

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

**Meeting of the Climate Change Committee
Held at the Grange Youth Centre
At 3.30pm on Thursday 27 April 2023**

PRESENT

Councillors D Vasmer (Chair), B Bentick, J Dean, K Halliday, P Moseley, K Pardy and E Roberts

Alex Grant (Shropshire Wildlife Trust), Chris Bainger (Environment Agency), Dan Wrench (Shropshire Council), Frank Oldacre (Friends of the Earth), Martin Sutton (Shropshire Council), and Tom Endacott (Gfleet)

IN ATTENDANCE

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

38/22 APOLOGIES

That apologies were received from Councillor R Dartnall, Councillor A Mosley, Kevin Oubridge, David Sharpe, and Mike Dineen

39/22 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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40/22 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Climate Change Standing Committee meeting held on 9 February 2023 were submitted as circulated and read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Climate Change Standing Committee meeting held on 9 February 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

41/22 MATTERS ARISING

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

Councillor Vasmer informed the Committee that the order of the agenda would be slightly altered, and that item 11 would be moved forward due to Dan Wrench and Martin Sutton not being able to stay for the whole meeting.

42/22 CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN 2020-2024

The Deputy Town Clerk explained to the committee that there would be an update on action 2 (web page) and 8 (climate audit) during the discussions. She further updated that in relation to item 34 (Youth Council) – draft Terms of Reference would be submitted to Full

Council for approval on 5th June 2023, and that they hoped to have this fully established by the following academic year.

The Deputy Town Clerk continued by informing the committee of intended guidelines for a competition in the Town for young people to gather ideas regarding climate change, she then introduced the Climate Change Officer to provide an update.

The Climate Change Officer informed the committee that the competition was an initiative to increase engagement among future generations regarding the climate crisis for school children of various ages. He outlined that the competition would be based upon the competitors' ideas of solving the climate crisis, but there would be bonus points if they demonstrated their knowledge of carbon dioxide, greenhouse gasses and how they were released, as well as what man-made actions contributed to the release of greenhouse gasses to unsustainable levels.

The Climate Change Officer explained that their work would be presented to a group, and the way in which they would present would be up to them, and that judging would be based upon the information provided, accuracy, engagement, and enthusiasm. The competitors would receive optional guidelines to help provide some ideas for their projects, and that creativity would garner further points.

The Climate Change Officer concluded by outlining that the prize would be high street vouchers, which they thought would be ethically appropriate as well as helping to keep everything within the Town.

Councillor Bentick enquired if the competition would be going out to youth organisations.

The Deputy Town Clerk informed that the competition would not just be limited to schools.

Councillor Bentick explained that Councillors have useful information and networks that could be of assistance.

Madam Mayor Elizabeth Roberts expressed enthusiasm for the competition.

The Deputy Town Clerk emphasised that the competition was open to other networks, and that there was a desire to make sure that no one was left behind.

Tom Endacott enquired if anything would happen with the work afterwards.

The Deputy Town Clerk agreed with Tom Endacott that it would be helpful to showcase ideas and explained that there would be an attempt to promote the work within the Town and further details would be distributed after the meeting, and that the plan would be to launch this competition before the next meeting.

Councillor Vasmer suggested some press at the back of the meeting.

Madam Mayor Elizabeth Roberts suggested to utilise the museum to showcase the work produced.

43/22 MARCHES ENERGY AGENCY

The Deputy Town Clerk informed the committee that The Fuel Poverty and Energy Efficiency scheme, overseen by the Marches Energy Agency would be open to Shrewsbury residents who fell into different criteria.

The Deputy Town Clerk explained that it was available to owners, occupiers and landlords/tenants, but not social housing, and that the beneficiaries would be properties that fall under the Band A-B council tax properties with an Energy Performance Certificate and an SAP rating of C-G. She further explained that funds would be released to the MEA in three tranches of £25,000 each to allow a fair distribution of grants available.

The Deputy Town Clerk reminded the committee that there was a delay in taking this scheme forward the previous year as the Marches Energy Agency were first trying to utilise central Government funding.

The Deputy Town Clerk reassured members that the Marches Energy Agency were now in a position where they could resource the project in Shrewsbury, and that details on how the funds could be accessed would be advertised soon, and that the planned launch date would be early May.

Councillor Vasmer asked if there were any comments, and thanked Councillor Dean for his involvement.

The Deputy Town Clerk informed the committee that there were several residents who were already interested in the scheme.

44/22 CARBON LITERATE STATUS

The Deputy Town Clerk reminded the committee of the Shrewsbury Town Council achieving Carbon Literacy discussion from the previous meeting. She informed the committee that she had looked into it, and it appeared that in order to achieve Bronze status, Shrewsbury Town Council would have had to ensure that the Leader of the Council completed the training. However, to achieve Silver, they needed just two more people to complete the training. She concluded by notifying the committee she would be asking for volunteers amongst members and staff.

Chris Bainger shared that he thought that it would be a good idea for the Committee to participate.

Councillor Moseley asked what the mechanism was for joining.

The Deputy Town Clerk Informed Councillor Moseley that it was joinable online. She suggested that it was even possible for the Council to attain Gold literacy status.

Alex Grant enquired if it was possible for commercial organisations to take part. The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that it was possible and offered to circulate the details.

Dan Wrench suggested that for job recruitment descriptions an applicant would be asked if they had completed carbon footprint analysis.

The Deputy Town Clerk replied that it could be built into the induction for new members of staff.

Tom Endacott suggested the possibility for the Committee to work with the BID regarding Carbon literacy statistics and the Deputy Town Clerk said that she would follow this up with them.

45/22 E-CARGO BIKES

The Deputy Town Clerk informed the committee that the scheme was discussed at Finance and General Purposes Committee a couple of weeks prior, and the resolution was changed to say that STC would now fund £13k to both purchase two bikes and provide some running costs. She further explained that she had been in discussions with Mark Fermor and hoped to take the scheme forward shortly. She added that The Cycle Hub would purchase the bikes on the Councils behalf and run the scheme, but the bikes would be branded by STC and be a great asset to the Town and Council.

Councillor Vasmer advised that the weather should be appropriate for launch.

The Deputy Town Clerk informed the committee that there would be an effort to promote E-Cargo bikes in the town and that she would speak to the BID about this.

Dan Wrench enquired if there would be a way to calculate Carbon Reduction.

The Deputy Town Clerk replied that Mark had data on the scheme.

Dan Wrench also suggested that this scheme could attract external investment.

Councillor Dean informed the committee of the Mayor of London report promoting E-Cargo Bikes.

46/22 EXTERNAL ATTENDEE PRESENTATION & TIMETABLE

Councillor Vasmer reminded the committee of the agreement of the usefulness of inviting members of the committee to take it in turns to talk about activities their own organisations were carrying out to address climate change.

Councillor Vasmer then invited Chris Bainger to present on the River Severn Partnership and Severn Valley Water Management

46.1 Position statement from Chris Bainger on River Severn Partnership and Severn Valley Water Management Scheme

Chris Bainger provided a presentation on the scheme.

Chris Bainger began by outlining the importance of the scheme by informing the committee of issues relating to the river such as having three of the most significant floods within five years, limited funding, and limited localised intervention. He stated that partners are looking how to better use funding.

Chris Bainger informed the committee that they were using a catchment-based approach to reduce flood risk and intend to focus on intervention in the Upper Severn Catchment. In addition to this he confirmed that they have forty million pounds invested with four and a half million secured for natural flood risk management.

Chris Bainger continued by emphasising the importance of nature-based solutions and stated that there was a real chance of locking up carbon with natural solutions. Moreover, he emphasised solutions such as tree planting to reduce water flow, green finance, geospatial data, and restoring peatland. In addition to this he warned about the serious consequences of agricultural pollution and advised that since the mid-nineties water quality had been reduced.

Councillor Bentick enquired if planting schemes would have a meaningful effect, to which Chris Bainger responded with a confirmation that they would, and that they could be part of the project.

Councillor Bentick highlighted Severn Trent's plans of extracting water from the River Severn to other parts of the country and asked if it would cause a detrimental effect.

Chris Bainger proved an answer of yes and no; he informed that Severn Trent would not be wanting the water in the winter, but he still had concerns about it.

Frank Oldacre informed the committee of the dangers of transferring water between rivers and used the example that water from the River Severn would kill the water in the River Thames.

Chris Bainger supported this statement by highlighting the effect on species such as salmon.

Councillor Dean enquired about the relationship between the scheme and farmers by asking if the farmers were onboard.

Chris Bainger confirmed that the farmers were starting to get onboard, but that there were issues with large farms as the farmers struggled to see how the scheme would have benefited them.

Councillor Moseley requested that the presentation slides be circulated, to which Chris Bainger agreed by stating he would distribute both the slides and a pdf copy of the presentation.

46.2 Proposed external attendee presentation timetable

The Deputy Town Clerk as all external members of the committee if they remained happy to give a brief presentation on their own organisation's activities in relation to climate change. It was agreed that the schedule would be as follows:

17 July 2023	Dan Wrench, Shropshire Council
12 October 2023	Tom Endacott, Gfleet
11 January 2024	Frank Oldacre, Friends of the Earth
18 April 2024	Kevin Oubridge, Shropshire Climate Action Partnership
TBC	Mike Dineen, Shrewsbury Civic Society

The Climate Change Officer would remind each of the presenters of the date they were due to present on in advance of each meeting.

47/22 COMMONPLACE

Due to limited time, it was agreed that this item would not be reported on. The Deputy Town Clerk did ask for volunteers to test the site.

48/22 TREES FOR STREETS SCHEME

Councillor Vasmer invited Councillor Dean to introduce the Trees for Streets scheme.

Councillor Dean informed the committee that a number of street trees had been lost and not replaced, which causes issues such as losing biodiversity, and this all prompted the Trees for Streets scheme.

Councillor Dean proposed the possibility of crowdfunding for the work with local communities, which he stated was not ideal for them to enter into an agreement with the Council, who do the work and provide the expertise necessary, which would allow the Council to support urban areas.

Councillor Halliday remarked that there had been a lot of tree planting in Belle Vue, where she worked locally with the highways department (most of brook street)
Councillor Vasmer invited Dan and Martin to outline Shropshire Council's approach to this.

Dan Wrench brought to the committees' attention that there were hurdles such as getting insurance, and also mentioned that they had a map of the Monkmoor area.

Councillor Moseley requested if it was possible to share the information about Monkmoor with her as it was part of her ward. Dan Wrench said he could.

Councillor Dean enquired if it was possible to take patches out of the concrete and planting only trees.

Dan Wrench informed that paved areas were tricky, and one would have to make sure residents were happy with it. However, he also informed the committee that most people were generally keen on the idea.

Councillor Halliday informed that for the Belle Vue planting, local people had donated money and there had also been Councillor grants, and that they did not have a problem with finding the funding.

Councillor Bentick enquired if it was possible to participate in the tree planting schemes with his ward.

Dan Wrench requested for Councillor Bentick to contact him if Councillor Bentick had any ideas.

Martin Sutton informed the committee that there was not a formal register of planting sites, and that they were normally contacted should there have been a request. He also mentioned that they had no control of the trees and that they could only advise and encourage, and that highways find the trees, but that they believe that trees are a liability

when it comes to their operations. This resulted in difficulty to obtain urban planning permission

Martin Sutton told the committee that he would speak to Ben Cartwright about whether mapping of areas can be expanded, which he stated could be a useful first step.

Martin Sutton also informed the committee that he did contact Trees for Streets and will set up a social media campaign. He also informed that the organisation did make money and took a percentage of the funding, and that the most success was seen in some of the more affluent areas.

Martin Sutton informed the committee that Shropshire Council had a Heat Map on their website by ward, and that the ideal amount of canopy cover is 20%, with the lowest being 7% in Shrewsbury. He emphasised the importance of prioritising the areas where there was less cover as well as areas that needed the most amount of assistance.

Martin Sutton also mentioned the difficulties of working with highways as they were very busy and hard to contact regarding niche issues such as tree planting. Highways did not object to the initiative, but most of the work would need to be done by the interested parties.

Martin Sutton also informed the Committee that he had previously done work with Mike Pugh on the urban tree challenge.

Martin Sutton also explained how he would have liked to have applied for a grant to plant trees in urban areas but cautioned that having the land is the main difficulty.

Councillor Vasmer proposed the possibility of using Council land going forward.

The Deputy Town Clerk told the committee that she would speak to Mike Pugh about it.

Martin Sutton briefed the committee that they had a £13,000 planting grant, and public access. He mentioned that each tree would require £1,000 and that it would not be easy to find land for it.

The Deputy Town Clerk proposed that the Town Council would take the discussions forward and that she would arrange to meet with Dan, Martin and Mike Pugh separately.

Councillor Dean enquired if planters counted.

Martin Sutton answered that planters were not mentioned.

49/22 NEXT MEETING

It was confirmed that the next Committee meeting would be held on Monday 17th July.