

**SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL**  
**Meeting of Council**  
**Held in the Council Chamber, Shirehall, Shrewsbury at**  
**6pm on Monday 23 January 2023**

**PRESENT**

Councillors E Roberts (Mayor), R Dartnall, M Davies, P Gillam, N Green, K Halliday, C Lemon, P Moseley, A Mosley, K Pardy, A Phillips, D Vasmer, B Wall & R Wilson.

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Gary Farmer (Head of Operations), Andy Watkin (Head of Resources), Michelle Farmer (Committee Clerk).

**112/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**RESOLVED:**

**That apologies be accepted from Councillor Bentick, Councillor Dean and Councillor Wagner. Apologies were also received from Amanda Spencer (Deputy Town Clerk).**

**113/22 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
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**114/22 MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL**

The minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 14 November 2022 were submitted as circulated and read.

**The Town Clerk referred to the Planning Committee minutes of 1 November 2022 and:**

**66.3 22/03369/OUT - Outline application (access for consideration) for a Continuing Care Community – Hencote.**

The Town Council had objected to this application on two occasions and the application was currently in the appeal process as Shropshire Council had also refused the application.

Members had now been made aware that Shropshire Council had appeared to change their original decision over the appeal at the last minute. The Planning Inquiry was scheduled to start the next day.

Councillor Green had requested an emergency motion to be declared at this meeting but there was no mechanism for an emergency motion. He advised Members that this would be a matter for the Planning Committee as they had assumed that Shropshire Council would continue with the appeal but had now appeared to have 'rolled over'. The inquiry planned would still go ahead and that the Inspector was intending to hear all witnesses. He enquired as to how far the Members wished to pursue a judicial review as large costs would be involved.

The Town Clerk advised that the established practice was that where the Town Council and Shropshire Council supported refusal of an application and the matter be referred to the Planning Inspectorate, the Town Council did not seek third party representation as all previous

comments would be submitted as part of the Planning Authority Defence. This change of heart at the last minute denied the Town Council an opportunity to make representations. This needed further discussion.

Members had all objected to this application with good reasons and he suggested it was discussed in further detail at the next planning Committee due to be held on 31 January.

Councillor Phillips expressed his surprise at the 'change of heart' from Shropshire Council and he was surprised at them accepting a 10% Affordable Housing contribution.

Councillor Vasmer stated that the emergency motion should be put forward, but the Town Clerk advised that any motion had to be presented within seven days. The only course was to raise it as a matter from the previous minutes.

The Mayor read out the motion that Councillor Green had wished to put forward so Members were aware:

- 1) Councillors and people of Shrewsbury will be shocked to hear that Shropshire Council is intending to offer no evidence at the Inquiry into the Appeal against the refusal of planning permission for the development of an up-market care home at the Hencote site which starts on Tuesday. This only became apparent towards the end of last week, giving no time for objectors to consider this new information.
- 2) This is due to the appellant offering a last-minute offer of £1.3m towards affordable housing.
- 3) This sum has been accepted by Shropshire Council as sufficient to outweigh the original reasons for refusal. Not only is the sum offered derisory - normally three to five times that amount would be offered - but in no way does it recompense residents and visitors for the irrevocable harm to a striking and highly visible part of Shrewsbury's landscape.
- 4) Moreover, the threat to nearby ecology cannot be fully computed, particularly as the damage from runoff from the site would only become apparent during and after construction.
- 5) Furthermore, previous planning applications on the site have highlighted the problematic highways concerns regarding additional traffic.
- 6) The argument put forward by the developer, that this development would help Shrewsbury increase care spaces, is disingenuous. In practice this development would attract wealthy retirees from across the country. It would only add to the growing pressures upon our hard-pressed hospitals which already have to deal with the consequences of a higher-than-average number of older people.

This Council Resolves:

- 1) To deplore Shropshire Council's response to the developer's offer and to fight this proposed development by all legal means.
- 2) To call on the Planning Inspector to adjourn the Inquiry into the development at Hencote until objectors have had the opportunity to consider the developer's latest offer.

**RESOLVED:**

- i) **That the above motion be discussed in further detail at the next Planning Committee to be held on 31 January**
- ii) **That the Minutes of the Full Meeting of Council on 14 November 2022 be approved and signed as a true and accurate record.**

## **115/22 MATTERS ARISING**

**105/22 – Dana Footpath.** Councillor Mosley commented that at the Full Council meeting held on 14 November 2022, he had put forward a motion which was critical of the Shropshire Horticultural Society and called on them to end their very longstanding opposition to the plans for a diversion of the Dana Footpath to take it across the Castle forecourt so as to avoid the steps and provide a more accessible route.

At the meeting, Councillor Mosley had withdrawn the motion as the Shropshire Horticultural Society gave an undertaking that they would review their decision. He informed Council that the Shropshire Horticultural Society General Committee had met and decided to approve the plans.

This was excellent news for the very large numbers of current users of the path and particularly for those with mobility difficulties, buggy users, shoppers etc who would now be able to enjoy an attractive route in and out of the town. It would encourage active travel, draw more visitors to the Castle and promote the visitor economy.

There were still discussions to be held to finalise details, but Shropshire Council would undertake the work and Shrewsbury Town Council had already set aside £50,000 for construction. Councillor Mosley thanked officers at Shrewsbury Town Council and Shropshire Council and the Shropshire Horticultural Society for their final approval. He also gave thanks to for the significant role that the Castlefields Action Team had played in raising public awareness and their successful lobbying efforts over a number of years.

## **116/22 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **116.1 MAYORAL ENGAGEMENTS**

Details of the Mayor & Deputy Mayor's engagements for the period 6 November 2022 to 24 December 2022 were circulated and noted.

The Mayor reported that since the last meeting she had a full diary and had attended lots of festive activities including the Official opening of the Lime Tree Care Home, Shropshire Music Winter Concerts, the Shrewsbury Drapers Carol Service and Shrewsbury Abbey Nine Lessons and Carols.

The Deputy Mayor informed Council that she had attended events over the Christmas period including the Shropshire Freemasons Carol Service along with the Mayor, the Lingen Davies Carol Concert and the War Widows association lunch. This week she had officially opened the new Kwik Fit centre on Featherbed Lane.

### **116.2 TOWN CLERK ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Town Clerk reminded Councillors of the current Mini Holland Bid and her request for comments from Councillors. She asked that letters of support be sent to her as soon as possible due to the deadline of the 31 January 2023.

## **117/22 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.

A question had been received from Alyson Lanning from the Greenfields Community Group, but this was not received by the Town Clerk until shortly before the start of this meeting as the question had been sent to the Deputy Town Clerk and not the Town Clerk as standing orders specify, and the Deputy Town Clerk was currently on sick leave. Due to the lateness of the question the Town Council had not had an opportunity to make a response.

Councillor Mosley stated that due to the lateness of the question, following Standing Orders, the question would be answered within five working days from today. Councillor Mosley was happy to read out the following question, but a response would not be given at this meeting.

“Greenfields Community Group wish to submit the following questions to this evening's Shrewsbury Town Council meeting (23.1.23). These are questions that have not been answered - having been submitted to the full council on 14.11.22.

Shropshire Council has recently issued an Independent Report 2022 into their views on what constitutes and does not constitute a park or open space in a response to reviewing the planning process and revocation of planning decision 2018 where all parties stated that this 'site' (Greenfields Recreation Ground) was not and never was a park. In the view of Shropshire Council, a park is land which primarily is used for 'sport or recreation' and are not specific beyond these terms.

Do the Shrewsbury Town councillors endorse this loose definition for their parks in their wards for any future disposal?

Shropshire Council repeats the 'anecdotal' narrative of the Redfern report (published June '22) and STC in the above report.

However recent documents have come to light:

1. conveyancing 2017 where the wrong deed and map were used in the disposal of Greenfields Recreation Ground, an alternative map substituted by STC for the Capper Deed map
2. and at the Land Registry where the Town Clerk registered Greenfields Recreation Ground in 2010 on behalf of the Council through an AP1 document which is legally binding. The site sold is clearly part of this registering of land in 2010 and within the map boundary showing Greenfields Recreation Ground attached to this AP1

In 2010 the Town Clerk and the Council therefore knew this land legally was part of Greenfields Recreation Ground as they provided a legally binding map and document.

Can the Town Clerk please answer why STC knowingly disposed land that was legally held as a part of the Recreation Ground, as she registered the land at the Land Registry and signed the documents in 2010 (before she created two new deeds on the site two months later). STC does not have any legal deeds, deed maps or legal documents that show this land is not a park however it has numerous legal documents in the public domain that show it cannot be anything other than a park, so any alternative anecdotal evidence is an incorrect subjective view and not one based of the legal facts.

3. What is the time limit for Shrewsbury Town Council to answer a question from the public?

Could you please ensure that these questions are raised at the meeting tonight - as they have not been satisfactorily answered at the previous meeting.”

Councillor Phillips understood why the question could not be answered this evening due to Standing Orders but stated that all Councillors should have a copy of this question.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the question be noted, and a written response would be sent to the Greenfields Community Group within five working days of this meeting.**

**118/22 MOTIONS FROM MEMBERS**

**SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT CONFERENCE FOR SHROPSHIRE – PRESENTED BY COUNCILLOR LEMON.**

This motion sought to record and applaud the first steps that the community of Baschurch had taken to reinstate its railway station, following the positive engagement of a large proportion of its population and the support of a wide number of bodies and organisations.

This Council had declared a climate emergency. As such, it recognised the need to reduce carbon emissions, and one of the best ways this could be achieved was by encouraging a switch to sustainable modes of transport, particularly from private car to public transport.

Shrewsbury, as the county town, sat at the middle of a web of railway lines and bus routes and was well placed to drive the modal change required to move from high-carbon private cars to lower carbon buses and trains, especially as electric and hybrid versions of both continue to be developed. As such, they should be applauding initiatives to improve these links, and to increase the options for rural communities to travel into the town by bus and train where those journeys are necessary.

The Council should support local initiatives from communities as they determined their own transport needs, as many of us here had done whilst we try to resist cuts to the bus services that serve their divisions. As well as making it easier for residents of Baschurch and the surrounding area to travel to Shrewsbury, an open station would make it easier for residents of our town to travel there – especially the many students from Shrewsbury who travel to Walford College. Increasing options was the best way to encourage a shift to public transport, and if a regular, reliable, clean train or bus service was provided, then people would use it. He hoped that the moves to reopen this station encouraged other places in the county to follow suit – Shropshire like many parts of the United Kingdom used to have a far more extensive network of railway lines serving towns and villages, it would be good to see other places become reconnected to the national network too.

Members supported Councillor Lemons motion. Councillor Phillips enquired whether there were potential sites within Town Council boundaries. Councillor Lemon stated that it would be good to get the ball rolling on Baschurch first, as although there had been other suggestions, such as a Shrewsbury Park & Ride station near Preston Boats, it was very expensive and time consuming to reopen an old (or open a new) station so one at a time was good.

**RESOLVED:**

**That this Council welcomed Baschurch Parish Council's efforts to re-open Baschurch railway station and congratulate them on the first successful steps their project had taken. The scheme they envisaged involved a transport interchange hub next to the station which would enable a greater catchment area to be taken into account when making the case for**

**reinstatement, facilitating an integrated public transport service involving walking, cycling, buses and rail in the ideal scenario. That this Council called on the Shrewsbury Area Committee of SALC through its Representative to consider how this parish council initiative may be promoted widely across the county as an example of best practice on developing sustainable transport at the first tier of Local Government.**

#### **119/22 BUDGET 2023/24**

The Head of Resources reported that the budget needed to be agreed and the precept requirement to be submitted to Shropshire Council by no later than 31 January 2023. The draft budget had been presented to Finance & General Purposes Committee earlier in January, where the majority of the meeting was spent looking and discussing in detail the forecast outturn which helped form the basis of the budget for next year 2023/24, and the assumption made and applied and any savings identified to offset rising costs along with any other impacts on the budget, such as moving to 7 St Johns Hill.

He hoped Members could appreciate that they were in a period of inflationary pressures which made forecasting and setting a budget difficult. The budget presented before Members was in the usual format for this meeting by cost centres, as opposed to nominal analysis which looked at total costs.

The current year forecast was for a £94 deficit.

Turning to the budget, Expenditure had increased due to inflation on costs to £4,198,993. There was also an increase in income streams however, to balance the budget this had required an increase in precept to £63.26, a £3.01 increase on band D. This would raise £1,670,237 to balance out at a £104 deficit.

He commented that whilst this would be little comfort to residents, the precept had not increased for 3 years and benchmarking against towns in Shrewsbury and nationally, the rate was very low. Most houses were also Band B which would be a £2.34 increase, but they had to quote a Band D equivalent. The budget still enabled the council to provide excellent unreduced services and had a good pipeline of capital projects going forward from good financial management in previous years. The Head of Resources commended this budget for agreement by the Council.

Councillor Mosley thanked the Head of Resources for the budget and for keeping the Town Council in line with a reasonable outcome. The raising of the precept was not ideal, but the Town Council precept was relatively small and unavoidable. Councillor Mosley also commented that they had a substantial Capital Programme to complete with some significant developments outstanding. He also commented that Members were currently in the middle of a visioning exercise where they could discuss where they could put their finances.

Councillor Wilson also thanked Members for the budget. He commented that the rise in precept was regrettable but necessary to maintain the services provided and that Shrewsbury had the lowest of any Town Council in the County.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- (i) That the Council Tax base for Shrewsbury for 2023/24 be noted as being 26,402.73.**

- (ii) That a Revenue Expenditure Budget of £4,198,93 be set against an Income budget of £4,198,889 with a planned deficit of £104 being funded through General Reserves.
- (iii) That a Precept be levied against the Taxpayers of Shrewsbury of £1,670,237 which equated to a Band D Levy of £63.26.
- (iv) That the proposed Fees & Charges as agreed by both Finance & General Purposes Committee & Recreation & Leisure Committee be approved.

## **120/22 LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION CONSULTATION**

The Town Clerk reported to Members the current consultation from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, and its proposals for new council divisions and divisional boundaries for Shropshire Council. The consultation would conclude at the end of January.

This consultation had already been raised at Finance & General Purposes on 9 January and the Group Leaders had met to look at proposals and to submit comments to the Boundary Commission. Town Council thoughts had also been communicated to the Shropshire Council working group and the legal team at Shropshire Council who were aware and supportive.

The submission to the Boundary Commission stated that the Town Council was firmly of the view that Shropshire Council and Shrewsbury Town Council boundaries needed to remain aligned establishing 17 separate member divisions for the unitary authority, allowing Bayston Hill to keep autonomy from Shrewsbury as a very cohesive and distinct community. The benefits the Town Council saw to this approach were as follows:

- Enhancements to community cohesion, ironing out those existing anomalies from the original boundary review
- Establishment of very clear development boundaries for the town
- Assurance that any currently proposed and future urban extensions of Shrewsbury became integrated into the authority providing their services rather than very urban parts of extremely rural parishes
- A very clear understanding of responsibility for community infrastructure, which allowed for capital CIL/ S106 money and revenue from Council Tax precept assigned to the authority responsible for that infrastructure
- Removal of any confusion for electors at both Unitary & Town Council as to candidatures and voting during elections, who to seek representation and advice from which authority/member to create a sense of identity with.

The Town Council were aware of Shropshire Council's proposals and had communicated the above as a sensible approach. Additionally, they had requested that Shropshire Council proceeded to undertake a Community Governance Review of the Town Council boundary as outlined above.

Councillor Dartnall fully supported the submission but stated that the map needed to be updated to show Column and Sutton as two distinct wards.

Councillor Wilson commented stating that the proposals set by the Boundary Commission were ridiculous and they must stay in Shrewsbury. He referred to areas within Shrewsbury being included in the Severn Valley Division as well as other areas now being in the Ludlow

Parliamentary constituency. He commented that the draft submission as prepared by the Town Clerk summed up the situation perfectly.

Councillor Lemon commented that as he was only a Town Councillor, he was not allowed access to the Shropshire Council proposals. He would like to see the maps as it was important to single-hatters also. He also agreed that the proposals made no sense, and he hoped the Boundary Commission saw sense.

Councillor Mosley commented that the Town Council boundaries needed to be looked at and the Commission needed to be aware of urban extensions which needed to be part of Shrewsbury and not rural areas.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Town Councils submission as presented be forwarded to both the Boundary Commission and Shropshire Council.**

**121/22 BUDGET CONSULTATION 2023/24**

The Town Clerk reported that this was a Shropshire Council consultation where people could give views on their proposals. The consultation was open until 30 January 2023. A link was added to the agenda papers so Members could complete the online survey if they wished to. No comments were made by Members.

**122/22 JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

The Town Clerk reported to Council the membership requirement for the Joint Consultative Committee. The Committee must have six Councillors and six staff members. Due to the early start of this meeting and the time constraints of the Operational Staff, some Members were finding it difficult to attend the meetings which led to the meeting not being quorate.

The Town Clerk had looked at the possibility of moving this meeting to an afternoon, but this was not feasible for the staff. Group Leaders had been discussing this and were supportive of this committee not following political balance rules if it meant others could attend.

Councillor Wilson commented that it was a shame this item had ended up on Full Council and it was disappointing it had not worked for Members of the Liberal Democrats, but he understood that these meetings needed to be quorate and were not a political division.

Councillor Vasmer apologised to Members that he had to withdraw from the Committee but due to the early starts it was difficult for him to attend and he fully understood the importance of the Committee.

**RESOLVED:**

**That Councillor Dartnall and Councillor Pardy be voted as new members of the Joint Consultative Committee.**

**123/22 POLICIES**

The Town Clerk presented a number of policies to Council for approval. These had been worked on by the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk and had been considered by both the Finance & General Purposes Committee and a Working Group.



Councillor Mrs Moseley had noticed a typo on the Asset Disposal Policy. The Town Clerk agreed to look at this and amend accordingly.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the following policies be accepted:**

- i) Asset Disposal Policy**
- ii) Business Continuity Policy**
- iii) Complaints Procedure**
- iv) Data Protection Policy**
- v) FOI Publication Scheme**
- vi) Purposefully Habitual and Vexatious Complaints Policy**

**124/22 FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

The minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 5 December 2022 and 9 January 2023 were circulated as read.

Councillor Mrs Moseley commented that she was marked both in attendance and absent on the minutes of 5 December, Councillor Pardy had acted as a substitute for her.

Councillor Lemon commented that his attendance at the meeting on 9 January had not been noted.

**RESOLVED:**

**That upon Councillors Moseley and Lemons' attendance being corrected, the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 5 December 2022 and 9 January 2023 be received and adopted.**

**125/22 RECREATION & LEISURE COMMITTEE**

The Minutes of the Recreation & Leisure Committee held on 18 January 2023 were circulated as read.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the minutes of the Recreation & Leisure Committee meeting held on 18 January 2023 be received and adopted.**

**126/22 PLANNING COMMITTEE**

The minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 22 November 2022, 13 December 2022 and 10 January 2023 were submitted as circulated as read.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 22 November 2022, 13 December 2022 and 10 January 2023 be received and adopted.**

## **127/22 WORKING GROUPS**

### **127.1 YOUTH WORKING GROUP**

The minutes of the Youth Working Group meeting held on 17 November 2022 and 19 January 2023 were circulated as read.

Councillor Mrs Moseley provided an update since the last Youth Working Group meeting held on 19 January. The meeting had raised the issue of major building work taking place at Monkmoor Lodge this year. It was likely that the New Lodge would not be available after the half term break in the summer term, i.e., week beginning 29 May 2023. It was now looking hopeful that Crowmoor School may be an alternative option.

#### **RESOLVED:**

**That the minutes of the Youth Working Group meeting held on 17 November 2022 and 19 January 2023 be received and adopted.**

### **127.2 HEALTH & WELLBEING WORKING GROUP**

The minutes of the Health & Wellbeing Working Group meeting held on 13 October 2022 and 17 November 2022 were circulated as read.

Councillor Halliday provided an update. It was noted that one of the six Health and Wellbeing Hub pilots had submitted to NHS England and had subsequently seen the funding awarded withdraw. Councillor Halliday had written to the ICS and would continue with the ongoing engagement.

#### **RESOLVED:**

**That the minutes of the Health & Wellbeing Group meeting held on 13 October 2022 and 17 November 2022 be received and adopted.**

## **128/22 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](http://www.shrewsburytowncouncil.gov.uk)

## **129/22 PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

The minutes of the Personnel Committee meetings held on 9 November 2022 and 1 December 2022 were circulated as read.

Councillor Mosley questioned why these items were exempt items as only one set of minutes needed to be excluded from the public.

Due to the content of the minutes, The Town Clerk, Head of Resources, Head of Operations and the Committee Officer were asked to leave the meeting whilst the minutes were discussed.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on 9 November 2022 and 1 December 2022 be received and adopted.**

**130/22 CLOSING REMARKS**

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