

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
Climate Emergency Working Group
Held via Zoom at 2.00pm on Thursday 21 January 2021

PRESENT

Councillor Julian Dean (JD)	Shrewsbury Town Council
Tom Endacott (TE)	Gfleet Services
Alan Leaman (AL)	Friends of the Earth
Councillor Alan Mosley (AM)	Shrewsbury Town Council
Councillor David Vasmer (DV)	Shrewsbury Town Council
Adam Purnell (AP)	Young Shrewsbury, Shrewsbury Town Council
Dan Wrench (DW)	Shropshire Council
Chris Bainger (CB)	Environment Agency
Mike Dinneen (MD)	Shrewsbury Civic Society
Katy Jones (KJ)	Shrewsbury Business Chamber

With Helen Ball (Town Clerk)

1. Apologies

Despite contact being made with Extinction Rebellion, there was still no representations. It was therefore felt that other bodied should be invited to fill the void and it was suggested that maybe school representation would find this platform useful. HB reported on discussions she had recently with the Head Teacher of the Shrewsbury Academy who has interested in the local Climate Change agenda and how she could involve her students. All thought this was a good avenue in pursuing.

ACTION: HB to contact the Shrewsbury Academy Trust

2. Notes from the previous meeting on 22 October 2020

The notes of the previous meeting were circulated and it was agreed they were a true reflection of the topics of discussion

Outstanding Actions:

Contact the concession in the Quarry about using and promoting the Shrewsbury Cup (JD) – HB reported that she had been in discussion with the concession holder who had agreed to promote the Shrewsbury Cup; this however would be done once the pandemic lockdown measures had been withdrawn and the risk of transmission and subsequent risk to his staff had reduced. In the meantime, he was continuing to use recyclable materials and was encouraging sensible disposal.

3. Climate Action Plan

Following from the last meeting the Deputy Town Clerk had reviewed the Town Council's Action Plan. This had been circulated to members of the Group.

The Action Plan had been categorised into the key themed areas which had been established at the very first meeting of the Group.

Councillor Mosley went through the Action Plan to determine whether this was the direction of travel that the town was heading in and a number of areas were raised:

- **Item 5 – Website** – the Town Council had recently commissioned a new website and there were plans in place to had a dedicated page for Climate Emergency
- **Item 6 – Referencing Climate Change matters during commentary on planning applications** – this was already being done. Additionally, the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan Masterplan has recently been launched and one of the underlying principles has been about addressing climate change
- **Item 8 – Carbon Audit** – The Group asked if this could be made available
- **Item 9 – Purchase of high energy efficiency appliances** – This was ongoing
- **Item 10 – Buildings Audit** – This had commenced but COVID related matters have been the operational focus of staff this last year
- **Item 11 – LED Lighting** – All street lights had been converted to LED
- **Item 12/13 – Solar Lighting** – The installation of Solar Lights in the Quarry had been exceptionally well received. The Council had set a budget to complete the project. JD enquired whether there were any plans for solar power at the Town Council Depot. HB advised that Shropshire Council was looking at developing a solar farm across the road from both the Town Council and Shropshire Council Depots and they were exploring the potential for that generated power to be fed directly to those depots rather than the national grid; details of power usage had been provided to Shropshire Council.
- **Item 17 – Replacement vehicles** – The Council has a number of electric vehicles on trial. TE advised that there were a number of new vehicles on the market that might meet the Town Council's needs; he was happy to talk to the Officers who were leading on electric replacements
- **Item 18 – Charging Points** – Points for the depot had been commissioned. AL asked whether these would be available for use by staff. TE advised that this wasn't classed as an HMRC benefit. HB reported that this had not yet been considered. This was the start of building capacity. It was a chicken and egg situation – we couldn't have electric

vehicles without charging points and there was no need for charging points if we didn't have vehicle.

- **Item 19 – Footpaths** – The Town Council had invested heavily in improving some of the worse and yet most used pathways to promote walking and cycling
- **Item 22 – Home Working** – COVID had forced this approach far quicker than anticipated. All office based staff had the capability of working from home. AL asked whether the Town Council had reviewed the increased costs of domestic bills resulting from working from home as opposed to collectively working in an office. HB had advised that do review had taken place as it was felt that any increased home expenses were likely to be mitigated against the reduction in grey miles of staff not coming into the office.
- **Item 23 – Mileage Policy** – This was to be reviewed with a view to the potential for Pool Cars. AL asked whether staff with high consumption cars were penalised in the mileage expenses policy. HB advised that the Council was required to meet the terms and conditions of employees as set out by the National Joint Council and the policies did not allow for such an approach. TE explained the travel hierarchy and the options open to the Town Council including salary sacrifice, public transport, pool fleet and hire vehicles. In the scheme of the size of the organisation, pool fleet was a good option.
- **Item 25 – Zero to Landfill** – The Council's waste contractor operated a zero to landfill policy where all waste collected by the Town Council was sorted and recycled.
- **Item 27 – Planter Vessels** – All planter vessels were systematically being replaced with those with built in reservoirs, having the potential of reducing watering from daily to ½ a week
- **Item 29 – Open Space Management** – The Council was looking at ways that it could reduce verge cutting and in place replace with wildflower planting to improve biodiversity
- **Item 33 – Tree planting** – The Council has a programme of tree planting and a number of trees are on order for various sites. The Council operates its own tree nursery and has been liaising with DW bad Tree Officers about the potential of expanding that Tree Nursery to develop a Community Tree Nursery Project to be funded through the £500k grant Shropshire Council has received from the DEFRA Trees Outside Woodland Project. Whilst there is a desire to plant trees, it is often difficult to find locations where trees can be planted. AL suggested that the Town Council Nursery staff could look at taking shrub cuttings and growing them on. HB advised that this is already done and this year alone staff have taken 20,000 cuttings growing them on up to 2l pot size when they are big enough to be planted out.
- **Item 38 – Community Development** – AL suggested that the Council invests in matrix signs around the town to advertise council events and activities and provide essential

messages in flood times. HB advised that the Town Council has been working alongside Shropshire Council and the Vehicle Messaging Signs are due to be installed in April

- **Item 41 – Youth Activity** – AP reported that Young Shrewsbury had been a challenge due to COVID with all the weekly open access sessions cancelled. They were still working with a group of vulnerable young people and climate impact was a focus for discussion. AP asked AL whether Friends of the Earth had any educational resources that they could use; AL would investigate.
- **Item 41 – Youth Activity** - DW advised that the College had not yet signed up to the Shropshire Zero Carbon Partnership; it would be useful having the College on board as they could signpost to courses on retrofitting. JD agreed to investigate Retrofit College.
- **Item 44 – Council Travel** – This had reduced significantly as staff didn't make as many journeys to work and also Councillors and staff were no-longer travelling to Council Meetings as these were all online.
- **Item 45 – Cycle Scheme** – AP reported that Youth Workers were doing more detached work with young people and the quickest way of getting around the town was via bike. Could the Council look to purchasing a couple for Youth Workers. JD agreed to enquire with the Shropshire Cycle Hub.

The Group was very supportive of the work undertaken by the Town Council and were keen to help promote activities in any way possible.

The Group discussed ways that this work could be tied in with the Shropshire Zero Carbon Group. DW provided links to:

Shropshire Action Plan: <https://bit.ly/3iCLsEn>

Shropshire Climate Strategy <https://bit.ly/2LRgixb>

4. River

Weir Project – AM advised that the Town Council has agreed to part fund a feasibility study into the development of a hydro-scheme for the Weir and HB had been working with Adrian Cooper the Climate Emergency Manager. CB raised the fact that Transition Towns received considerable public money to undertake a number of studies; could these not be accessed? DV reported that he had raised this already with Adrian Cooper. He also stressed the need for local consultation.

Fish Emergency – CB raised concerns about the levels of salmon stocks in the river and the need to ensure there were two fish passes on either side of the river. He was arranging for

a group of interested stakeholders to come together to look at upgrading the town river look side of the river. The Severn Rivers Trust was hopefully going to lead the project and he urged the Town Council to get on board and support the project.

Combined Sewer Outflows – AM advised that the Town Council had received an interesting presentation from the Shropshire Wildlife Trust about the impact the Combined Sewer Outflows were having in the quality of the river. Philip Dunne has presented a Private Members Bill on this issues. CB reported that the most active of these CSOs actually discharges into the Fish Pass which was not good for fish health. The following link shows the extent of the problem:

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=a6dd42e3bc264fc28134c64c00db4a5b&extent=-401307.0872%2C6628364.5565%2C-130261.3849%2C6788576.5678%2C102100>

Flood Alleviation – KJ reported that the Business Chamber was keen that there was a co-ordinated approach to flood alleviation as part of this Action Plan. AM advised that this was being dealt with strategically through the River Severn Partnership involving all local authorities along the River Severn. They were looking at major flood alleviation measures upstream from Shrewsbury.

5. Climate Emergency Budget

The Group considered the paper that the Deputy Town Clerk had prepared on utilising some of the Climate Emergency Budget for various projects. She had proposed an allocation based on whether there was already an established budget for various projects and whether the Town Council had made a conscious effort to procure an energy efficient route which may have cost more financially. These were listed as:

Project	Total Cost	Original Budget Allocation	Proposed commitment from CE Budget
Solar Lighting Project in the Quarry	£72,710	£45,000	£27,710
Replace Street Light heads with LED	£138,671	£95,000	£43,671
Explore electric Vehicle options for fleet (Electric Mule	£16,704	None.	£4,704 (the difference in cost

purchased – a fuel one would cost around £12,000)		Would come from capital budget.	between electric and fuel)
Installing electric vehicle charging points at the Weeping Cross Depot	£2,200	None. Would come from capital budget.	£2,200
Improve pathways and encourage walking & cycling	Phase 1 £26,581 Phase 2 tbc	Phase 1 £26,581 Phase 2 £48,269	Phase 1 £2,658 (10%) Phase 2 10% of final spend
500 British native tree whips to grow in Nursery	£500	£0	£500
TOTAL proposed commitment			£78,785

Members agreed that this approach was eminently sensible. AM reported on the Town Council's commitment to keeping this budget topped up but it seemed sensible that the public could see that the fund was being used for worthwhile projects.

6. Parish Council Carbon Footprint Tool

HB reported that she was one of a 100 Parish Clerks across the country who had been working with the Centre for Sustainable Energy to develop a tool to track carbon consumption at a parish level. CSE had joined forces with the University of Exeter who were looking at something similar. Various data sources had been layered on top of each other to understand both territorial usage (i.e. carbon generated in a parish but not necessarily consumed in the parish and local consumption). HB was on a programme of testing to tool but she shared what the site looked like and the results it was showing for Shrewsbury. She wasn't able to share the link as it was still in the testing stage but would share details once it went live. Members of the Group welcomed this approach and whilst it would clearly have some limitations as it was based heavily on assumptions it was a good indication on the areas of consumption and would be a good tool to enact change.

7. Closing Comments

AM thanked everyone for a full and frank discussion. It had proved useful and gave him assurances that the Town Council was following the right path. Details of the next meeting would be circulated in due course