

**SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
QUARRY WORKING GROUP
MEETING HELD AT PARK WARDENS LODGE, QUARRY PARK
ON 19 MAY 2022**

PRESENT

Councillors Green, Mosley & Wilson

IN ATTENDANCE

Helen Ball (Town Clerk) & Amanda Spencer (Deputy Town Clerk)

APOLOGIES

Gary Farmer (Head of Operations), Mark Bowen (Amenities Team Manager) & Councillor Parly given retrospectively

01/22 PURPOSE OF THE WORKING GROUP

- 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 Statutes
- 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

02/22 TOUR OF THE QUARRY DEPOT

As part of the meeting members were taken around the Quarry Depot by the Amenity Space Deputy Team Leader. He outlined the poor storage facilities and the fact that all buildings weren't weatherproof. Welfare facilities were temporarily relocated to the Splashpark pavilion; however these weren't adequate as staff had to access them either via the Splashpark itself or through the plantroom. The greenhouse was causing operational problems moving around the depot and a temporary tunnel erected between the greenhouse and the toilets to allow staff to safely rod the drains; this was becoming a

weekly occurrence as it was believed that the drains from the toilets towards the Quarry had shifted. Members discussed the kind of facilities that would be required to run the park; whilst it was acknowledged that there wasn't a need for greenhouse facilities as all planting requirements could be facilitated at Weeping Cross, there was a need for staff to be resident in the park and the necessary kit needed to be kept on-site.

Members discussed likely timescales for development of the pool area as initial discussions had taken place with Shropshire Council about the potential of jointly funding public conveniences that could be used by both pool and park. Given the latest delays it was felt that improvements to public conveniences for park usage could not wait.

Members discussed the greenhouse. Past structural surveys had deemed it beyond economical repair but saying that it remained curtilage listed with Quarry Lodge. It would therefore be useful to seek the Conservation Officers view of the best course of action. It was unlikely that a greenhouse would go in its place. Previous discussions had looked at the potential for a contemporary garden, but members on site felt that options should remain open to look at other uses including a pavilion/visitor centre, including café and meeting room facilities.

The Town Clerk & Deputy Town Clerk reported on their work a couple of years ago with the Manchester School of Architecture. All students across the 6 years of the course were given a specific Shrewsbury related task, one of which was the redevelopment of the Quarry Depot and the Senior Management Team were required to act as Client; all had been impressed by the calibre and variety of projects. The Town Clerk would look to finding examples of the submissions.

03/22 BROADER ISSUES

Members discussed some of the broader issues relating to the park.

Usage – The Park attracted some 1.5million visitors as year and certainly throughout COVID had as much usage as any year with a full events programme. Some areas including pathways were showing wear and tear and as a Grade II listed Park the Town Council had a duty to maintain its upkeep.

Security – was a concern for Officers. Last year Security Officers were commissioned to patrol the park to address the increasing levels of ASB both from young users but also from individuals with alcohol and substance addictions. Security cover had addressed many of those issues but of late similar patterns of behaviour had returned and there had been a need to revert back to security cover.

CCTV – the Park had three cameras that hooked up into the main town system. The Town Council had separately paid of the cameras to be upgraded to digital capability. The infrastructure though was a problem both in terms of flood levels and also vermin accessing the underground trunking and chewing through the fibre optic cabling.

Power and Water – the Park had a number of areas in which electricity and water could be accessed for event organisers. This infrastructure needed to be assessed as both wear and tear and water damage due to flooding had reduced its capability.

Quarry Pool – The Leader & Town Clerk had recently met with the Leader of Shropshire Council about future plans for the pool. While she was keen for a pool facility to be retained, she had had to put a delay on any further works due to escalating costs and inability to finance capital financing.

Charging – the Park had its own fees and charges structure for varying events, the proceeds of which helped to fund the park. The park also had a number of concessions which had been tendered out. This Group could be the first port of call for any charges reviews ahead of submission to the Recreation & Leisure Committee.

Structures – within the park there were a number of structures, many of which were individually heritage listed. There was a need to structurally inspect these structures and attend to any repairs, some of which could be costly.

04/22 CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

Members agreed that the site would benefit from a Conservation Management Plan to ensure the Park continued to be managed befitting its status as a Heritage Park. It was acknowledged that the development of a plan would not be a short-term matter and members would require more detailed information of what is on site, what the operational requirements were, how Conservation Officers viewed the site. The Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk were asked to start to pull information the Town Council help to assist with this process.

05/22 FUTURE MEETINGS

It was agreed that this Working Group would need to meet regularly to begin this process. Quarterly meetings were suggested in the first instance.