

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

**CLEAN RIVERS WORKING GROUP
HELD AT LIVESEY HOUSE**

30 JANUARY 2024

PRESENT

Councillors Rosemary Dartnall (Chair) Bernie Bentick & Kate Halliday

Alison Biddulph, Suzie Roy (Up Sewage Creek), Andy Jones (Shrewsbury Town Fisheries), Luke Neal (Shropshire Wildlife Trust – Head of Landscape Recovery) , Stephen Potter, Kat Ray & Sam Wilson (Severn Trent); Jamie Drummond (Drummonds Canoes); Pau Hayward, Gareth Parsons, Tom Coekin & Dan Trewin (Environment Agency;

IN ATTENDANCE

Helen Ball (Town Clerk)

21/24 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Gareth Mead (Severn Trent Water)

22/24 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

All twin-hatted members declared a personal interest in Shropshire Council should any matters relating to the Town Council's relationship with Shropshire Council arise.

23/24 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was agreed that the minutes of the last meeting held on 25 November 2024 were a true and accurate record.

24/24 MATTERS ARISING

Sam Wilson (Environment Community & Engagement Lead) detailed the types of engagement that was being carried out by Severn Trent.

This included:

- Targeted campaigns to drive behaviour change. She would provide details of Shrewsbury related campaigns
- Outreach Work with businesses around sewer misuse
- Schools Education Programmes around how toilets and sewers work

- Targeted offers of free water butts in postcode areas where surface water flooding was a problem

Councillor Bentick detailed problems with building rubble being dumped in the Reabrook. Paul Hayward reported that whilst it was an EA responsibility they were not funded to remove materials and questioned whether this could be dealt with as fly-tipping through Shropshire Council. Councillor Bentick felt that this wasn't an acceptable response, and he requested a discussion with the EA outside of the meeting.

25/24 BATHING WATER STATUS

Details of the Water Quality status for the river was discussed. The bathing water had been established as poor.

Alison Biddulph had expressed her disappointment with the classification, feeling that this did not portray the water quality overall.

Tom Coekin detailed the matrix in determining a classification. A classification was based upon averaged data over a 4-year period and that it was inevitable that the classification would be poor in the first year having only tested the river 20 times. 2024 was a wet year, which saw the amplification of E-Coli bacterial readings and the three spikes had been put down to storm events.

Jamie Drummond reported that he had seen a noticeable decline in usage of the Frankwell ramp since publication and that in seeking bathing water status there should have been a clear directive and understanding of how the classification was calculated and its potential impact on other river users.

Alison Biddulph apologised saying she hadn't intended to damage businesses. There was nothing that could be done with the formal signage as that was prescribed by DEFRA but there was a need to launch a campaign about safe swimming. She asked whether EA might help with a form of words.

Environment Agency staff wished to stress that having bathing water status was beneficial long-term as it allowed both EA and Severn Trent to access resources to make improvements and changes. EA had developed their Action Improvement Plan and whilst it wasn't for public use, Tom was happy to share the plan with the Group.

It was agreed that Alison, Jamie, Tom, Kat & Rosemary would look to developing signage that explained the classification by the beginning of March.

Kate Halliday reported that Julia Buckley MP was keen to get community groups together. Whilst there was to be significant investment this would result in significant rises to bills. She enquired whether there could be an extra-ordinary meeting of this group to look at a forward plan. Stephen Potter offered to help.

26/24 RIVER SUMMIT

Alison reported that she was working with 6 volunteers to organise a River Summit. They were looking for a venue and the summit was aimed at promoting the use of the river. She asked whether other partners were willing to help. Those agreed to contact Alison directly.

27/24 SEVERN TRENT UPDATE

Severn Trent reported they had been given the green light to proceed with their business case for improvements to reduce water quality issues in Shrewsbury. They had already started work on some of the CSOs in Shrewsbury and were looking at plans to segregate surface water from sewage.

28/24 ENVIRONMENT AGENCY UPDATE

Since classification the drafting of the Action Improvement Plan had been carried out. Investigations had taken place with any adverse testing results and source apportionment testing had been carried out since August but currently they were unable to identify sources of pollution from such a small sample of tests.

29/24 SHREWSBURY TOWN FISHERIES UPDATE

Fisheries gave an update on their continued testing which fed into the wider Angling Trust State of the Severn Report.

The Town Clerk asked about testing of the Reabrook as Councillor Bentick had raised the fact there was no testing in recent Standing Committees of the Council. Andy Jones reported that his team regularly tested Reabrook since November as far as its upper reaches in Pontesbury. The Reabrook was not as bad as the River Severn and fish stocks were considerably higher in the Reabrook than other tributaries.

Bailiffs had expressed concern that much of the poor water quality in Shrewsbury was down to the easement of pressures on farmers in Wales regarding the spreading of slurry. The River had maintained above average levels since September resulting in outlying fields being waterlogged, yet farmers continued to spread slurry. There were questions whether farmers were meeting the Farming Rules for Water rules:

[Rule 1: Planning use of manures and fertilisers](#)

[Rule 2: Storing organic manures](#)

[Rule 3: Applying manures or fertilisers](#)

[Rule 4: Where not to apply organic manures](#)

[Rule 5: Where not to apply fertiliser](#)

[Rule 6: Reasonable precautions to prevent soil erosion](#)

[Rule 7: Protecting against soil erosion by livestock](#)

[Rule 8: Position of livestock feeders](#)

EA representatives encouraged reporting of any concerns

30/24 FURTHER UPDATES

30.1 Surfers Against Sewage

It was reported that Surfers Against Sewage had their own website where other's water quality data was being stored.

30.2 Up Sewage Creek

It was reported that Up Sewage Creek had their own testing kits but testing locations wasn't known. They were happy to share their data with others.

30.3 Sabrina Boat

No one present

30.4 Canoe Clubs

Jamie would look to contacting the national bodies for paddle board and canoeing to see how they could support the group

30.5 Swimming Clubs

The club were looking to take part in the 7-mile swimming club even

31/24 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 23 April – 5.00pm - Livesey House