

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

**Meeting of the Climate Emergency & Nature Recovery Standing Committee
Held at the Grange Centre, Mount Pleasant Road
At 2.30pm on Thursday 11 January 2024**

PRESENT

Councillors J Dean (Chair), R Dartnall, A Mosley, K Pardy,

Alex Grant (Shropshire Wildlife Trust), Chris Bainger (Environment Agency), Dan Wrench (Shropshire Council), Frank Oldacre (Friends of the Earth), Kevin Oubridge (Big Solar Coop), Mike Dineen, and Tom Endacott (Gfleet)

IN ATTENDANCE

Amanda Spencer (Deputy Town Clerk) and Alan Jameson (Admin Apprentice/Climate Change Officer)

29/23 APOLOGIES

That apologies were received from Councillor Bentick, Councillor Wilson, David Sharpe, and Sharuff Morsa

30/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Shropshire Councillors	Twin hatted members declared personal interests in matters relating to the Town Council's relationship with Shropshire Council.
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31/23 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Climate Emergency & Nature Recovery Standing Committee meeting held on 12 October 2023 were submitted as circulated and read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Climate Emergency & Nature Recovery Standing Committee meeting held on 12 October 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

32/23 MATTERS ARISING

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that all matters arising were included within the agenda.

33/23 CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN 2020 - 2024

The Deputy Town Clerk informed the committee that most updates relating to the Action Plan were highlighted in the agenda.

The Committee were reminded by the Chair that the reason for holding the meetings at various locations was to provide the opportunity to have a greater understanding of Town Council assets. Regarding the Grange, he made the suggestion that members take into consideration such matters as the way the building was heated.

34/23 GREAT BIG GREEN WEEK 2024

The Deputy Town Clerk described the Great Big Green Week as an opportunity to showcase what the Town Council has done to reduce their environmental impact. However, she briefed members that while the Town Council was happy to demonstrate to the public the work it does, they were also encouraging others to get involved. As part of the effort to incorporate the various stakeholders of Shrewsbury, 50 organisations were sent letters from the Chair, which included charities, the B.I.D, and Shropshire Council. All were invited to participate and given encouragement to present in the way that most fits their organisation. She further added that while they had received many responses to the invitation, some invitees had not yet answered back. Therefore, they would be chasing them up. Members of the Committee were also encouraged to try and get their own organisations involved.

Councillor Mosley asked who would be coordinating the event, and if schools had been invited.

The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that schools had been invited to participate and that she would be the one in charge of coordinating the event. However, she stressed that she would not be micromanaging everything as partners would have autonomy when it came to their presentations. The organisations invited to attend would have their plans for the occasion publicised by the Town Council. If they had trouble in deciding the most appropriate way to project their ideas, they would be offered suggestions on how to proceed.

35/23 MARCHES ENERGY AGENCY

The Committee were informed by the Deputy Town Clerk that there were currently 10 households using the scheme, and that they had received a number of applications over Christmas, some of which were not approved for various reasons. The Town Council was still waiting for an up-to-date statement of the expenditure so far.

Councillor Mosley enquired as to why there had been so few uptakes.

The Deputy Town Clerk replied that there had been a number of other funding pots that were being used up first. The Town Council was planning more publicity for the scheme, as well as a new press release to show the public what they had to offer. She emphasised the need to support as many people as possible.

Mike Dinneen informed the Committee of a grant the Civic Society had received from the Marches Energy Agency, which was used to replace outdated heaters in Bear Steps with panel heaters.

36/23 CARBON LITERATE STATUS

The Deputy Town Clerk familiarised the Committee to the Town Council's application for both bronze and silver literacy status, which they were applying for at the same time; there were extra steps that needed to be taken to attain silver status as a case study would have to be written for the purpose of encouraging reflection. She proposed that the Committee provide feedback on the case study after she had completed it. Once silver status had been attained, they could then pursue gold.

The Chair asked how many people had taken the training, and if employees had changed their working activities after participating in the training.

He was informed that training had been completed by around 16 people, and that the mindset of employees had changed. Examples were given of attitudes towards procurement, wastage, and how the Council operates on an operational level. Employees were consciously and subconsciously considering climate implications when conducting work; the Great Big Green Week would also provide an opportunity for further reflection in this area.

Councillor Dartnall enquired if the case study was to show what has been done and to push things forward.

The Deputy Town Clerk stated that they did not have to be perfect on the case study, as it was beneficial to also explore areas for improvement.

Councillor Mosley raised the point that this provided an opportunity for the Town Council to act an exemplar.

37/23 CARBON LITERACY TRAINING FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

As part of the Town Council's role to assist the community, the Deputy Town Clerk described their plan to help small businesses become climate literate. To be literate, there is a 7-hour attendance for the seminars, which may provide difficulties for some interested parties. She informed the Committee that Save Our Shropshire made a proposal to create a more bespoke package for small businesses and had been in talks with the Deputy Town Clerk regarding the most appropriate ways of engagement.

She further added that Save Our Shropshire suggested that the Town Council does not provide full funding for businesses, as it may remove some motivation to take the course seriously. She suggested charging businesses £50 for the course, with the Council funding the rest. There were also proposals to show a 2-hour promotional seminar to demonstrate the benefits of taking the training.

Chris Bainger enquired what they would get in return for completing the training. He was informed that they would receive a certificate and would be able to show that they are Carbon Literate with a seal of approval from carbon literacy.

Frank Oldacre pointed out that large businesses were already aware of the benefits of climate literacy for attracting customers and advised that the Council should highlight this to others.

Councillor Dartnall recommended to disseminate this out to other groups and proposed doing things incrementally, starting with Fresk then moving on to literacy.

Kevin Oubridge informed members that it was possible to attain Carbon Literacy with Climate Fresk.

38/23 E-CARGO BIKES

The Deputy Town Clerk informed the committee that the bikes were now available for use via Shropshire Cycle Hub and a press release was planned for that Friday.

39/23 EXTERNAL ATTENDEE PRESENTATION

Tom Endacott gave the presentation about his organisation Gfleet, a sustainable transport consultancy based in Shrewsbury that had been running for 20 years. Most of their clients had been local authorities, including the Welsh Government. He listed examples of their work for Exeter City Council, Leeds Park & Ride, and Northumberland County Council Staff Car Park.

He advised that their approach to transport was technological neutrality, and that they use life cycle analysis for assessing the environmental impacts of a product. Through this type of analysis, they are able to advise their clients as to the best type of vehicle to procure. He described battery powered vehicles as being the best option, followed by hybrid vehicles, then hydrogen, and finally biofuel if no other option was available, but he stressed this was far from ideal. He articulated that the only instance in which batteries were not ideal were for heavy vehicles.

Tom Endacott made an additional point that despite the initial cost, electric vehicles are cheaper to run than vehicles running on fossil fuels. He also made members aware of the best time to charge the vehicles based upon the demand and usage of the energy grid, which was overnight when most people were asleep.

Kevin Oubridge asked if electric vehicles lasted longer than diesel vehicles. He was informed that electric vehicles were expected to last for 10 years, whereas a diesel vehicle typically lasts for 7 years.

The Deputy Town Clerk brought to the Committee's attention of Tom Endacott's assistance with helping to create the Town Council's staff travel plan, and that his expertise was very helpful.

Dan Wrench highlighted his scepticism of hydrogen, and wondered if Tom would be able to speak to some of his colleagues in Shropshire about it.

Tom Endacott advised that transport needed more hydrogen than was currently available, and that the hydrogen currently available would be of better use on existing projects. He further emphasised that with hydrogen they cannot recover their cost.

40/23 CLIMATE WEBSITE

The Deputy Town Clerk updated the committee on the progress of the website. The plan had been submitted to Web Orchard, who had begun building the website, but there was still some work to be done, and that she would welcome feedback from the Committee.

The Committee were shown how the website currently looked and were guided through the various pages from Climate Initiatives, the Committee Page, Operations etc.

The Chair emphasised making sure that the website followed the accessibility rules on colours.

Councillor Mosley stressed that he didn't want too much about the Council on the website, that it would be helpful to make the website a resource to advise people what they can do.

Alex Grant enquired if there was anything regarding biodiversity included. He was given confirmation that there was.

Tom Endacott asked how often the progress tracker would be updated. The Chair advised that they were waiting for the audit to be completed, to which Tom Endacott suggested having it once a year.

The Chair asked if a live progress tracker could be implemented. He was informed by the Deputy Town Clerk that it they did not have the resources to do so.

Councillor Dartnall counselled that a live progress tracker wasn't necessary.

Dan Wrench said he enjoyed the idea of having a map showing what individuals were doing.

The Chair added to this with the suggestion of mapping nature recovery, and that having a map on the website would help get people involved.

Councillor Pardy asked if there was anything for children. The Deputy Town Clerk agreed that it was a good suggestion.

The Chair stressed the need for a live site constantly being developed, and somewhere people can get advice.

41/23 NEXT MEETING

The next Committee meeting will be held on 18 April 2024 at 2.30pm. External attendee presentation to be given by Frank Oldacre.