpath. The SHS had had prepared reports for their Land & Buildings & Executive Committees and had anticipated a decision by mid to late Feb. The Town Clerk was due to have another meeting with them shortly so would seek an update. Councillor Mosley requested that the Town Clerk liaise with Tim Pritchard, Shrewsbury Programme Manager at Shropshire Council as he had been significantly involved. The Town Clerk assured Councillor Mosley that she and Mr Pritchard were in conversation often.

Councillor Mosley asked if there were any timetable for work at Castle Walk. He was mindful that the work should not be done all at once taking out the land entirely but was keen to know what the timetable of works might be. He also felt that in view of the potential land acquisition nearby, it may be pertinent to await the outcome of that.

The Town Clerk reported that staff were currently working on the necessary tender documents. There had been discussions with the Environment Agency about the amount of soil that would need transferring onto the site and they were comfortable with the arrangements. It would not be necessary to apply for any permissions, however an exemption from licence would be required and the Operations Manager had been working with the team on the paperwork.

Councillor Dean referred to social media comments on the Quarry Pool forum, which suggested there had been a lack of consultation with them from both Shrewsbury Town Council & Shropshire Council regarding the various options for the Quarry Pool and the Sundorne Pool, and he was keen to establish if there had been any approaches from the Quarry Forum regarding this and whether there might be an opportunity for this Committee to consider the various options that Shropshire Council were looking at and also hear the view from the Quarry forum.

The Town Clerk reported that she was not currently aware of any representations that the Quarry forum had made to the Town Council specifically. In relation to the approaches from Shropshire Council there had been a conversation with colleagues from Shropshire Council prior to their paper going to Cabinet but she had heard nothing since.

Councillor Jones expressed concerns that a number of trees in the wooded area off Harlescott Lane had been cut back to ground level. The heavier boughs had been removed but a lot of the lighter branches had been left. He enquired whether the trees had been taken down due to Ash die back and if so why the branches had not all been removed at the same time.

The Operations Manager was not aware of this work but said that he would speak to the Countryside & Greenspace Manager to find out and would report back.

Councillor Vasmer supported Councillor Mosley's views on Castle Walk. He also referred to the resolution of Minute 43/3 CCTV upgrades that Officers explore the potential of local recording of all cameras at Monkmoor Recreation Ground and asked if there had been any developments.

The Town Clerk said was under the impression that the three cameras managed by Shropshire Council would remain and that the Town Council were adding additional cameras to cover the other areas not currently covered. She would clarify the position with Shropshire Council regarding their cameras and report back.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Recreation & Leisure Committee meeting held on 27 January 2021 be approved and signed as a correct record.

102/20 PLANNING MEETINGS

The minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 26 January 2021, 16 February 2021 & 9 March 2021 were submitted as circulated and read.

In proposing the Minutes Councillor Green commended the officers who had stepped into the breach for the meeting on 9 March whilst regular officers were out of action. He was pleased to report that all had gone smoothly and the meeting had been a success.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 26 January 2021, 16 February 2021 & 9 March 2021 be accepted and approved.

103/20 PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on 11 February 2021 were circulated as read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on 11 February 2021 be accepted and approved.

104/20 CIVICS COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the Civics Committee meeting held on 2 February 2021 were circulated as read.

In proposing the minutes Councillor Burgess reported that there had been a good constructive discussion on how the Mayoral role could be developed going forward.

Councillor Jones reported that he had proffered his apologies for this meeting to the Mayor's Secretary, but these had not been recorded.

Councillor Mosley referred to recommendation (i) contained within the minutes 'That Officers explore replacement of the Mayor's Car with a suitable electric/hybrid alternative'. His view was that the Council should be setting an example by purchasing a fully electric vehicle and he put forward a motion to remove the words hybrid alternative from the recommendation.

A discussion took place members duly voted on the Council's Mosley proposed amendment:

Councillor Adams	Abstain
Councillor Burgess	Abstain
Councillor Dean	For
Councillor Fraser	For
Councillor Gillam	For
Councillor Green	For
Councillor Halliday	For
Councillor Jones	For
Councillor Mackenzie	For
Councillor Mosley	For
Councillor Nutting	Abstain
Councillor Pardy	For
Councillor Phillips	Abstain
Councillor Roberts	Abstain
Councillor Vasmer	For
Councillor Wall	Abstain

RESOLVED:

(i) That the minutes of the Civics Committee meeting held on 2 February 2021 be accepted and approved.

(ii) That Officers explore replacement of the Mayor's Car with a suitable electric vehicle.

105/20 UPDATE ON COUNCIL ACTIVITY AND INVOLVEMENT IN THE RECOVERY PLAN

The Town Clerk's update report had been circulated to members ahead of the meeting which detailed areas of work and activity during lockdown 3. Restrictions had started to ease from 8 March when individuals had been allowed to leave home for recreation and exercise outdoors with their household or support bubble, or with one person from outside their household. From 29 March outdoor sports facilities including golf & tennis would be allowed to reopen. Preparations were continuing for non-essential retail to open up on the 12 April.

Members were content with the update and there were no questions.

Councillor Mosley congratulated officers for the continued reports which had all been very positive and highlighted the level of work management had undertaken and to excellent effect and he proposed a Vote of Thanks be given for all the hard work that had gone into these reports.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Town Clerk's report be noted**
- (ii) That a Vote of Thanks be given to Senior Managers and Officers of Shrewsbury Town Council for their management and reporting of work undertaken during the COVID pandemic.**

106/20 PREPARATION FOR COUNCIL MEETINGS POST 7 MAY 2021

On 4 March Local Authorities and Police & Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England & Wales) Regulations 2020 were created under the provisions of the Coronavirus Act 2020 and provisions for flexible meetings were put in place with a hard end date of 7 May 2021.

Members were in receipt of the Town Clerk's report and the Officer recommendations contained therein.

The Town Clerk reported that it had been surprising how well virtual meetings had worked with greater member attendance, greater public attendance, greater press engagement and ongoing reporting of business as well as the added green benefits of reduced travel and reduced printing.

Having spoken to the MHCLG Civil Servant who was looking at this issue, her inbox was full of representations from all tiers (County, District, Unitary, Town & Parish) lobbying for permanent extension to the regs and there was also ministerial support. The logistics though were around whether there needed to be changes to Primary Legislation to do this and that is the time stumbling block.

The Council must therefore make provision for something that sets out a framework to ensure that decision making is lawful.

Having spoken to the Group Leaders, their wish was to have some hybrid system whereby Full Council meetings were physical and the Standing Committees remained virtual. The Annual Council meeting would also be held physically, ensuring the necessary governance and delegations of committees were in place.

The Town Clerk noted that this week Parliament were going to debate the extension of the Coronavirus Act potentially for a 3-6 month period so everything contained within the report may change and hopefully this would just be last resort and the ability to hold virtual meetings will continue lawfully, but she needed to make sure plans were in place to ensure the Council was able to effectively discharge its functions.

Councillor Mosley expressed disappointment that the Government had not been considered the issue sooner, which may have helped avoid the difficulties that had ensued and he felt that it was necessary to have a backstop in place should there be changes to be implemented. He put forward a proposal that the Finance & General Purposes Committee be delegated to consider any changes in the Government's position and make the necessary resolutions.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Town Clerk's update be noted.**
- (ii) That delegation be given to the Finance & General Purposes Committee to consider any changes to the legislation of holding virtual meetings and make decisions as appropriate.**

107/20 GREENFIELDS RECREATION GROUND

Councillor Mosley reported that the Greenfield Independent Investigation report was not yet available to the Town Council. He had contacted Michael Redfern QC who was undertaking the investigation and who had provided the following response:

'The first draft of the report is completed based on the law as stated in the recent Court of Appeal case of Day v Shropshire Council and interested parties. The appellant has petitioned the Supreme Court for permission to appeal on a point of law of public importance. If granted, the Court of Appeal decision could be reversed as there is little case law on the law pertaining to the Day case. I cannot perfect the legal analysis in the draft until the permission decision is made'.

The report would be made available at a public meeting and on the Town Council's website as soon as it was available.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

Councillors Green & Nutting left the meeting

108/20 ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE

Members were asked to consider a notification received of a request to register land adjacent to 30 Havelock Road as an Asset of Community Value so the Town Council's view on this request could be conveyed to Shropshire Council. This would ordinarily have been dealt with by the Planning Committee but the deadline dates preclude it being considered at the next meeting.

The Community Right to Bid was introduced on 21 September 2012 as part of the Localism Act 2011. The Right to Bid gives communities the opportunity to nominate land and property which they feel forms part of their community and they may wish to have the opportunity to purchase in the event that the land was proposed to be sold at some point in the future. Further information on the Community Right to Bid can be found on <http://mycommunity.org.uk/resources/understanding-the-community-right-to-bid/>

Shropshire Council is responsible for the administration of the Community Right to Bid and must consider any requests for an Asset of Community Value. An Asset of Community Value is defined as where its main use must further the social interest or wellbeing of the local community and it must be realistic to think that such a use can continue. Social interest includes cultural, recreational or sporting interests.

Requests for registration of Assets of Community value can be submitted by either a Parish Council or a Neighbourhood Forum or an un-constituted group of no less than 21.

In considering listing, Shropshire Council consults with the local parish Council and seeks guidance on the following questions:

- Is the land/Property currently used by the community?
- If not, when did the use cease?
- How Long the asset has been used by the community for?
- What kind of community activities occur there and how often do they occur?

This parcel of land has been the subject of numerous applications for development dating as far back as 2005. The latest application was refused in December 2020, citing the lack or preservation or enhancement to the Belle Vue Conservation area.

The parcel of land in question was once the garden for 30 Havelock Road, a red-brick two-storey villa built in the 1880s. This parcel of land was annexed from No. 30 some time ago by a 1.8m high boundary fence but retains the characterful trees and greenery that adds to the streetscene of Havelock Road.

Councillor Halliday spoke in support of the application from a group of local residents.

RESOLVED:

That Shrewsbury Town Council supports the registration of land adjacent to 30 Havelock Road as an Asset of Community Value on the grounds that this site has been recognized as a valuable visual amenity to the area since 2005 and by virtue of its annexing from the principle building residents have enjoyed an as-of-right use of this site for recreational activity.

109/20 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 and the minutes would appear in draft on the website within the next month.

110/20POTENTIAL LAND ACQUISITION

The Town Clerk updated members in relation to potential acquisition of the Wakeman Playing Fields.

Councillor Mosley proposed that Consultants be appointed to consider the future development of all the Town Council land in the area. Councillor Vasmer supported this proposal.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That Shrewsbury Town Council seeks to acquire the Wakeman Playing Fields within a 10% leeway of the Red Book Valuation as prepared by TSR;**
- (ii) That the Council's existing Usable Capital Receipts Fund be utilised to pay for the site;**
- (iii) That Officers be instructed to utilise the most efficient means to negotiate with the College;**
- (iv) That a sum of £25k be set aside to undertake further investigatory works; namely Masterplan & Management Plan Development, Planning Permission to develop the site further.**
- (v) That Consultants be appointed to undertake this work.**

111/20CLOSING REMARKS

The Mayor closed the meeting and thanked all Councillors for attending and taking part in this virtual meeting. She also thanked staff who had supported this meeting.