

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Recreation & Leisure Committee Held in the Guildhall, Frankwell Quay, Shrewsbury At 6.00pm on Wednesday 05 December 2018

PRESENT

Councillors K Pardy (Chair), I Jones, N Green, N Laurens, A Mosley, K Roberts, D Vasmer and Mrs R Wall.

IN ATTENDANCE

Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Gary Farmer (Operations Manager), Mike Cox (Outdoor Recreation & Asset Manager), Stuart Farmer (Projects Officer), Rebecca Oliver (Committee Clerk) and Matt Wilcoxon (Countryside and Greenspace Team Leader).

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies of absence.

39/18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (PECUNIARY & NON-PECUNIARY) IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CODE OF CONDUCT

Shropshire Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Those twin-hatted members declared a personal interest in any matters relating to the Town Council's relationship with Shropshire Council.
Councillor N Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Declared a personal interest in items relating to the market as his fiancé is on the waiting list for a stall.

40/18 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Recreation & Leisure Committee meeting held on 10 October 2018 were submitted as circulated and read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Recreation & Leisure Committee meeting held on 10 October 2018 be approved and signed as a correct record.

41/18 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- 41.1 Ref: Min 31/18 Bus Shelters** – The Town Clerk reported that contact had been made with Arriva to ascertain whether they could provide details on numbers who use bus stops in the town. Whilst their current data collection could not provide this information the new system will provide that data from March. Enquiries have also been made of Passenger Transport Services at Shropshire Council to enquire what information they hold. Due to the large number of bus shelters, this will take time.
- 41.2 Ref: Min 24.1 Trial Solar Light** - The current trial of the solar light in the Quarry will run until April 2019. Officers will be interested to see how well it performs during the darker winter days.
- 41.3 Ref: Min 24.2 Geosensing Monitors** – Officers have met Elephant Wi-Fi regarding extending the geosensors into the Market Hall and Square. Orders have been raised.
- 41.4 Ref: Min 28.5 Beech Tree in the Dingle** – The Town Council has received planning permission to carry out essential works on the Beech Tree in the Dingle. Following the works, the tree will continue to be monitored closely.
- 41.5 Ref: Min 30.2 Church Road Recreation Ground** – The Town Clerk reported that no further complaints had been received regarding dog fouling. The work to create a footpath from the hardstanding area to the school entrance is scheduled into winter maintenance programmes; this will entail edging the existing path and laying a grasscrete path within the railed area of the football pitch. The litter bin in the play area has been relocated.
- The community have carried out litter-picking duties and the Town Council requested to be informed when these sessions are planned so arrangements can be made to remove the gathered rubbish.
- The Town Clerk informed members that it will cost £18k to upgrade the play area and the removed equipment will be reinstated at another play area.
- 41.6 Ref: Min 32/18 Proposed Tender Works** – Tenders for the Monkmoor Recreation Ground All Weather Pitch and Radbrook Recreation Ground pitch levelling are ready to progress but will be deferred until the New Year to tie in with timescales for the planned works.
- 41.7 Ref: Min 33/18 Winter Maintenance** – The Town Clerk reported that permission has been sought from Andy Wilde, Shropshire Council, to use the Longden Road Salt Store and be invoiced for usage rather than trying to create a Salt Store. A response is awaited.

42/18 COUNTRYSIDE UPDATE

The meeting was joined by Matt Wilcoxon, the Countryside and Greenspace Team Leader. He made an interesting and informative presentation on the work of his Countryside & Greenspace Team; this included:

- **Longden Road Cemetery and Crematorium maintenance team** work with volunteers. There has been a dramatic increase in the presence of wildlife and insects in areas left to be more natural.
- **The Tree Gang** are active from October to March and had increased workload following the snowy conditions of last winter.
- **Shrub Bed Team** have had increased work maintaining the War Graves ahead of this year's Remembrance Sunday.
- **Rural Team** have taken on new contracts including some schools and have repaired sunken graves in the rural cemeteries in addition to their normal duties.
- **Grass Verge Mowers Team** have been under extra pressure this year due to staff sickness, two new starters that have required training and extreme weather conditions that significantly affected the grass growth and therefore the workload.
- **Countryside Unit** have been assisted by 500 volunteer hours in the past year.
- **Maintenance Team** cover a range of duties from tractor work to treating invasive species.

Matt explained the pressures on these countryside sites including erosion, encroaching developments, invasive species and anti-social behaviour. Examples of fly-tipping and bonfires which the staff have to clear up takes a lot of time and invariably never leads to prosecutions.

Three apprentices have been taken on by Shrewsbury Town Council, one of which is in Matt's team. He is working on a 2-year horticultural course with Walford College. It is hoped he will progress into permanent employment with the Town Council.

Some of the main projects that have taken place in 2018 included:

- Installation of a cattle corral area at the entrance of the old Riverbed site.
- Clearing storm damage.
- Planting of 500 trees as a hedge in Monkmoor, which were destroyed. The Police are still investigating the crime.
- Removing 6 trailers full of litter and old tyres from the Reabrook.
- Replacing a footbridge in Copthorne Park.
- Maintaining around 22 miles of footpath by cutting back the verges using robotic cutters. Members asked whether this type of kit is used widely. The Projects Officer confirmed that the Town Council does not use remote robotic cutters for hard to access banks. The machines are very expensive and with few inaccessible areas, Officers could not justify the purchasing of such machines. Staff are trained on the safety of accessing and cutting banks.
- Planting of Wild Meadow gardens. Matt explained that although wild meadows require less maintenance than cutting, they only thrive in certain locations, the ground preparations need completing correctly, the results are unpredictable and overtime may result in a dominant species plus the aesthetics of the garden

before and after flowering looks untidy. Despite these challenges, Matt would encourage more wild meadow gardens, which attract wildlife, but feels it is essential to educate the public about the type of planting so they appreciate it is not a neglected area. The initial seed is expensive but it is possible for the gardens to self-seed in subsequent years.

Matt explained about a new and exciting project for 2019, which is to introduce beavers as grazing animals on the Old Riverbed. The site is big enough for 2 or 3 families but initially just one pair of beavers would be trialled. It is a large, permanently wet site with no public rights of way. There would be no risk to humans as beavers are timid, slow breeding animals and the site would be secured with specialised fencing. The project is being developed with Natural England and the Environment Agency and a similar project has been seen working well in the Forest of Dean. There will be plenty of media coverage when the project is launched and schools and the public will be engaged through consultations.

The committee thanked Matt for his attendance and requested his presentation be circulated to them all.

Matt Wilcoxon left the meeting.

43/18 QUARRY

43.1 Events in the Quarry 2018

The Outdoor Recreation and Assets Manager (OR&AM) circulated the list of Events for 2018. Several charity events have taken place recently all of which were successful and all organisers have expressed their wish to return next year. The only remaining event to be held this year is the Santa Dash on 16 December alongside the weekly Park Runs.

43.2 Events in the Quarry 2019

The Outdoor Recreation and Assets Manager (OR&AM) circulated the list of Events for 2019. A new event, the Soap Box Derby on 26 May has already attracted interest and involves building and racing buggies and go carts. The organiser wishes to book the venue up to 2020. The Quarry is now fully booked for 2019.

43.3 Footfall Activity in the Quarry

Data from the Geosensing Footfall Counters for October - November and November - December were circulated prior to the meeting. The figures show peaks at expected times i.e. during festivals, events and on Remembrance Sunday. The average dwell time was 73 minutes.

43.4 Tendering for Ice-cream & Refreshments Concessions

Fifteen companies are tendering for this work and the tender documents are due to be received by 15th January 2019. Officers will report back on progress.

44/18 RECRUITMENT OF A MECHANICAL ENGINEER

The Operations Manager reported that a Mechanical Engineer has been appointed and will commence his role on 07 January 2019. The individual has been involved in the project to install a new lift in the workshop.

45/18 REMEMBRANCE

45.1 Update On Recent Remembrance Activities Involving The Town Council

The Town Clerk reported on Remembrance Sunday, which has grown in popularity and attracted extra people this year. There were around 1600 participants in the parade, St Chad's church was full for the service with over 2,000 people listening outside. There were 17 Town Council staff helping, 12 of which were managing road closures. The Church Wardens were praised for their work in seating everyone in the church. To speed up proceedings further next year, seating will not be reserved.

In the evening, the Shropshire War Memorial in the Quarry was lit with red lights and speakers announced the names of fallen soldiers. This was a moving event, organised by Andy McEwan and was well attended.

45.2 Location For The Planting Of The Remembrance Oak Trees In Each Ward

The Shrewsbury in Bloom Committee has funded the purchase and planting of 17 Oak Trees (one in each ward) to commemorate the centenary of the First World War. A list of locations within each ward was circulated and a number of councillors had asked to be involved with planting. Planting would take place over the next two weeks.

46/18 MARKETS

The Outdoor Recreation and Asset Manager reported that there is 100% utilisation with 15 traders on the waiting list, 10 of which are existing traders wishing to expand. The market will be opened until 9pm on Wednesday 12 December.

The Market Hall has again reached the top 10 in the public vote for the National Association of British Market Authorities Britain's Favourite Market; the next stage is for mystery shoppers to visit the market before Christmas.

47/18 RECREATION GROUND & OPEN SPACE MATTERS

47.1 Upton Lane Recreation Ground

The Operations Manager has appointed a consultant to carry out the feasibility study to redesign the BMX track on Upton Lane Recreation Ground. Some good

designs have come out of this work but the costings were higher than expected. The ward member has been involved and the quotes will be discussed with the group leaders before progressing.

47.2 County Ground

Quotes for extending the pavilion have been received in the region of £450k-500k. If this work is not carried out, the pavilion will require extensive work costing in the region of £100k. A contractor needs to be in place by April/May 2019 to ensure the 28 week build is completed for the Cricket season. This will be discussed further with the group leaders.

The Town Council has been approached by the Shropshire Cricket Board to host junior development and ladies development at the county ground. With the Canoe club utilising the facility on a Monday night, league cricket matches on a Sunday and a rounders club expressing an interest in using the facilities, there is utilisation 7 days a week. The Outdoor Recreation & Asset Manager will meet with the main users to ensure no conflict of use. With the facility being so well used, Officers hope to see a reduction in antisocial behaviour.

47.3 Monkmoor Recreation Ground

This facility has seen an increase in anti-social behaviour and is regularly used as a 'hangout' by many youths. The individuals can be abusive and due to a Police resources being stretched, help is not always immediately available. This puts the tenants in the pavilion, who open and close the facilities, in a vulnerable position, which causes Officers concern.

Officers proposed installing a specific type of fencing around the pavilion. This 358 fencing has been chosen for its appearance and robustness. Three quotes have been received ranging from £5500 - £6240. Once protected, the pavilion could be returned to its original white colouring, in place of the green paint. Members discussed the urgency for the fencing or whether it could wait until alternative refurbishment plans for the pavilion were made; Officers stressed the urgency for these measures; the fencing could be reused if the pavilion were ever to be redeveloped in the future.

Members supported the need for this fencing and agreed to the middle quote of £5634.

RESOLVED:

That fencing around the pavilion be installed for £5634.

47.4 Oakfield Drive

The Town Clerk reported on the unauthorised encampment in the middle of the green, off Oakfield Drive. Officers had worked with Severnside Housing as this encampment had links to a tenanted property in the area. This was the first occasion where the Town Council had had to seek an eviction order from the courts. The campers moved ahead of the bailiffs evicting them from the site but left behind 20 bags of rubbish, which the Council had to remove. There was

enough evidence to seek enforcement under fly tipping legislation and details had been sent to Shropshire Council. Cost of removal of fly tipped materials would be sent to Severnside Housing.

47.5 Abbey Gardens

The Town Clerk reported on an ongoing complaint by a resident in Amber Rise has made regarding trees overhanging his garden, which he considers to be dangerous and has asked that they be felled. Stephen Shields has attended the site, assessed the trees and deemed them to be healthy. The trees are only slightly encroaching on the resident's garden over the fence, which could be resolved with minor trimming, and some tree debris has landed in his garden. There are no safety concerns.

The Town Council's policy is to only fell trees if they are diseased, damaged or pose a health and safety threat. Conservation Area Consent would be required before any work could be done on the trees. It was reported that many compromises had already been made on the site to accommodate the new development.

Members unanimously agreed that the Town Council policy should be followed and that no further action be taken.

RESOLVED:

That no further action be taken.

47.6 Radbrook Recreation Ground

The Outdoor Recreation & Assets Manager reported on works that had been previously done by SAHA to create carparking within the Radbrook Recreation Grounds; this involved providing a hardstanding area for the vehicles to park on and the installation of bollards to prevent them driving onto the grass.

Half of the work has been done and SAHA would like to complete the remainder. Officers were happy with plans

RESOLVED:

That approval of work to complete the hardstanding areas at Radbrook Recreation Ground by SAHA be granted.

47.7 Castlewalk Recreation Ground

Officers reported in ongoing concerns about subsidence at the Castlewalk Recreation Ground; the site had developed many depressions, which fill with water and make cutting of the grass very difficult. The path is also undulating which could lead to erosion. Much of this subsidence is the result of the settlement of the former waste tip below ground. The site was capped many years ago and concerns were expressed that were the subsidence to cause breaches to the cap, significant environmental improvements would be required.

Officers have been in talks with both the Environment Agency and the Public Protection Department at Shropshire Council about the potential for levelling the ground with additional top soil. Both organisations are generally in agreement and conditions of any soil transfer were discussed. The timing of the work will depend on a number of points including ground conditions, access to top soil etc.

RESOLVED:

The plans be put in place to develop a solution to ground subsidence at Castlewalk Recreation Ground.

48/18 USE OF TECHNOLOGY

The Town Clerk reported on the need to use modern technology to carry out the effective and efficient management of the Council's Estate, meaning that sites are secured, the public remain safe and the staff are protected from harm. The inevitability is that as Police resources are stretched the Town Council has to become less reliant on the Police and more resilient. The Projects Officer detailed the kind of technology used by the Town Council.

48.1 GIS Mapping and the Current Programme of Mapping Streetlights

In preparation for upgrading streetlights to LED lights, the Project Officer has been mapping all streetlights belonging to the Town Council s. He circulated maps of the results and recognised there are still some anomalies. This project is hoped to eliminate uncertainty over ownership and gather facts about condition of columns, whether any already been converted to LED bulbs and the extent of the upgrades required.

48.2 Geosensing and the Need To Understand Footfall Numbers for General Usage, Compliance With Licences and the Management of Crowd Control

The Project Officer reported on the data gathered from the geosensors and how they provided a useful picture of the routes individuals take, their dwell time in locations, footfall patterns and hotspots. There is a great need to extend the sensors into the town centre to build on this picture and the BID are keen to be involved. It is hoped that these results can be used alongside other data such as car parking numbers, shopping centre footfall counts etc. to build up the whole picture and see what impact events, the weathers, floods etc. have on the town. It also helps Officers control the attendance numbers at events to ensure compliance of the Premises Licence.

The Town Clerk confirmed that no investigation has been done into the revenue potential for this data as the bigger picture needs to be mapped and the data collated with other sources. The Operations Manager explained how this system can add value to open spaces, justifying the use of spaces and resources and carry out value for money exercises.

48.3 CCTV Cameras and the Mobile Access To Data

There are eleven CCTV locations which are managed by the Projects Officer. They focus on public conveniences to reduce vandalism and the Council depots, which are vulnerable to break-ins. Due to Data Protection Regulations, only the Projects Officer can access and download data from these cameras. He has remote access to two of the locations, via his mobile phone but access is dependent on a reliable WI-FI connection. CCTV footage already captured has proven invaluable.

48.4 Bodycams and the Use By Operatives

The bodycams were used for the first time at the Christmas Light Switch on event, which proved very useful. Around 8 were worn in a standby mode and none were required to record as the presence of a camera was enough of a deterrent. The public will always be informed before the camera begins recording. The bodycams protect the staff and therefore it is intended that cleansing operatives, as lone workers, will undergo training and be issued with bodycams also.

48.5 Shopwatch Radios and the Use By Operatives

Shopwatch radios have been used by Town Council staff for a while and link to the police, local businesses, CCTV control room, and during evenings security staff at pubs and clubs. This was a BID initiative and Shrewsbury Town Council just purchased the radios. The radios give increased safety to lone workers and even if the police are unavailable other support can be received. Councillor Laurens gave his positive experience of using the radios when working with the Street Pastors.

48.6 Vehicle Trackers

The Projects Officer reported on the use of vehicle trackers for all key pieces of machinery, plant and vehicles. Alarms are received in the event any of these vehicles move out of the Town Council boundary or move out of core hours. In light of recent thefts, this facility has been extended.

49/18 FISHERIES

The Outdoor Recreation and Asset Manager reported on very successful fishing competitions which took place in October and November and the organisers wish to return next year.

An audit of all signage at all fisheries has taken place and an order for new signs put in.

Due to being a lone worker, the Bailiff has been issued with a bodycam following training.

Councillor A Mosley left the meeting.

50/18 TEAM SHREWSBURY

Shrewsbury has a new Inspector, Saif Ali, a new sergeant for the town centre and another for the town's perimeter. This new staffing has helped significantly already particularly

with dealing with issues in the town centre such as the homeless, drugs misuse and misuse of toilet facilities. Staff are focussed on reducing river deaths and participated in a telephone conference at Hindlip Hall regarding this, the result of which showed that the Team Shrewsbury ethos and partnership working is far ahead of other areas.

51/18 SHREWSBURY IN BLOOM

The Town Clerk reported that Shrewsbury was awarded Gold in the Britain In Bloom Small City Campaign and were only one point away from being the category winner. Next year the town will enter the Heart of England in Bloom Campaign where experimenting with routes, different personnel and locations will add variety to the town's entry. Officers asked Members to come forward with any new community projects or community groups that the campaign could focus on utilising Town Council resources to support such projects. IT was however emphasised that the campaign is not about what the Town Council can do, but what the communities can do for themselves.

52/18 CHRISTMAS

The Christmas Light Switch On event went well with 19 Town Council staff helping out. This has become a popular event of which the staff managed well. A couple of incidents were dealt with quickly and efficiently and the staff were thanked for their help. Peddlers were kept at bay with the support of security staff and bodycams were worn for the first time which proved a great deterrent.

Carols in the Square will take place next week and again 19 staff will be assisting with road closures and crowd control.

53/18 COMMUTED SUMS

- 53.1 Radbrook College Site** – tenders are out for the work to upgrade the play areas in Grangefields and Bank Farm Road. They will be returned in the New Year.
- 53.2 Copthorne Barracks Play and Open Space** – This development will generate £110k offsite contributions for upgrading the play area and open space at Silks Meadow and Copthorne Park. The project is awaiting progress with the pavilion extension at the County Ground.
- 53.3 Riverside Meadow s106 agreement** – This project is complete and £9k was spent on the play area and £14k on the footpath installation.
- 53.4 Shelton Hospital Land Transfer** – Majority of this land will be given to a management company but the entrance to the development off Somerby Drive

will be transferred to Shrewsbury Town Council once the landscaping has been completed.

53.5 Barratt Homes - Hanwood Road Land Transfer – This land has been adopted and commuted sum received.

53.6 Barratt Homes/Bovis Homes – Mytton Oak Road – There are lots of snagging works and the levelling of the water ponds to be completed before this land transfer can go ahead.

53.7 Shrewsbury South Sustainable Urban Extension

53.7.1 Sutton Grange site – this project is ongoing and unlikely to transfer in the next financial year.

53.7.2 Bellway Homes site – discussions are ongoing regarding adoption of open space including the acoustic fencing along the A5. Commuted sums have been amended to reflect this added request.

53.7.3 Galliers site – discussions about this site are very much in their infancy and is located to the right of Percy Throwers Garden Centre.

53.7.4 Community Centre – this community centre is due to be located at the back of the site by Percy Throwers and early discussions have taken place.

53.8 Ingleby Way – this site is now ready following clarification of the hedgerow ownership. Transfer is expected at the end of December once the snagging list is signed off.

53.9 Holgate Drive – this site is ready for transfer at the end of December once the snagging list has been completed.

53.10 Belvidere Paddocks – this site is ready and awaiting transfer at the end of December once the snagging has been completed.

53.11 Arlington Way – this site is with the lawyers awaiting transfer once the snagging issues have been satisfied.

53.12 Sweetlake – the S106 issue has now been resolved and the works to create a play area are being planned.

53.13 Shrewsbury Town Football Club – in lieu of the removal of a covenant on this site, £60k was awarded for levelling the pitch. This will actually cost £120k. This matter will be discussed with the group leaders before being progressed.