

SHREWSBURY IN BLOOM MINUTES

MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 30th JANUARY 2019 AT 2.00PM WEEPING CROSS DEPOT, SHREWSBURY, SY5 6HT

PRESENT

Keith Roberts (KR, Chairman), Helen Ball (HB, Town Clerk), Gary Farmer (GF, Operations Manager), Nic Laurens (NL), Pam Moseley (PM), Kath Owen (KO), Margaret Thrower (MT), and Hilary Humphries (HH, Communications Officer).

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Tony Bywater, Maggie Love and Chris Watkins.

01/19 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18th July 2018

Members discussed the minutes of the meeting held on 18th July 2018.

The minutes of the Bloom Committee were agreed to be a true and accurate record of the meeting.

MT confirmed that the funds raised from the Greenhouse Open Evening had been received by the Hospice and that she had received their letter of thanks.

02/19 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

03/19 COUNCIL PLANTING ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2019

GF advised members that the programme for the planting arrangements is in hand and going according to plan. The greenhouse is looking even better this year. HB is happy with her inspection of the facilities, although there are some modifications required to make it easier for staff to plant the different structures used as part of the floral features.

Pete Jenks has compiled a timetable for the planting programme.

To ensure that costs are reduced, GF confirmed that more cuttings have been taken and planted.

Members discussed a date for the Greenhouse Open Evening and agreed that it should be held on Wednesday 22 May from 6pm. It was agreed that there should be a raffle, with proceeds donated to a local charity. MT offered to provide light refreshments for the event.

KR is keen to encourage local schools to visit the greenhouse and members agreed to hold a separate event, during an afternoon, when groups of up to 10 pupils from primary schools in Shrewsbury wishing to visit the greenhouse can be shown around. HB suggested that the

Bloom Committee might be able to fund a planter for each school attending so that this can be planted up and looked after, and encourage updates via social media.

No date was set, although it was agreed that this should be close to the main Greenhouse Open Evening. It was agreed that light refreshments of juice and biscuits should be provided.

ACTION:

- **HH to write to all primary schools in Shrewsbury to invite groups of up to 10 pupils per school to visit the greenhouse.**
- **MT to provide light refreshments for the Greenhouse Open Evening on 22 May.**

04/19 RHS/HEART OF ENGLAND JUDGING CRITERIA CHANGES

HB advised members that the RHS has introduced new criteria for marking entries in their Bloom competitions, with a greater emphasis on both environmental issues and community participation.

For the Horticultural Excellence category, the judges will be looking at the type and quality of plants and their impact in different locations.

HB feels that Shrewsbury's floral displays will continue to impress the judges but that there was a need to concentrate more on categories B and C.

In category B, there needs to be an emphasis on biodiversity projects and use of the local environment which can be included in the RHS "Greening Grey Britain" theme. Whilst biodiversity was covered well in last year's portfolio, there was a need to tell the story to the judges on the day. HB suggested that STC's Countryside Unit is utilised more on judging day.

There is a great deal of heritage in the town, and the story needs to be better told. HB discussed the use of the Flaxmill as one of the locations to visit on the route.

Keir's involvement with street scene aspects of the town was discussed. HB advised members that the new phase of works on Pride Hill will start week commencing 4 February and with an 11-week programme, this should be completed well before judging day in July.

HB advised members that STC has been consulted about the planters for Pride Hill, with 9 new Amberol features with built-in reservoirs to be installed. It was felt that high-impact planting needed to be considered for this location, due to the prominent location and the amount of public scrutiny.

Members discussed various planting schemes and the need to work with local organisations to ensure that all parties agreed on any planting arrangements.

To assist with aspects of categories B and C, HB suggested it might be an idea to make more use of the river and highlight the work undertaken with the Environment Agency. Now that the Fisheries is managed by the Town Council, this can also be included in the judging programme. The University might also be considered for inclusion on the route with the Zutphen Gardens in the main square, the heritage of the area and the recycling bins in Frankwell Car Park.

With a new C1 category covering all year round activity and on-going planning, there is a need to engage and involve new community groups on the basis that these groups take ownership of their projects.

The C category also incorporates income from sponsorship of the traffic islands and hanging basket sales, which HH covers.

GF suggested there is a need to encourage litter-picking groups in different areas of Shrewsbury. Members agreed that Councillors should be sent a letter to encourage them to get more community groups involved.

HB advised members that there is a need to demonstrate more, and better, community engagement to the judges, with fewer places on the judging route. There is also a need to include redevelopment/improvement projects from S106 funds in the different Wards across town.

GF suggested that the work of Adam Purnell, STC's Youth Services Officer at the Grange, is highlighted and in particular his work with the local community and families.

ACTION:

- **GF to work on drawing up a list of suggested plants for the Pride Hill redevelopment for the next Committee meeting.**
- **HB to obtain the plans for the Pride Hill works for the next Committee meeting.**
- **HH to continue with Bloom publicity on both social media and in printed form.**

05/19 TOWN COUNCIL PRIORITIES AND THE NEED TO INTRODUCE NEW LOCATIONS TO THE ROUTE

Members agreed that a number of points have already been covered earlier in the meeting.

GF suggested that there should be a new start and end location for the judging route with a need to support other areas of the town.

MT suggested that it might be a good idea to get local schools involved with growing food for inclusion in the judges' lunch – this could include simple items such as lettuce, fruit, etc.

HB highlighted the work that Adam Purnell does at The Hive, which has a garden on site, with possible funding available from STC to support any initiative for Bloom.

ACTION:

- **HB to draft a letter on behalf of KR to send to all Councillors to encourage them to get local community groups involved with Bloom initiatives – and to include details of any schools who may be interested in a bottle greenhouse frame supplied by STC.**

06/19 ENTRY INTO THE HEART OF ENGLAND CATEGORIES

6.1 Heart of England in Bloom Small City Category

Members agreed that there was a need to have different locations along the route this year.

HB has spoken with Nicola and a date of Tuesday 23 July has been agreed for judging.

Members discussed the bottle greenhouse frames built by STC staff last year. KR felt that another two frames should be built again this year and offered to schools. This can be included in his letter to all Councillors already discussed in the previous agenda item.

MT raised the subject of Forest Schools, especially as most state schools have them now, and wondered whether this was an aspect that could be included for judging day.

NL has contacts with a prototype company that deals with autonomous vehicles and is happy to approach them with a request for a vehicle to be sited in the Square on judging day.

ACTION:

- **MT to contact Greenfields Primary school to request photos of the planters and bulbs she has provided them with last year.**
- **GF to forward details of the bottle greenhouse to NL.**
- **NL to provide contact details for the company who may be able to provide autonomous vehicles for judging day.**

6.2 Heart of England in Bloom Parks and Open Spaces Category

Members discussed the various sites that could be included for entry in this category. GF will discuss matters with Matt Wilcoxon from the Countryside Unit.

HB suggested the footpath from Castle Walk to English Bridge, which will see redevelopment as part of the Big Town Plan.

Members agreed to leave the decision on whether to enter this category until later.

ACTION:

- **GF to talk to Matt Wilcoxon about possible Countryside Unit sites for this category.**

6.3 It's Your Neighbourhood Category

HH suggested that Hermitage Gardens may enter the category again this year, although it's not known if other areas, including Bowbrook Allotments and the Hospice gardens will enter.

Members felt that there was a need to encourage more areas to enter this category.

07/19 PLANS FOR THE 2019 TOWN OF FLOWERS COMPETITION

HH advised members that following feedback from last year, all schools within Shrewsbury have been contacted and that three schools have already entered the Schools Grounds competition. There is also an item in the previous week's Admag to encourage more entries to the competition. Schools will also be sent a reminder in April.

The Business Premises category should continue to have recommendations made by staff members and Councillors. Members suggested that both the BID and Business Chamber should be included in helping to promote this category and recommend companies for inclusion.

Nominations for the Residential Front Garden category are usually received by members of the public and Ward members. Members agreed that to avoid unsuitable entries being judged, there should be a shortlist sent to the judges.

Members agreed that there should be a prize on offer for the winner of the Residential Front Garden competition.

MT wondered whether a local garden centre would be willing to sponsor the competition. NL has contacts at Severndale Nursery and will make enquiries.

Members discussed the need to change the judging of the Allotment competition and agreed that a new judge needs to be brought in to replace Mike Cox from STC. MT suggested a number of potential candidates.

ACTION:

- **HH to liaise with Debbie Entwistle in relation to working on the Town of Flowers competition.**
- **NL to make enquiries of Severndale Nursery in relation to sponsorship of the Town of Flowers competition.**

08/19 SHREWSBURY IN BLOOM PUBLICITY

8.1 Recruitment

Members discussed the need to recruit new members to the Committee with people who represent the community.

ACTION:

- **HH to initiate publicity to attract new members to the Committee.**

8.2 Press Coverage and Social Media

HH sends out Bloom press releases on a regular basis throughout the year.

HH also manages the Bloom Twitter account, with regular updates.

8.3 Admag Wraparound

There is a dedicated Bloom Admag wraparound in July and various Bloom features in other editions during the year.

09/19 TO CONSIDER A REQUEST FOR FUNDING FROM ST GILES PRIMARY SCHOOL

Members discussed a request for funding towards the construction of a sensory garden at the school.

GF advised members that Debbie Entwistle is currently working on costings from a list provided by the school. After discussing the plans, members agreed that the Bloom Committee is willing to provide support in the form of plants and compost to the value of £350.00.

HH has requested that the offer of support is conditional on regular updates of progress to the Bloom Committee.

Members discussed whether other companies, including Stadco, Caterpillar and the Rotary Clubs might be recommended to the school to approach for assistance with the build.

10/19 THE NEED TO ENGAGE NEW COMMUNITY GROUPS AND PROJECTS

Members felt that the initial stages for engaging new community groups should be approached via KR's letter to Councillors and HH's publicity drive.

There would be a chance to review progress at future meetings.

11/19 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- MT requested assistance from KR in relation to the presentation of the Schools Ground Award at Wilfred Owen School next month.
- GF advised members that Adam Purnell has requested funds from the Bloom Committee for the purchase of herbs for the Grange Youth Centre. There are plans to install raised beds to grow herbs and fruit trees to assist with programmes to assist local families.

ACTION:

Members agreed to meet the costs.

- GF also asked the Bloom Committee to consider meeting the cost of replacing the old concrete planters along Coton Hill and Abbey Foregate areas of town with 25 new ones at a cost of £1,800.

ACTION:

Members agreed to meet the costs.

- GF also asked members to consider Matt Wilcoxon's request for funding towards the purchase of wild flower seeds for distribution to local Councillors and schools.

ACTION:

Members agreed to provide funding of £150.00.

12/19 FUTURE MEETING DATES

The following meetings were confirmed for 2.00pm at the Weeping Cross Centre, Shrewsbury:

Thursday 28 February

Thursday 28 March

Thursday 25 April

Thursday 23 May

Thursday 27 June