

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

QUARRY WORKING GROUP

Meeting held at Livesey House, St Johns Hill, Shrewsbury

20 October 2023

PRESENT – Councillors Nat Green, Alan Mosley, Kevin Pardy (Chair) and Rob Wilson

IN ATTENDANCE – Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Amanda Spencer (Deputy Town Clerk) and Danny Powell (Operations Manager)

23/01 APOLOGIES

No apologies were received.

23/02 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS

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.

23/03 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes from the meeting on 9 May 2023 were noted.

23/04 MATTERS ARISING

There were none.

23/05 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The group were reminded that the purpose of the group was:

- To develop a holistic plan in developing and maintaining the Quarry Park given its jewel in the crown status and a Grade II Listed Park.
- To review all structures in the Park including all Memorials and Statues
- To review all physical infrastructure including pathways, public conveniences and utility connectivity
- To consider the maintenance requirements for the park including the use of the Depot, the decommissioning of the Greenhouse and associated re-use of the land as well as the necessary staff welfare requirements
- To consider relations with other stakeholders including the Shropshire Horticultural Society and the Quarry Baths
- To consider everyday management issues including CCTV and Security
- To review the charging structure of the park both for concessions and use as an events space

23/06 PLANS FOR THE TOP OF THE QUARRY

The Town Clerk informed the group that the Quarry still attracted the largest footfall in the town. She explained that this, along with issues such as regular flooding and changing climatic conditions were beginning to take its toll on the Quarry and a long-term management plan needed to be developed for the site. She added that the site was Grade 1 listed and so there would need to be a conservation plan in place to sit alongside the operational maintenance plan.

The Town Clerk also informed the group that there had been a Development Brief written in 2014 and that she suggested that the group look at this in the first instance. She also suggested that they consider employing a specialist to develop a long-term plan which would include ascertaining what the public would like to see from the Quarry. The Development Brief would be circulated after the meeting.

Councillor Wilson suggested that the Town Council had the opportunity to roll a number of solutions into one space at the Quarry by developing a building that could provide welfare facilities for staff along with toilets and a rentable space for the public. He added that the Town Council had a responsibility to ensure such a valuable asset was looked after properly.

He also suggested that the group consider review all entrances to the Quarry as he felt that there was a lack of impact in areas such as from Victoria Quay.

Finally, he asked that the group look at expanding the solar lighting provision in areas that were not currently lit.

Councillor Green agreed with these points and suggested that current gates provided a good example of what could be developed elsewhere on the site.

Councillor Mosley queried the benefit of having a building built at the top of the Quarry and asked what the public would think. Councillor Wilson responded that as custodians they had a responsibility to consider all options.

Councillor Mosley enquired what was happening with the greenhouses.

Danny Powell responded that Men in Sheds were due to remove the smaller of the greenhouses but that a plan still needed to be made for the larger greenhouse. He also said that he had looked at options for adding a temporary structure to the site to replace the staff welfare facilities which were currently unsuitable, adding that this could be done very reasonably. Staff appeared happy with this solution.

The Town Clerk then explained that the larger greenhouse could not be removed without approval from the conservation officer and a plan for what appropriate facility would be put in its place as it was a heritage site.

Councillor Wilson reinforced the need for a short, medium and long-term vision for the whole site. Councillor Pardy agreed that this was important.

Councillor Mosley said that the Big Town Plan Masterplan was currently be revised and the plans for the Quarry could be included.

The Deputy Town Clerk added that, in the first instance, a short-term plan needed to be developed as part of the budget setting for 2024/25.

Councillor Wilson replied that in the short term he would like to see the issues of temporary staff accommodation, drainage and additional solar lighting being addressed.

Councillor Wilson then asked if there was a correct balance in the number of events held in the Quarry each year. The Town Clerk responded that this was carefully considered by Recreation and Leisure Committee each year and, whilst the number of event days had not increased, the security measures that needed to be put in place to manage events, including additional fencing, had.

The Chair suggested that if there were any particular items that the group would like to see included in the plans that they forward these to the Deputy Town Clerk.

RESOLVED:

That a paper outlining the short-term financial needs for the Quarry, to include temporary staff accommodation, drainage and additional solar lighting, be prepared for consideration by Finance and General Purposes Committee. The paper will also include a proposal for a long-term plan and consultation.

23/07 SECURITY

The Town Clerk reminded the group that the Safer Street funding that paid for the Quarry security had run out in September and the match funding put in place by the Town Council expired in March 2024.

Councillor Wilson asked if security should be brought inhouse and the Town Clerk responded that it was far more efficient to outsource this as it meant that cover could always be provided.

Councillor Wilson then asked if it made sense for the Quarry security to be contracted separately from the Town Rangers and the Town Clerk responded that ideally they should both be part of the same arrangement.

RESOLVED:

That the continuing provision of security staff for the Quarry be considered at Recreation and Leisure Committee.

23/08 CAR PARKING

The Deputy Town Clerk explained that the Operations Managers had already started putting in place measures to address staff parking in the Quarry.

Councillor Mosley added that the issue of increased parking during events needed to be considered and it was agreed that this be clarified with event organisers.