



SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL  
FULL COUNCIL  
16 NOVEMBER 2020

Agenda No

20

Responsible Officer: Helen Ball - Town Clerk

TOILETS

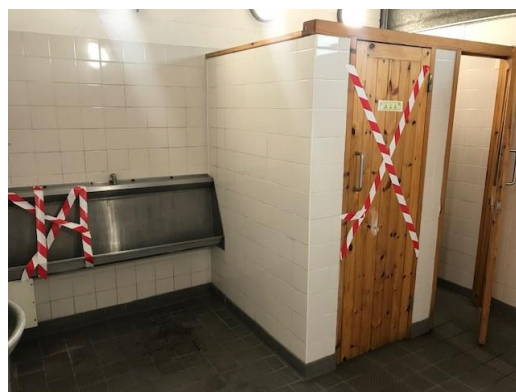
**Purpose of Report**

To inform members on public convenience provision in Shrewsbury.

**STC Provision**

Shrewsbury Town Council inherited a number of public conveniences at the time of vesting

|   |  |                              |
|---|--|------------------------------|
| <b>Abbey Foregate</b>   |  |                              |
| This is a separate block within the Abbey Foregate Carpark and predominantly caters for the tourist/visitor market. |  |                              |
| Facilities  | Gents  | (2 Cubicles/1 Trough Urinal) |
|   | Ladies   | (4 Cubicles)                 |
|   | Disabled   | Separate Disabled Cubicle    |
|   | Others   | CCTV & Defibrillator         |
| Condition   | Generally good throughout<br>Light is good either through natural light or lighting<br>Sanitary ware is in good condition made of resin bond<br>Tiling is fair but prone to collect dirt due to white tiles and grouting<br>Flooring is grey tiled with raised pattern which collects dirt |                              |
| Usage   | It is predominantly a tourist facility   |                              |
| Works Needed  | No works needed  |                              |



(Abbey Foregate Ladies, Gents, Ladies)



| <b>Butcher Row</b>   |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| Originally a sub-terrane facility which was prone to significant ASB, it was demolished and re-built |   |  |
| Facilities   | Gents   | 1 Cubicle  |
|  | Ladies  | 1 Cubicle  |
|  | Disabled  | Separate Disabled Cubicle included Baby Changing facility but was removed due to ASB |
|  | Other   | Changing Places Facility, CCTV   |
| Condition  | <p>Generally good throughout</p> <p>Lighting is good within the cubicles. Corridor benefits from natural light</p> <p>Sanitary ware is in good condition</p> <p>Tiling and flooring was constructed to reflect easy maintenance and is wearing very well</p> <p>Sharps boxes show signs of damage due to repeated break-ins to access needles</p> |  |
| Usage  | <p>This is used by visitors and shoppers. This area has been prone to significant ASB with the disabled cubicle being abused for the taking of illegal substances. The Changing Places Facility is well received by those who genuinely use it.</p>   |  |
| Works Needed   | No works needed   |  |

| <b>Upper Quarry</b>  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| This is formed of two buildings, a period building housing the ladies and DDA and a modern pastiche building housing the gents |   |  |
| Facilities   | Gents   | (2 Cubicles/1 Trough Urinal)               |
|  | Ladies  | (3 Cubicles)                               |
|  | Disabled  | Separate Disabled Cubicle with poor access |
| Condition  | <p>Condition is fair to poor.</p> <p>The main issue is the poor drainage system that the toilets feed into. This requires drains being rodded every week to keep them functioning. Planning would require the period building to retain but the modern building could be removed. Internally the facilities are tired and require replacement. Some broken tiles. Has poor layout.</p>  |  |
| Usage  | <p>This facility is well used and on the hole respectfully used.</p>  |  |
| Works Needed   | <p>Requires demolition and rebuild. A structural survey of all of the buildings in the depot area has highlighted the need to address the inadequate drainage facilities. Any works would need to be done at the same time as redevelopment of the pool as the drains flow from Quarry Lodge (SHS HQ) through the Upper Quarry toilets, through the Pool, down towards Lower Quarry toilets and into the main drain which runs along Victoria Avenue. Consideration needs to be given as to whether these could be incorporated in either the rebuilt Quarry Pool or any new development on the depot site.</p> |  |



*(Upper Quarry Disabled, Gents, Gents, Ladies)*

| <b>Lower Quarry</b>           |  |  |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| This facility is the busiest. |  |  |
| Facilities                    | Gents  | (1 Cubicles/3 Individual Urinals) with 2 separate drainage pipes |
|                               | Ladies   | (2 Cubicles)   |
|                               | Disabled   | Separate Disabled Cubicle  |
| Condition                     | Condition is fair<br>The facility structure is susceptible to flooding and this year was out of action for a number weeks waiting for flood water to subside.<br>It is a struggle to dry out the facility, this then results in damp and mould forming. Internally the facilities are tired and require replacement. |  |
| Usage                         | Is exceptionally well used by users of the park and by children using the play facility though this does pose a safeguarding risk as they have to exist the play area to use the facility  |  |
| Works Needed                  | Needs gutting and rebuild inside with potential for access from within the play area as well as outside of the play area.<br>Backflow valve protection required to water supply due to flooding.<br>Poor layout  |  |



**Hills Lane Toilets**

This is the only leased premises. Discussions have taken place with a local business to take over the facility and forecourt to use at outdoor seating, this being conditional on free access to public conveniences.

|              |   |                           |
|--------------|---|---------------------------|
| Facilities   | Gents   | (2 Cubicles/1 Urinal)     |
|              | Ladies  | (3 Cubicles)              |
|              | Disabled  | Separate Disabled Cubicle |
| Condition    | Fair. The internal works were refurbished around 8 years ago but the layout means they do not function well as a safe facility. |                           |
| Usage        | This facility has been subject to ASB including drug use and cottaging.   |                           |
| Works Needed | No works needed. Soon to be transferred.  |                           |

**Sydney Avenue**

For the last year the facility has been successfully opened/closed and cleaned by the café by the weir, subject to their opening times. The Town Council continues to maintain the facility and provide consumables.

|              |   |   |
|--------------|---|---|
| Facilities   | Gents   | (1 Cubicle/1 Tough Urinal) DDA accessible |
|              | Ladies  | (1 Cubicle) DDA accessible                |
| Condition    |   |   |
| Usage        | is predominantly used by walkers and anglers. It continues to be a spot for drug users, when the café is not in use |   |
| Works Needed |   |   |



*(Sydney Avenue Ladies)*

**Other Provision**

SC Bus Station  
SC Darwin & Pride Shopping Centres  
SC Theatre Severn  
SC Museum  
SC Quarry Pool  
Market Hall  
University Centre Shrewsbury  
Parade Shopping Centre



Railway Station  
Cafes  
Pubs

### **Cleansing Regime**

Operatives make multiple visits to each site on average 4 times a day subject to work demands and undertake various activities including power washing, drain rodding, mopping, consumable replenishment & minor repairs.

All cubicles now have sharps boxes installed. This was done as a necessity as drug users were hiding needles in very dangerous places placing both the public and staff at risk. Sharps boxes are replaced and full boxes are taken to a Clinical Waste Store at Weeping Cross where it is emptied every 6 months. Two 660 litre containers are collected every six months.

Cleanliness is only as good as the period that operatives leave the facility. Operatives have reported on the condition they find the facilities in at Recreation & Leisure Committee previously. Often these facilities have to be completely closed for deep cleaning, especially after incidents of substance misuse when bodily fluids have splattered over walls & ceilings.

All Ladies conveniences have sanitary waste bins which are collected by the external contractor.

In preparation for this report a member of staff visited all toilets without notifying the cleansing operatives of a visit. The officer reported a good level of cleanliness which passed the "Sniff" test. Incidentally the untidiest, as is always the case were the ladies' conveniences.

It should be noted that throughout the COVID crisis the Cleansing Operatives are covering shifts at the Market Hall as both Markets Officers have been shielding.

### **Opening Hours**

Facilities are open 7 days a week from 8am-4pm with the exception of Christmas Day and Boxing Day. Two full time operatives and a part time operative are employed to clean the facilities including alternate weekend working, though the part-time operative is currently on long-term sick leave.

### **ASB Issues**

Not unlike other outdoor public conveniences across the country, toilets in Shrewsbury are prone to anti-social behaviour from poor hygiene regimes operated by the users to more serious issues of drug taking and cottaging. This would only ever be addressed with resident operatives at each location, but at what cost?



## **Self-Locking Mechanisms**

Over the years, staff have experimented with various electronic closing mechanisms but they have all been prone to abuse with homeless wedging the mechanism and using facilities as a shelter and on others smashing doors down for access.

## **Charging Mechanisms**

Hills Lane Toilets have had pay on entry mechanisms installed. This merely resulted in the facility no longer being regularly used. There are also wider implications of unintended consequences of managing the wider public estate particularly around discarding of needles and drugs paraphernalia and human defecation in shrub beds. Members would need to make a policy decision if this is to be rolled out across the estate, particularly in the park where facilities are right next to the play area and are well used by children. The use of machines would have to be considered. COVID is forcing officers to look at cashless facilities elsewhere; this would need to be the case were a charging policy to take place.

## **COVID**

Under direction all toilets were closed and once leisure and retail opened so too have the toilets focusing on the DDA toilets where social distancing rules could be applied. All toilets have been reviewed by the Council's external Health & Safety Officer and all toilets are now working in accordance with their individual COVID RA.

Abbey Forgegate – Gents (1 cubicle/1urinal), Ladies (2 cubicles), Disabled  
Butcher Row – 1 unisex only & Changing Places Facility  
Quarry Upper – Gents (1 cubicle/block off trough urinal), Ladies (2 cubicles), Disabled  
Quarry Lower – Gents (1 cubicle/1 urinal), Ladies (1 cubicle), D  
Sydney Avenue – Disabled cubicle  
Hills Lane – remain closed pending transfer

New signage and hand sanitiser has been installed throughout, cubicles and urinals closed to create space

## **Options for the Future**

COVID has also raised the need to review the provisions of toilets differently and the movement towards unisex cubicles with washing and drying facilities within the cubicle (similar to Butcher Row) is the safest approach. Officers have already raised this issue with both the Finance & General Purpose Committee and the Recreation & Leisure Committee.

In developing specifications considerations need to be given to the long-term maintenance of these facilities particularly when it comes to the choice of sanitary ware, access to pipes, electrics and drains, tiles including grouting and whether large washable surfaces are better, flooring for the same reasons,



types of dispensers for toilet paper, soap, sharps boxes to avoid drilling holes everywhere and the ability to fill dispensers easily.

Members could consider having resident cleansing operatives on-site or even contracting the cleaning out but the budget would inevitably need to be improved and in event would the benefit of intensive cleansing regimes over-ride the cost.

Members might wish to consider charging mechanisms for these facilities, but should be mindful of unintended consequences.

Members may wish to consider wider toilet provision including better signage to other municipal facilities to spread the usage or even community toilet schemes similar to the ones operated by Kingston Borough Council ([https://www.richmond.gov.uk/community\\_toilet\\_scheme](https://www.richmond.gov.uk/community_toilet_scheme) ) which pay businesses to open up their toilet facilities to the public.

### **Conclusions**

- (i) That on the whole given the patronage, the toilets are in reasonable condition
- (ii) That there should be a review of regimes and hours of operation to determine whether opening/closing operations could be extended and cost implications.
- (iii) That focus on work should be around the Upper and Lower Quarry Toilets
- (iv) That given the potential experience of the Hills Lane Toilets being transferred to business operation a Community Toilet Scheme could be considered.
- (v) That consideration be given to wayfinding signage to other toilet facilities