

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Meeting of the Climate Emergency & Nature Recovery Standing Committee

Held at Livesey House, 7 St Johns Hill

At 2.30pm on Thursday 10 April 2025

PRESENT

Councillors J Dean (Chair), R Dartnall, A Mosley, B Bentick and R Wilson.

Alex Grant (Shropshire Wildlife Trust), Frank Oldacre (Friends of the Earth), Anna Brennand (Marches Energy Agency) and Lynn Parker (LNRS Co-Ordinator, Shropshire Council)

IN ATTENDANCE

Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Clare Turner (Deputy Town Clerk), Max Ball (Communications Officer) and Esme Breeze (Admin Apprentice).

27/24 APOLOGIES

That apologies were received from Councillor P Moseley, Chris Bainger (Environment Agency), Tom Endacott (Gfleet), David Sharpe (AECB) and Kevin Oubridge (Climate Frisk).

28/24 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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29/24 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Climate Emergency & Nature Recovery Standing Committee meeting held on 16 January 2025 were submitted as circulated and read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Climate Emergency & Nature Recovery Standing Committee meeting held on 16 January 2025 be approved and signed as a correct record.

30/24 MATTERS ARISING

Min 21/24 - Great Big Green Week - The Town Clerk commented that the Town Council would be promoting Great Big Green Week but not facilitating the event. There was a mention of looking at the Great British Spring Clean and how that event would link in with some ideas around Great Big Green Week.

Min 22/24 – Climate Audit – The Town Clerk commented that this was ongoing. The Town Clerk also mentioned the possibility of having an arrangement for allotment holders for their waste to be sorted/collected.

31/24 LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY

Lynn Parker, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy Co-Ordinator for Shropshire Council, attended the meeting and gave a presentation to the committee on The Local Nature Recovery Strategy. She highlighted how it was a collaborative project that aimed to tackle environmental issues by encouraging nature recovery on different habitats, for example wetlands, woodlands, trees, hedgerows and connecting features, heathlands, grasslands, open habitats and habitat mosaics, farmed land and built environment. A map was shown to the committee, which highlighted some designated sites but also priority places. There was also an example given of some draft priorities, for example to restore and create new ponds with good water quality, restoration of natural ecosystem function in the headwaters, address the flood and low flow issues seen in Perry catchment, creating new hedgerows and restoring ones in poor condition.

Councillor Dartnall enquired if there would be greater protection for large sections of hedge removal that had been removed without permission. Lynn explained how the strategy was not there to mandate or protect but the removal had to be taken account of through the planning system and that there was already a set of regulations for hedgerow protection.

Lynn went on to explain that there was a 'how-to-guide' for councils to take the first step and take action. At the end of the presentation the Chairman allowed for questions.

Councillor Wilson commented on how the Town Council could look into the Built Environment Priorities, B1-B9, as a starting point as the Town Council would not need to wait for the strategy. He also suggested that one of the Operations Managers from the Town Council, could look into the B1-B9 Built Environment Policies, to see how soon they could be started.

Lynn Parker suggested that she should talk to the Operations Manager to look through the priorities and mapping.

The Town Clerk reported that she had already had discussions with Lynn and how they would look into other sites, not just countryside sites. She also suggested that the Town Council Countryside and Greenspace Manager and Operations Manager both looked into what could be done in the greenspaces.

Councillor Bentick commented that the map was unclear as it was not detailed in the area of the Reabrook. He suggested that the councillors should have maps of their own wards. Lynn commented to say that the proper version would be more detailed.

Councillor Dean mentioned that at Bishops Castle, their map was pinned up for people to have a look and make any comments on areas that they believed were important. He suggested that there should be a version to allow people in Shrewsbury Town to see the map.

Lynn commented that they were working with many partnerships and focusing resources and would also be providing monthly updates.

Alex Grant mentioned the 30 by 30 campaign, where 30 percent of land is managed in a nature reserve way by 2030.

Frank Oldacre mentioned how he thought that farmland was low on the list and needed more priority.

Lynn agreed and mentioned how farmland was already going to be top of the list after realising that farmland could be classed as other types of land as well, for example grassland.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Town Council continued to liaise and support the consultation out to organisations and residents.**
- (ii) That the Town Council review Environmental Policies B1-B9 to consider what immediate action it could take to improve nature recovery**
- (iii) That the councillors have individual sections of the map for their wards.**

32/24 FUEL POVERTY & ENERGY EFFICIENCY SCHEME

The Town Clerk gave an update on the scheme stating that in April 2023, Committee were informed that the Fuel Poverty and Energy Efficiency scheme, which was overseen by the Marches Trust, would be open to Shrewsbury residents who fell into different criteria. In July 2023, Committee were informed that the project had been officially launched and a commitment of £75,000 was pledged to the project by the Town Council. The scheme was available to owners, occupiers and landlords/tenants, but not social housing, and that the beneficiaries would be properties that fell under the Band A-B council tax properties with an Energy Performance Certificate and an SAP rating of C-G. Funds would be released to the MEA in three tranches of £25,000 each to allow a fair distribution of grants available. The Scheme was set to originally end on 31 March 2024 but was delayed getting off the ground, and was extended for a further year.

In view of the one-year extension had now lapsed and with local council elections where Town Council would have a new council and committee members, it felt that now was the correct time to end the scheme in its current form enabling the new council to agree how to use the remaining funds to meet the council's climate commitments.

To date, including pending/in progress cases, the total amount spent was £28,000. Cases that were still in the pipeline would be honoured but no new cases would be accepted.

Councillor Mosley commented that this was a good scheme and there was high demand for it, but it had been added on to an existing council scheme and therefore not many people knew about it.

RESOLVED:

That the Town Council agreed to pause the scheme with a view to further discussions with Marches Trust

33/24 CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN 2020 - 2024

The Town Clerk reported that the Action Plan was completed but The Carbon Neutrality Plan still required work as the Town Council were still not carbon neutral and still needed to fulfil their promise of being carbon neutral by 2030.

The Town Clerk commented that she would be meeting with Tom Endacott from G-fleet, to investigate the Town Councils fleet and if it could be changed but not got rid of.

Councillor Bentick wanted to know how far off the Town Council were from Carbon Neutrality and to see if it was possible to be carbon neutral before 2030.

Councillor Dean stated that mitigating was not enough, and that the burning of fossil fuels would also need to be stopped. Councillor Dartnall agreed and suggested that the fleet was the biggest impact.

Alex Grant reminded the committee that tree planting would not be the best solution by itself, as planting over wetland would cause the wetland to sequester more carbon. He also mentioned how it was important to not reduce biodiversity.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee await the outcome of the elections to discuss the Climate Action Plan further.

34/24 CARBON LITERACY ACCREDITATION

The Town Clerk reported that the Bronze Level Accreditation Application had been submitted and that to maintain it the Town Council had to forward plan and send a video off to reach V2 level. She reported that the Town Council had now met the requirements and accreditation. There would be a presentation held on 12th June for the Town Council to attend and receive their award.

The Town Clerk asked the committee if any members would wish to attend and receive the award. Councillor Dean commented that he would be happy to go and collect the award but also would not want to take the opportunity away from any other committee members.

RESOLVED:

That the decision on who would attend the award ceremony would be postponed until after the elections.

35/24 NEXT MEETING

The next Committee meeting will be held on 16 July 2025 at 2.30pm.