

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
CITY OF SANCTUARY WORKING GROUP
VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS
MONDAY 30 OCTOBER 2023

PRESENT

Councillors Phil Gillam (Chair), Kevin Pardy and Elisabeth Roberts

Helen Ball (Town Clerk) and Amanda Spencer (Deputy Town Clerk) – Shrewsbury Town Council

Amanda Jones – Shropshire Supports Refugees

15/23 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Kate Halliday and Maggie Filipova-Rivers.

16/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Those twin-hatted Councillors declared an interest as Shropshire Council in the event matters relating to the Town Council's relationship with the unitary council were discussed.

17/23 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was agreed that the minutes of the last meeting held on 18 September 2023 previously circulated were an accurate account of proceedings.

18/23 CITY OF SANCTUARY REGISTRATION

It was reported that the registration process was not complete. The Deputy Town Clerk would circulate the logo to all councillors and staff so that this could be used in email signatures.

19/23 CITY OF SANCTUARY TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

It was noted that a Town Council Networking Meeting had taken place on 24 October but no one from the group had been able to attend.

20/23 TOWN OF SANCTUARY ACTION PLAN

The Chair updated the meeting on the following actions:

1. A letter was to be created welcoming asylum seekers to the town – this would be added to various websites and social media pages (PG)
Update: This was now complete and available for circulation and on the Town Council's website.
2. The letter would be translated into various relevant languages (AJ)

Update: AJ had managed to translate the letter into Arabic, Ukrainian & Chinese. She would send each of these to the Deputy Town Clerk to be put into the correct format and added onto the Town Council website.

3. Appropriate training for councillors and officers would be investigated further (RD)
Update: RD was not at the meeting so no progress update was received. AJ would make enquiries. RD to be invited to all future meetings.
4. A visit to some of the current occupants of the Lion Hotel would be explored and coordinated (AJ/PG)
Update: PG reported that he, KP and ER had visited the Shropshire Supports Refugee Community Hub on 26 October. They had had a tour of the building and met around a dozen refugees, the majority of whom were from Sudan.
5. The possibility of automatic translating from the Town Council website would be investigated (AS)
Update: COMPLETE.
6. The application process for accreditation would be commenced (AS).
Update: AS had attached the agenda copies of the draft application form and action plan. She asked the group for their input into both of these documents.

AS said she would speak to the incoming Mayor about adopting Shropshire Supports Refugees as one of his charities for his mayoral term.

PG said that he would invite the current Mayor to the next meeting they had with refugees.

7. Comments on the draft Strategy and Action Plan would be returned to AS (All)
Update: AS had circulated the draft Strategy but no comments had yet been received. This would be discussed later in the meeting.
8. A Powerpoint presentation on current struggles would be created (AJ)
Update: AJ had not yet managed to prepare the presentation as she was working on one for a national conference currently. She would share the details of this conference with the group.
9. The Sevenoaks assessment would be shared with AS (MFR)
Update: COMPLETE.
10. Involvement in the process would be discussed with the BID (HB)
Update: HB had briefly mentioned the process to the BID; they were supportive of all community initiatives. Once more detail was available HB would discuss it further.

21/23 DRAFT STRATEGY

It was reported that AS had circulated the Draft Strategy for comments. The group agreed that they were happy to adopt this.

The group discussed how they might embed the sentiments of the City of Sanctuary status within normal Town Council business.

AS suggested that Recreation and Leisure Committee should be mindful of the commitment when discussing Town Council operations. Councillor training would help with this.

AJ suggested that there could be regular meetings between councillors and refugees. Shropshire Supports Refugees would be happy to assist with this.

22/23 FUTURE MEETING DATES

It was noted that the next meeting of the working group would take place on 4 December 2023 at 2.00pm.