

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
RECREATION AND LEISURE
Wednesday 6th July 2022

Officer: Helen Ball – Town Clerk

SECURITY IN THE QUARRY

Purpose of Report

To update members of the Committee on Security in the Quarry Park

BACKGROUND

At the last meeting of the Recreation & Leisure Committee the Town Clerk presented a paper regarding the development of a Town Ranger Service. The report was prepared on the back of growing anxiety of town centre based staff, six of which has suffered abuse from individuals in appropriately abusing Council assets including all of the Toilets and the Quarry. Two of those six staff had been signed off on long term stress at work. They had implored the Management Team to put in place measures that would protect them from such abuse. The social and financial case was put within the report.

The Committee resolved to not proceed with the Town Ranger Scheme, but instead invited staff to speak to members. Twelve members of staff had logged onto the Teams Live Meeting and had listened first hand to the debate, the result was they refused to close public facilities and had heard enough from members that they felt it pointless to meet. The Management Team therefore faced a dilemma in keeping public toilets open.

HEALTH & SAFETY

S2 Health & Safety At Work Act 1974 sets out the general duties of an employer in relation to the protection of its staff. By maintaining a status quo, the Town Council was in effect failing in its duty to protect its staff. Therefore, the Town Clerk was left with no alternative but to use her delegated authority to protect staff.

PROSECURE APPOINTMENT

Prosecure was commissioned to provide patrol cover and locking at key times and locking facilities at others. Two SIA staff have been deployed to provide the following cover:

Monday	18.00 - 20.00 – Locking Up
Tuesday	18.00 – 20.00 – Locking Up
Wednesday	18.00 – 20.00 – Locking Up
Thursday	13.30 – 19.30 – Patrolling & Locking Up
Friday	13.30 – 19.30 – Patrolling & Locking Up
Saturday	13.30 – 19.30 – Patrolling & Locking Up
Sunday	13.30 – 19.30 – Patrolling & Locking Up

As the days have got longer this longer patrolling cover has been amended to 14.30 – 20.30

Duties include:

- Patrolling the Park including play area, toilets & Dingle
- Visiting the Butcher Row Toilets
- Closing Mardol Quay
- Closing Butcher Row Toilets
- Closing the two sets of Quarry Toilets, Splash Park & Dingle

Three members of staff have been utilized on a rota which has provided excellent continuity and the staff liaise with both the Quarry Grounds Staff and the Neighbourhood Wardens & Toilet Cleaners to ensure a smooth handover. The Prosecure Staff have also got to know the key protagonists who cause antisocial behavior both in the park and around the Butcher Row Toilets.

OUTCOMES

Prosecure provide a weekly update on activity; any issues are subsequently fed into the Team Shrewsbury Partnership and patrols/outreach/detachment of other stakeholders have been changed to respond. Those staff have also worked collaboratively with the Police, CCTV Control, other Shrewsbury Watch Radio Users, Event Organisers in the Park.

Prosecure staff have also been involved in a number of key ASB issues; namely:

- Protecting a young lady from Sex Traffickers
- Catching Drugs Deals & Usage
- Rescuing an intoxicated minor from the river
- Going to the aid of an elderly lady who had become seriously unwell
- Identifying the perpetrator of a knife attack in the town
- Providing Education to young people under the influence of alcohol and other substances
- Removing individuals from the park who were causing ASB

The key benefit of all of this has been the improved morale with the operational staff. Productivity has increased, sickness absence has reduced and the general feeling of a happy workforce has improved exponentially.

FUTURE

As reported at the last meeting, the Town Clerk worked with West Mercia Police Crime Reduction Hub to submit a bid to the Home Office for Safer Streets 4 Funding. This would allow for expanded coverage in the park, the development of a Taxi Marshalling Scheme and a Town Rangers Scheme to be run by the BID.

The need for collaborative working and interoperability between partners is crucial and members are asked to reconsider this approach.

The financial costs of such a scheme were detailed in the last report and remain the most economically viable solution, rather than aiming to utilize staff on overtime.

Staff continue to review incidents in the park. The public as well as staff have noted a more pleasant ambience about the park and this only comes with time, a consistent approach to managing the park and a positive workforce.

This security detail must stay in place certainly until the end of the summer, at which it should be reviewed.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the report is noted
2. That Prosecure be asked to provide a Quarterly overview of progress
3. That the reports from Prosecure continue to be fed into the Team Shrewsbury Partnership
4. That this Committee Reviews progress at an Autumn meeting with a view to making long term decisions about the future safety and security of both Council staff and assets