

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

**Meeting of the Finance & General Purpose Committee
Held Virtually on Microsoft Teams**

At 6.00pm on Monday 4th October 2021

Please note this was an informal virtual meeting of the Committee convened to assist the Town Clerk with carrying out the delegated powers granted to her by Full Council on 22 March 2021 & Finance & General Purposes Committee on 12 April 2021.

PRESENT

Councillors: A Mosley (Chair), M Davies, R Dartnall, J Dean, and N Green

Councillors P Moseley (Vice-Chair) and D Vasmer joined during the meeting.

IN ATTENDANCE

Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Amanda Spencer (Deputy Town Clerk), Gary Farmer (Operations Manager), Andy Watkin (Responsible Financial Officer), Stuart Farmer (Project Manager), Mike Cox (Outdoor Recreation & Asset Manager), Ruth Jones (Office Manager) and Heather Phillips (Committee Clerk), Sean McCarthy (Leisure Services - Project Officer, Shropshire Council)

36/21 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor A Phillips.

37/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Shropshire Councillors	Those twin-hatted members declared a personal interest in any matters relating to the Town Council's relationship with Shropshire Council.
Councillor N Green	Declared a prejudicial interest in Item 12 Markets.
Councillor J Dean	Declared a prejudicial interest in Item 11 Tender Work (Mayor's car) and Item 14 (ii) Civics Working Group

38/21 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 19 July 2021 were submitted and circulated as read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 19 July 2021 be approved and signed as a correct record.

39/21 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

40/21 PAYMENT SCHEDULES

Prior to the meeting, the Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) circulated the Schedule of Payments for the period 10 July to 24 September 2021. These have been agreed by two signatories before the RFO and Town Clerk authorise the electronic payments. No comments or concerns were raised.

RECOMMENDED:

That the schedule of payments passed for payment for the period 10 July to 24 September 2021 be approved.

41/21 QUARTER 2 MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

Prior to the meeting, the Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) circulated the Quarter 2 Management Accounts 2021/22 and Balance Sheet, and asked members to note the inclusion of Column E which is the year to date figure for 2019 (ie the last accounts without the impact of Covid).

The RFO reported an overall £670,941 positive variance and that overall the figures were encouraging. However, this is driven by unbudgeted income from CIL, S106 and other commuted sums and should balance itself out at the end of the year. Setting the budget last year was difficult but overall this year's budget and income is on target. The key points made were:

- Expenditure: whilst small adverse variance of £1,886 is expected to continue the trend until the end of the year which is in line with budget barring something exceptional.
- The overspend on casual/temporary staff required for The Quarry will be covered by earmarked reserve.
- No pay award has yet been received which forms the basis for some of the underspend on gross wages; hopefully this will be resolved soon to aid accurate setting of the 2021/22 Budget.
- Income is a positive £672,827 which, after discounting non budgeted income such as commuted sums, leaves a surplus of £9,662, which is better reading than deficits last year and should remain until the end of the financial year unless there are any further lockdowns.
- The 2019 figures are more useful for looking at income to see that levels are nearly back to those pre-Covid ie commercial, events/fairs and sports will continue to improve. On the expenditure side it showed savings in 2020 when activity was less than normal ie fuel but this is now back to normal levels.

Councillor Davies asked if any plans were in place for potential fuel and energy price increases. The RFO replied that any fuel price rises should not have too much impact as most of the Council's fuel use is in the first half of the year and that there are always far fewer journeys in the second half. While electricity/gas prices will have an impact on these accounts, again half the year has passed and gas is only used at two sites. The RFO also reported that the Council has a formal purchase model with the energy supplier which reduces any peaks and troughs, although above inflation increases will have to be factored in.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

Councillor Moseley joined the meeting

42/21 END OF YEAR ACCOUNTS

The RFO reported that the External Audit Report of the 2020/21 Annual Accounts had been completed and an unqualified audit received. The Report and Certificate was circulated prior to the meeting. Councillor Mosley congratulated all involved.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the conclusion of the Annual External Audit for the 2020/21 Annual Accounts be noted;**
- (ii) That the RFO arrange for publication of the completion of the Annual Audit**

43/21 BUDGETING TIMETABLE FOR THE 2022/23 BUDGET

The RFO circulated the timetable for the 2022/23 Budget to inform members on the procedures and timescales. The RFO said that the timetable was similar to last year but that the budget needed to be set by the end of January because the completed precept form will be due to be submitted to Shropshire Council. Following this, councillors will be asked for ideas for inclusion in the budget. The budget will continue to be discussed during ongoing internal meetings, and more in-depth discussions on principles and assumptions will take place at the next Finance & General Purposes Committee in December. The draft budget will then be considered in January's meeting next year where a budget will be agreed to be put forward to Full Council on 26 January 2022.

Councillor Mosley asked if group leaders could be invited to the internal meeting in November and the RFO said that an invite will be forthcoming.

The timetable is as follows:

- *4th October 2021 – F&GP*
Following meeting Head of Resources to email all councillors to request any changes to current service delivery and ideas for inclusion in next year's budget and further discussion.

- *WC 16th November 2021– SMT*
Meeting to consider budget and operational factors to be considered in budget
- *6th December 2021– F&GP*
Set budget principles and assumptions and look at forecasted outturn on 20/21 budget
Consider impact of Covid19 on future budget
Consider submissions from councillors
Set fees and charges
- *WC 13th December 2021– SMT & Group leaders*
Meeting to consider draft budget to be submitted to F&GP
- *10th January 2022 – F&GP*
Review and recommend 2022/23 budget to Full Council
- *24th January 2022 – Full Council*
Approve the budget and submit precept request to Shropshire Council

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and dates made in the diary.

44/21 NEIGHBOURHOOD FUNDING

Sean McCarthy (Sports Development - Shropshire Council), presented a request on behalf of Meole Brace Secondary School for a contribution from the Neighbourhood Fund to replace the artificial pitch in the School grounds. Councillors received a Project Overview prior to the meeting.

The current artificial turf pitch at Meole Brace Secondary School is no longer fit for purpose and is highlighted as a priority for replacement in the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy (PPOSS). It is used by the School, Shropshire Hockey Association, Shrewsbury High School and Shrewsbury Hockey Club. All three of these use the facility for their official training and fixtures. It is also used by the wider community. The total project cost is £280,400 and the funding being sought from the CIL local funding is £196,280.

Mr McCarthy explained that the turf is used extensively by clubs and the wider community. The current surface was laid in 1995 and has since had patched repairs. The life-span of the pitch was put at 10 years and it is now no longer fit for purpose.

Should funding be approved the replacement surface will be laid/provided by an England Hockey approved supplier and this will ensure it meets current guidelines set out by England Hockey. The surface will be deemed unsafe if not replaced. The existing floodlight columns will be reused but the floodlights will be replaced with more ones more energy efficient and that limit light pollution.

If the ATP at Meole Brace was lost, there is a likelihood that the clubs using the provision would either fold or be forced to export their demand outside of Shropshire.

The three key elements to the project are:

- To provide a high quality hockey facility for Shrewsbury.
- To maintain use for education purposes ie PE lessons and fixtures.
- To maintain use for the wider community.

Councillor Moseley asked if any other grants might be available for the school and Mr McCarthy explained that there are some other avenues that could still be pursued but that most were in place already. The Shrewsbury Hockey Club and the Shropshire Hockey Association will also be contributing.

Councillor Dean enquired whether Shrewsbury High School were contributing and Mr McCarthy said that he will ask them. The High School are charged for the use of the facility (as is the Hockey Club).

Councillor Dartnall enquired about the timescale for the project and Mr McCarthy said that the ideal time to replace the surface would be the summer holidays in 2022. A company would have to be appointed in April to carry out the work and therefore the tendering and procurement process would need to start before Christmas (although this can be done without the funding being secured). The hockey clubs need as much time as possible to fund-raise but should have firm commitments of funds early next year. Mr McCarthy also added that he was fairly confident that the projected costs for the replacement pitch of £280K were realistic as a recent similar project cost £260K.

Councillor Mosley expressed concern that funding this project might set a precedent. The Town Clerk said that there would be no particular precedent for this from Neighbourhood Funding. Councillor Mosley asked if a decision could be delayed until the exact shortfall amount is known. Mr McCarthy proposed that he attend a future committee with an update on the funding situation and with more detailed information on the shortfall in funding.

Sean McCarthy left the meeting.

45/21 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

45/1 Update on the 2021/22 programme

The Town Clerk reported that the Capital Programme had been updated as follows since the Recreation & Leisure Committee Meeting of 22nd September:

- The kitchen at Castlefields Community Centre is currently being installed.
- The BMX track work at Upton Lane is scheduled to start in November.
- The Monkmoor Meadows path work is scheduled to start on 18th October.
- Work on The Mary Webb play area is due to start shortly but a final start date is has not been confirmed.
- At the last Recreation & Leisure Committee Meeting, height restrictive barriers to guard against unauthorised encampments were discussed with regard to 8 vulnerable locations. The resolution from that meeting was for

officers to proceed with the most effective solutions for individual sites and to do them in the order of the most vulnerable.

- The sedum roof on the trial bus shelter has done well so greenhouse staff Greenhouse will be starting to propagate sedum matting this winter for other bus shelters.

The Town Clerk added that there have been some delays in starting these projects due to contractor difficulty in sourcing parts and materials.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

45/2 Update on the recommendations of the Group Leaders in relation to the Council Wishlist

Councillor Mosley reported that the Town Clerk had collated all of the Councillor Wishes into ward-specific pages and this was circulated prior to the meeting. No comments or concerns were raised.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the report be noted**
- (ii) That the recommendations be approved.**

45/3 Greenhouse Demolition Permissions

The Town Clerk circulated a report on the Quarry Greenhouse prior to the meeting that had previously been submitted to the last Recreation & Leisure Committee. At that meeting, it was approved that a Working Group (consisting of Councillors Mosley, Vasmer, Pardy and Green) be set up to take this project forward. However, they wished that the idea for consultants to be involved be deleted from recommendations. The Town Clerk said that planning permission to demolish this listed building would not be granted without a consultant involved. Councillor Mosley replied that if consultants are needed, then the Working Group will take the project forward in that context.

The Quarry Greenhouse was built at the turn of the 20th Century and was a functional greenhouse until the late 1990s when it fell into disrepair. The fabric of the greenhouse has become more and more unusable and for a number of years it has been fenced off.

The site has a number of constraints; namely:

- There have been many repairs over a long period of time and there is very little left of the existing Victorian greenhouse
- There is asbestos sheeting on the racks within the greenhouse which would require specialist removal
- Underneath the greenhouse is a large concrete rainwater reservoir

Previously Officers have met with the Head of Planning and a Senior Conversation Officer to determine any approach to removal.

A recent structural survey has identified that it is not viable to repair and should be demolished.

Whilst not within the Curtilage of the Grade Listed Heritage Park it is afforded protection by its principal listing of Quarry Lodge given that the structure was built before 1st July 1948.

The facility also sits within the Shrewsbury Conservation Area.

Enquiries have been made with specialist conservation planners to determine a course of action to see its demolition and the site re-use. The findings of those enquiries is appended to this report.

It is evident that the council's wish to demolish and convert into a Contemporary Garden isn't that straight forward and enquiries would need to be made with both the Conservation Team and Shropshire Council and Historic England. There will be a need to have a plan which retains the historic value of the site regardless of its condition.

This also adds to the need to undertake a piece of work to determine a future vision for the park which officers have previously identified as a requirement to enable programmed work to be planned and funded.

The Town Clerk added that this project has now been extended into a wider consideration of the top area of The Quarry. The idea is to demolish the Greenhouse and to carry out a refurbishment and add a new garden to develop for an interpretation presentation covering the history of the Quarry, Percy Thrower's involvement, etc; it is hoped that this may satisfy the demands from the Conservation Team at Shropshire Council and from Historic England.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the report be noted.**
- (ii) That a Working Group consisting of Councillors Mosley, Vasmer, Pardy & Green be established.**
- (iii) That appointment of Consultants be limited to technical support only.**

45/4 Streetlighting

The Projects Officer circulated a report on Streetlighting prior to the meeting. As part of the original tender column structure tests were carried out on all lighting columns in the inventory. The results of these tests gave a recommended retest date with time scales varying from 1–7 years depending on the construction and condition. Most columns were given a 5 year retest cycle but a number were recommended as 2 years. These 2 year columns had been inspected and 3 (1 at

the Pig Trough and 2 at Welsh Bridge) had been identified as needing replacement due to heavy rust at their bases.

A cost for these replacement has been provided of £4421.00. This will be the final cost for supply and installation. Shrewsbury Town Council already own the power supply that feeds these columns so here would be no requirement to involve Western Power Distribution costs.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the report be noted.**
- (ii) To progress with the purchase of the LED lamps at £7,300.00.**
- (iii) To progress with the installation of the replacement columns at £4421.00**

46/21 ASSET DISPOSAL POLICY

The Town Clerk reported that Mr Redfern QC had been asked for his comments on the Asset Disposal Policy drafted by the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk and circulated prior to this meeting. Mr Redfern said that he could not yet endorse its contents as he was still awaiting the outcome of the application to the Supreme Court.

RESOLVED:

That consideration of the Policy be deferred to a future meeting.

47/21 TENDER WORK

A report giving an update on recent Tender Work was produced by the Project Manager and circulated prior to the meeting.

Currently there is one live tender to supply 2 Stiga Ride-on mowers (closing date 8 October).

The Old River Bed tender is currently under review and the Countryside Manager is in discussions with the Wildlife Trust regarding funding.

Tenders recently awarded are:

- **Replacement of Mayoral vehicle** – contract awarded to Furrows of Shrewsbury for 3 year lease of Kia e-Niro.
- **Monkmoor Meadows** – contract awarded to AGA Group.

The report also included an update on other tendering works as follows:

- **Quarry Solar Lighting** – Due to the thorough tender process completed for the initial phase of this solar lighting scheme, it was felt that the need to stay with the same supplier to ensure matching equipment was of utmost importance. A quotation for the

extension was received to ensure any price rises were in line with current supply and demand issues.

- **Upton Lane learn to ride track.** – Following discussions with the ward member and contractor a second smaller track has been designed to allow younger and more inexperienced riders to progress. Following the submission from the current contractor a basic design and idea was sent to the interested tenderers for them to be given the opportunity to submit a bid. No other submissions were received so the current contractor has been awarded both contracts. This will mean all warranties will run together as well as the 2 tracks being installed at the same time.

The Project Manager is currently in the process of compiling the tender documents for upcoming projects in line with the 2021/22 Capital Plan. The first projects to be tendered for will be as follows:

- Stanley Lane footpath and solar lighting
- Moston Road footpaths
- County Ground Pavilion extension
- County Ground Cricket Pitch 1 levelling

No comments or concerns were raised.

RESOLVED:

That the reports be noted.

Having declared a prejudicial interest, Councillor Green left the meeting for the consideration of this item.

48/21 MARKETS

The Outdoor Recreation & Asset Manager circulated a report to update members on the current situation within the Indoor and Outdoor Market prior to the meeting.

The **Indoor Market** is currently performing well with 99% occupancy.

The late night events at the Indoor Market have been extremely well received, with many of the traders opening and mainly selling food and drink. A lot of the canopied traders feel the clientele do not attend the late nights to purchase fruit and veg or hats and bags, so they tend to keep away. The next late night events are to be held on 30th October and 4th December.

Wednesday late night opening is still progressing, however it will be subject to guidelines at the time relating to incidents of Covid in the county. The late night shopping dates were scheduled between 24th November to 22nd December and all stalls will be asked to participate.

The **Sunday market** had noticed a small decline in the number of market traders due to the pandemic affecting small businesses. Many of the stall holders have had to modify the way

they operate. The car boot pitches were in demand as people took the opportunity to have a clear out during lockdown.

The Sunday Market is subject to weather conditions and so income will be dependent upon this factor. The Outdoor Recreation & Asset Manager also added that the Market may be affected by the recent nationwide fuel shortage to highlight to members that sometimes trade can be affected by situations we don't have control over. At the time of reporting, however, there was good attendance.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

49/21 MOSTON ROAD RECREATION GROUND

A report to consider extending the use of Moston Road Recreation Ground to the Shrewsbury Academy was compiled by the Town Clerk and sent to members prior to the meeting.

The Marches Academy Trust is a multi-academy trust based in Shropshire providing primary and secondary education across the county. The Shrewsbury Academy and the Grange Primary School have been part of the trust since 2019.

The Shrewsbury Academy's catchment has traditionally been from the Sundorne, Battlefield, Bagley, Harlescott and Castlefields & Ditherington Wards though of late it has attracted students from across the whole of the town as well as the rural areas to the east. The school has become more popular with more students placing it as their first option and the Year 7 Roll has increased from 132 in 2019 to 184 for this September intake. This has been down to the change in ethos of the school and the fact that students are proud of their school. The Academy has been working to secure Department for Education funding to expand the Sundorne site and it was announced on 15th July 2021 that it had been successful.

Developments will allow the old Sundorne Infant School to be refurbished and incorporated into the Academy once students vacate to the Featherbed Lane site in 2022, a new teaching block and other ancillary facilities. Whilst not everything the Academy had requested, it does present itself as the biggest investment in education in northern Shrewsbury in a generation. The development will allow the school to cater for 1127 students.

Outside space on the site is a premium and will become more so once the school development takes place. Open space includes:

- Half size rugby pitch
- 9 v 9 football pitch (caters for U12/13s)
- All weather pitch made up of 3 netball courts
- Tennis courts are out of action as the site is being used for demountable classrooms
- Infant school playing field has a mysterious mound in the middle which would restrict usage. The site isn't big enough for any senior school football, though has the potential for 2 rounders pitches

The School has in the past used the Moston Road Recreation Ground; it was last laid out for summer athletics about 5 years ago and the school paid for additional works to facilitate use.

The School has investigated the use of the Sports Village; this is a facility that is commercially rented out and of late being used by the football club. The logistics of transporting students to and from the Sports Village means that the actual duration of sports lessons is extremely restricted.

Adjacent to the Academy site off Meadow Farm Road is the Moston Road Recreation Ground, owned by the Town Council. Measuring 2.7 hectares the site is flat with poor drainage potential, minimal landscaping and has Infant and Junior Play Areas and a Multi-Use Games Area. The Lantern Community Centre was built on part of the Moston Road Recreation Ground by the Borough Council prior to local government reorganisation.

During the Town Council's tenure of the site, pathways were installed to connect play areas to the main highway. The site is currently maintained by the Recreation & Formal Greenspace team.

In preparation for the 2021/22 Capital Programme, discussions took place with the local member regarding additions to that programme, including:

- Creation of a BMX Track
- Circular footpaths to improve active use of the site
- Tree planting and wildflower planting to create naturalised areas

A sum of £80k has been set aside from the Neighbourhood Fund to develop these ideas.

Initial enquiries about the potential of the Shrewsbury Academy using the Moston Road Recreation Ground was made by the Education Department at Shropshire Council. At that time there wasn't any discussions about the exact usage required; more the in principle creation of a partnership to develop mixed usage. This was incorporated into the bid to the Department for Education.

Periodically over the last 18 months, senior officers have either met at the school or on Teams to keep updated on the expansion plans from the school and the Town Council's aspirations for the recreation ground. No agreements have been made on usage; the discussion was more around the art of the possible. The message has been clear from the School that they see themselves at the heart of the community. Any new development of the school will be open to community use and equally any ways that the students can be involved in community life, the better.

The last meeting at the school on the 15th September provided an opportunity for officers to understand the extent of what the Department for Education funding will facilitate. There were no plans that could be shared with Council at that stage. The Town Clerk, Head of Operations and Recreation & Formal Space Team Manager visited the site and were given a tour by Julie Johnson (Headteacher) and Nick Parkin (Operations Manager). Advice was given on how best to maximise use of recreational facilities and what could feasibly be fitted onto new parcels of space that are due to become part of the school curtilage; these included laying out sports pitches in a certain way, taking down fencing and obstacles to maximise size of pitches, drainage options and industry best practice.

Discussions have taken place with the Town Council Officers about the potential for utilising the Moston Road site for sport and well-being of their students. It should be noted that a significant number of students live in flats and do not have access to personal green space.

Ideas discussed include:

- Creating footpath routes around the site which could be used for both the wider community in supporting a healthier and active lifestyle but also the school for orienteering and cross country. We already have defined routes laid in the Quarry for Park Run and we have been exploring how route and website technology might provide a better experience in some of our countryside sites.
- Creating areas for Outside Classrooms and Forest Schools, teaching students to care for their surroundings; this has the potential of reduction in ASB and vandalism seen on our sites. The school is keen to create “peace gardens”; areas of reflection for their students within their grounds. There is no reason why something similar could not be created on the recreation ground.
- Creating a wheeled sports track, a single use tarmac track that caters for all wheeled sports including bikes, scooters and skateboards similar to the ones at Shorncliffe, Little Harlescott Lane and Meole. The school would be a perfect place to rather the specification for such a project.
- Creating areas for tree planting and wildflower planting. The Countryside Team have done some great work with students across the town in developing similar schemes.
- Potentially laying out part of the site for temporary informal team games including football, rounders and athletics. It has been ascertained that formal fencing would only be required for formal team games; this would not apply for games lessons. Grounds staff have looked at locations that pitches could be marked out to reduce the risk of damage to vehicles.

Staff had also discussed broader areas in which the Town Council and School might be involved:

- The Council operates a 4000 square metre greenhouse and has in the past facilitated school visits to show students how to grow and care for plants. Students have also helped plant hanging baskets.
- The Council has developed a Tree Nursery with funding from DEFRA. This facility could be used to help students understand about treestock, plant on trees, take cuttings for shrub propagation. Staff could also help students plant both in the school grounds and at Moston Road.
- The Council is developing a programme of volunteering opportunities with Shrewsbury School. Shrewsbury Academy already has links with Shrewsbury School and the potential for students from the two schools to work on plans to improve Moston Road provides benefits for both schools.

- The Council has provided schools with the opportunity of work experience placements and staff could be made available to visit the school to tell their personal experiences of being a work experience apprentice and growing with the organisation.
- The Council has had a number of apprentice gardeners in the past and this route could provide students with good meaningful employment.

There are also benefits that the School can bring to the Council:

- The School has an active School Council and an active Eco-Council and students are keen to help to design, consult and create areas for the wider community.
- The School can help to broaden any community consultation. They already have an active electronic newsletter network and the latest briefing about Moston Road was appended to the Town Clerk's report.
- The School might assist in the development of a Friends of Moston Road Recreation Ground to look at the wider continued community usage of the site and greater public involvement.
- The School already have close links with the Town Council's Youth Service as a number of their students access various sessions that Young Shrewsbury provide. This is further work that can be done to provide collaborative activity.

Throughout these discussions, there has never been any suggestion that the Moston Road Recreation Ground would be handed over to the Shrewsbury Academy; it would continue to be a Council owned facility.

Councillor Pardy remarked that the report was flawed and asked that members reject the last 2 recommendations on the report that propose that the Council collaborates with the Shrewsbury Academy regarding its use of Moston Road Recreation Ground and that the Ward member works on developing these proposals.

Councillor Pardy's reasons for asking members to reject these recommendations were as follows:

- No formal consultation with the local community had taken place. Councillor Pardy therefore consulted the community using Facebook and the Sundorne Newsletter asking, "Would you be happy for the Recreation Ground to be used by the Academy?" - there were only 3 supporters of the project.
- It seemed that the Shrewsbury Academy would lose grants if they did not acquire use of the Recreation Ground so the plan may be one which is based more firmly on finance.
- The Academy had been using sports facilities and pitches for years therefore a re-organisation of timetables may be all that is required.
- The Football Club has been given use of 2 sports facilities at the Sports Village but these are only used on a Sunday and therefore would otherwise be free for community use.
- Historically, the Academy has only used the Recreation Ground once and that was five years ago for some orienteering and cross-country running. There are other more ideal routes for these activities nearby.

- With regard to Forest School, the site is surrounded by neighbourhoods and no fence is currently obscuring the view.
- Examples of schools without fenced off sports areas receive pressure from Ofsted to erect a fence for safeguarding purposes. Dog mess could also be an issue for children using the grounds if not fenced off.
- No skate park is required in the area.
- The Academy would like a place for their young people to go for reflection and contemplation but the recreation ground shares a boundary with a church and there are lots of other areas that could be used for this activity.
- The Recreation Ground is well used by the community for informal play and dog walking, and by elderly residents and young people from the 4 tower blocks and other flats nearby.
- The grounds were donated to the public by the previous landowners 60 years ago and there is a covenant on it (for which details are, unfortunately, now missing).
- The report estimates a sum of £80K will be required for development but there have never been any complaints about flooding and pathways are not required by the community.
- The community have only asked for a mini BMX track, some benches and some scattered wildflower planting.

Councillor Pardy also pointed out that the Academy are intending to replace one of their grass fields with tarmac for a new entrance and car park.

Councillor Pardy concluded that if this community space is given away it will be lost forever and could set a precedent resulting in more spaces handed to outside organisations.

Councillor Vasmer agreed that the Moston Road Recreation Ground should stay with the community and should not be used by the School. Councillor Mosley visited the site prior to the meeting and agreed that the area could be used better but not in the way the Academy proposed, adding that the Headteacher had been badly advised.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the report be noted.**
- (ii) That the Council rejects the proposals of greater collaboration with and use of Moston Road Recreation Ground by the Shrewsbury Academy;**
- (iii) That the Council rejects the proposal for the Ward member to actively work with Officers of the Town Council and School to develop proposals that can be consulted on by the public.**

50/21 UPDATE ON COMMITTEE & WORKING GROUP ACTIVITY

50/1 Youth Services Working Group

The Youth Service Working Group met on 15th September and the Youth & Community Manager gave an overview of activity over the last few months:

- Youth Clubs started back albeit on reduced numbers due to COVID restrictions. These included:
 - Grange Pre-Juniors (Yrs 3, 4, 5) (Weds)
 - Grange Juniors (Yr 6 only) (Mon)
 - Sundorne Juniors (Yrs 6+) (Weds)
 - Monkmoor Juniors (Yrs 6-9) (Thurs)
- Football Sessions ran at Monkmoor (Thurs) and the Grange (Tues) facilitated by a Sports Worker and a Youth Worker.
- Music Project – By invitation only.
- The Hive is currently not being used.
- Flaxivity has closed.
- Detached Work has been pared back as this is the focus of Shropshire Council's Youth Service.
- Structured activity sessions are currently being favoured more than general open access sessions.
- The Youth & Community Manager is attending School Assemblies to raise the awareness of youth sessions.
- Summer Activities were run for the first four weeks of the summer holidays using the Holiday Activity Fund money received. This included daily sessions at the Grange including the provision of food and trips on a Friday to the Great Escape, Bowling, Jumping and Ice Skating.
- Residential at the Long Mynd Adventure Camp for eight young people.
- Outward Bound – This was funding from the residue Jeux Sans Frontier funding for 2 young people. This did not prove successful and any future allocation of funding will have to be thought through more thoroughly.

48 young people have attended to date and the Alternative Curriculum officer provided a number of case studies which demonstrate how successful the programme has been. 22 young people were already booked on for the Autumn term and will be accommodated in 6/7 half day sessions. All Councillors present stressed the benefit of such a service to some of the most vulnerable young people in the town.

The following Autumn Term activities were discussed:

- Development of outreach into Gains Park, Meole & Copthorne where some youth related issues had been picked up.
- Attendance at school assemblies to promote the service.
- Re-establishment of Open Access Sessions.
- Explore opportunities for young people in the town centre, possibly around work experience and youth placements with local businesses.

Finances were in place for all services until the end of the financial year. Discussions will need to take place regarding Alternative Curriculum work as this was currently being funded through reserve money.

The future of the Service was also discussed as the Youth & Community Manager outlined his intentions to move on and pursue other opportunities although he was though keen to help shape the future of the service before he left. Discussions took place about the type of individual required to lead the service.

Members discussed the difficulty in recruiting youth workers of late and the need to develop a more substantive team rather than employing casual staff who found it difficult working around full-time employment.

Members discussed how the Town Council's youth function needs to complement the Shropshire Council's service and elected members need to press for the need for Shropshire Council provision in the town as a significant number of the county's young people live in Shrewsbury. The Youth & Community Manager detailed the work he had been doing with Sian Makin, the new Youth Manager for the Central Area.

Members stressed the need for Youth Services to be a focal point of the future Visioning Work as it was not just about developing services for young people but also integrating their needs and ideas into the future decision making activities of the town.

Councillor Vasmer added that Adam Purnell's work has been excellent over the years and that he has had a superb impact on the service.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

50/2 Civics Working Group

The minutes of the last meeting of the Civics Working Group of 16 September 2021 were circulated to members prior to this meeting.

Councillor Dean reported that the Mayor's diary has become increasingly busy recently. He also reported that the Mayor's Climate Emergency Guide will be given to people/organisations when they book the Mayor and that the Mayor has expressed his hope that subsequent mayors will continue to issue the Guide in future.

RESOLVED:

That the notes be noted.

50/3 Climate Change Standing Committee

An update on the work of the Climate Change Committee was circulated prior to the meeting.

The inaugural meeting of the Climate Change Committee met on 15 July 2021. The Committee was formed following the successful Climate Emergency Working Group with several members of the original informal group returning as part of the membership. The purpose of the Committee is to provide strategic direction to the climate emergency activities of the Town Council and the wider community.

The main topic of discussion at the meeting was the Climate Change action plan. A revised version of this plan would be considered at the next meeting on 7 October 2021 when the important task of prioritising key actions and proposing the commitment of funds will take place. Those proposals will be brought back to Finance and General Purposes Committee at the next meeting.

The Committee also heard a presentation by John Ogle on behalf of the Shropshire Climate Action Partnership regarding the creation of a Low Carbon Heat Network for Shrewsbury town centre.

Councillor Mosley proposed that the new Active Travel Interim Officer at Shropshire Council be invited to the next meeting; Councillor Vasmer agreed to follow this up. It was noted that some of the Active Travel Interim Officer's schemes are currently concentrated in only one area of the town (Cophorne, Radbrook and Bowbrook) but it was noted that an additional need for New Street was required, and that other areas of the town will benefit when further funding becomes available. Councillor Mosley expressed his dislike at the change of name from 'low traffic neighbourhoods' to 'liveable neighbourhoods' which he thought insulting.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the update be noted.**
- (ii) That the new Active Travel Interim Office be invited to a meeting.**

51/21 WELCOME BACK FUND

The Town Clerk circulated the Welcome Back Fund Guidance from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (April 2021) and a report on the Fund prior to the meeting. The Report updated the Committee on the allocation of funds from the Welcome Back Fund as follows:

Shropshire Council has received funding approval for £288,000 under the Welcome Back Fund. Details of the fund are appended to this report.

The fund had been apportioned to various towns across the county with a remit to drive economic activity within those towns. There are various conditions of funding around what it can be spent on and how the funding can be drawn down. Typical activity that the funding can be used on includes the following:

- Placed based marketing, for example, supporting safe celebration events on high streets and in local towns.

- Marshals.
- Public space maintenance.
- Maintenance of public conveniences (toilets) including new temporary facilities (toilets) provision.
- Beautification activities including graffiti removal.
- Non-permanent public realm adaptations.
- Activities that future proof the high street.
- Improvement of green spaces and provision of outdoor seating areas.

£45,000 had been allocated to Shrewsbury. Given the economic focus of the funding, the first port of call for delivery has been the Business Improvement Districts. For all towns other than Shrewsbury & Oswestry, the Town Councils were asked to consider how Shropshire Council should spend the funds with a preference of using their framework contractors. In the case of the two larger towns, provision has been made for the funds to be transferred to the Business Improvement Districts on the expectation that any spend is based upon a collective agreement between the BID and the respective Town Council. This has in effect provided greater flexibility on how the funding can be spent with this route.

The Town Clerk had met with the Executive Director of the Shrewsbury Business Improvement District to look at potential projects. All projects need to be completed and funding claimed by the end of this financial year.

It is considered that the Castle Street Area of the town from the Railway up to its junction with Pride Hill would be most impactful, taking into account some of the public realm improvements suggested within the Castle Street Feasibility Study commissioned by the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan Partnership. Work would include:

- Delineation of the cycle/carriage way with a more semi-permanent solution than the social distancing measures – this would help continue the culture of promoting active travel within the town centre and a sense that the street becomes more pedestrian friendly space rather than being vehicle dominant, whilst continuing to provide appropriate loading arrangements for businesses
- Expansion of the public art project which has seen BT Boxes painted by local artists – to potentially include the two bus shelters (that would need refurbishment and sedum roofs) and possibly the crossing points (similar to a project in the Piccadilly area of London)
- Introduction on Street Trees in planters and very contemporary planting
- Development of an A-Board Scheme to help promote businesses but not cause public realm clutter
- Enhancements to seating

Members considered providing an additional contribution of £10k to match a similar sum provided by the BID; this was supported

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Report be noted.**
- (ii) That the Council contributes an additional £10k to the project fund.**
- (iii) That the Council puts forward a representative to work on the Task Group.**

52/21 CLOSING REMARKS

In closing the meeting, the Chairman thanked members of the public for attending and those that had logged in. All papers relating to this 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. He thanked Councillors attending and Theatre Severn and all staff involved in this meeting.