



**SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
5 OCTOBER 2020**

Agenda No

13

Officer: Amanda Spencer – Deputy Town Clerk

Climate Emergency Initiatives

Purpose of Report

To inform members on the current position regarding the climate emergency initiatives taken by Shrewsbury Town Council.

Climate Emergency Working Group

Following the declaration of a Climate Emergency Resolution by Shrewsbury Town Council on in March 2019 it was agreed to establish a Climate Emergency Working Group. The overall purpose of this working group is to provide advice and support to the Finance and General Purposes Committee on how Shrewsbury Town Council might best proceed to reduce and measure any reduction in its (net) carbon footprint and on the development of an appropriate Climate Emergency Action Plan.

The group met for its inaugural meeting on 23 July 2020 and the minutes of that meeting are at the end of this report as Appendix A. The next meeting will take place in October and the main topic for discussion will be the action plan.

Other activities

In addition to the actions under discussion within the working group, Shrewsbury Town Council has been carrying out a number of initiatives from the previously agreed capital plan which come under the remit of Climate Emergency. These include:

- Solar Lighting Project in the Quarry
- Wildflower verge planting
- LED Replacement
- Tree Planting
- Ash Die Back Proposals
- Battery Operated kit to replace petrol operated kit
- New energy efficient boiler at the Grange Youth Centre.

We are also currently investigating a number of additional initiatives including:

- The provision of electric pool vehicles for STC staff
- Installing electric vehicle charging points at the Weeping Cross Depot
- Seeded rooves for bus shelters.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

(i) That the Report and content of the Climate Emergency Advisory Group minutes be noted.



APPENDIX A

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
Climate Emergency Working Group
Held via Zoom at 3.00pm on Thursday 23 July 2020

PRESENT

Chris Bainger (CB)	Environment Agency
Councillor Julian Dean (JD)	Shrewsbury Town Council
Tom Endacott (TE)	Gfleet Services
James Handley (JH)	BID
Katy Jones (KJ)	Business Chamber
Alan Leaman (AL)	Friends of the Earth
Robin Mager (RM)	Shropshire Wildlife Trust
Councillor Alan Mosley (AM)	Shrewsbury Town Council
Adam Purnell (AP)	Young Shrewsbury, Shrewsbury Town Council
Councillor David Vasmer (DV)	Shrewsbury Town Council
Dan Wrench (DW)	Shropshire Council

With Helen Ball (Town Clerk) and Amanda Spencer (Deputy Town Clerk).

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Alex Phillips.

2. Terms of Reference and Membership

Councillor Mosley welcomed everyone to the inaugural meeting of the group and thanked them for their attendance and participation. He outlined the terms of reference for the group and explained that it comprised representatives from council, climate related organisations and various community groups. The group would report into the Town Council's Finance and General Purposes Committee and would meet around 4/5 times per year. He asked if there should be any additions to the terms of reference but none were suggested.

Each member of the group then introduced themselves and their interests. It was noted that representatives had also been invited from Extinction Rebellion and the Civic Society but none had yet come forward.

Action:

Contact Extinction Rebellion and the Civic Society again inviting them to put representatives forward to the group (AS).



3. Update on Town Council climate emergency actions

Helen Ball gave a presentations on the recent actions of the Town Council in relation to climate emergency. A copy of the presentation is attached to these minutes.

Action:

Distribute the draft terms of reference from the Climate Action Partnership for Shropshire (HB).

Action:

Distribute comments from the Town Council Climate Emergency workshop held on 6 February 2020 (AS).

Following the presentation the Town Council were commended by the group for the amount of work that had taken place to support the climate emergency agenda so far and it was recommended that this should all be publicised to the public. There then followed a discussion on a number of the items that had been raised:

4. Trees

Dan Wrench asked if the Town Council had a system for recording tree planting and carbon sequestration. Helen Ball replied that they did not have any specific system yet but that an extensive tree survey was underway, particularly in order to review how many trees the Town Council had on its properties in the light of ash die-back. So far 10,000 ash tress had been counted on the countryside parks. There were four stages of ash die-back and the majority were currently in stage two, which was more positive than originally believed, but the issue would need to be addressed in the next three years.

The work being undertaken to manage ash die-back would need to be publicised well to ensure that the public were aware that the work needed to be undertaken.

5. Verges

Julian Dean asked where decisions were made about which verges should be planted with wild flowers. A number of these had been planted across the town and were being very well received by members of the public. It was confirmed that the majority were on Shropshire Highways land but the Town Council had assessed where the flowers would best grow based on the conditions of the soil and carried out the planting and maintenance. Most of the verges had been planted in the autumn and, although it took a lot of work to manage these verges, it was felt that the effort was worth it.

DW added that a number of verges were also being planted with wild flowers across Bridgnorth and south west Shropshire. It was confirmed that the benefits included a reduction in the need to cut the land by nearly 70%.

Chris Bainger raised concerns about the increase in non-native species of plants growing on public land across the town including the proliferation of Japanese knotweed on Network Rail land.



6. Shrewsbury Cup

JD asked if the concession in the Quarry were currently using the Shrewsbury Cup as a way to reduce waste. HB didn't believe that they were but that they were taking proactive steps to manage their waste.

Action:

Contact the concession in the Quarry about using and promoting the Shrewsbury Cup (JD).

7. Co-Wheels

JD asked if there was potential for the Town Council to use Co-Wheels for its operations in order to reduce the number of unnecessary car journeys across the town. HB responded that the Town Council was looking at ways it could reduce unnecessary travel by staff but that it was difficult logistically to use an external company as a lot of travel was undertaken in vans full of necessary equipment.

Currently the majority of staff ordinarily based at Riggs Hall were working at home due to the outbreak of COVID-19. This did mean that there was a reduction in traffic and energy consumption at Riggs Hall but JD asked that the Town Council be mindful that, come winter, individuals turning on heating across multiple houses was likely to become less energy efficient.

DW reported that Shropshire Council were running some salary sacrifice schemes and publicising Government grants to encourage steps to be taken to increase energy efficiency at home.

8. Influencing Others

AM asked the group how the Town Council might influence others to carry out actions to address climate emergency. He explained that one such measure had been taken recently in reviewing the procurement process. The Town Council didn't always go for the cheapest tender but asked tenderers to provide both the carbon footprint of the company tendering and the carbon footprint of carrying out the project to be considered as part of the selection process. The Town Council had also just set up a framework for local organisations and tried to avoid using companies outside of the local area unless necessary.

Alan Leaman asked, given the situation regarding COVID-19, how open were the public right now to addressing climate emergency? He felt that what the public really needed were leadership from both the Town Council and Shropshire Council.

IDEAS FOR THE ACTION PLAN

- Shared electric charging points with the BID
- SOXE bid at Weeping Cross