

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Meeting of the Recreation & Leisure Committee Held Virtually on Microsoft Teams At 6.00pm on Wednesday 9 March 2022

Please note this was an informal virtual meeting of the Committee convened to assist the Town Clerk with carrying out the delegated powers granted to her by Full Council on 22 March 2021 & Finance & General Purposes Committee on 12 April 2021.

PRESENT

Councillors K Pardy (Chair), B Bentick, J Dean (substituting for C Lemon), P Gillam, E Roberts, R Wilson & D Vasmer (substituting for A Wagner). Also in attendance Councillors A Mosley & Mrs P Moseley.

IN ATTENDANCE

Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Amanda Spencer (Deputy Town Clerk), Gary Farmer (Head of Operations), Stuart Farmer (Projects Manager), Mike Cox (Outdoor Recreation & Asset Manager), Ruth Jones (Office Manager) & Carol Pullen (Committee Clerk).

84/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED:

That apologies be accepted from Councillors Lemon & Wagner.

85/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (PECUNIARY & NON-PECUNIARY) IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CODE OF CONDUCT

Shropshire Councillors	Those twin-hatted members declared a personal interest in any matters relating to the Town Council's relationship with Shropshire Council.
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86/21 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Recreation & Leisure Committee meeting held on 19 January 2022 were submitted as circulated and read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Recreation & Leisure Committee meeting held on 19 January 2022 be approved and signed as a correct record.

87/21 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

72/21 – Ref 64/01 Shorncliffe Recreation Ground – Councillor Wilson & the Town Clerk had met with Redkite on site were awaiting proposals.

72/21 – Ref 64/02 Stanley Lane Recreation Ground – Matters were being clarified with the preferred tenderer. Councillor Bentick had raised a potential objection from a resident about lighting that had not been picked up in the original consultation. Awaiting confirmation to proceed.

72/21 – Ref 66/02 Dana Gardens – The Town Clerk and the Contracts & Arb Officer had visited the site and they did not feel the tree was as close to the property as had been suggested. The tree officers at Shropshire Council had been contacted to determine how acceptable minor pruning would be to reduce impact from lower limbs.

81/21 – Trees – The Queens Green Canopy matters were going well with some 500 trees having been distributed. Work in the Quarry to deadwood the Lime Trees was going exceptionally well.

88/21 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Ahead of the meeting, the Capital Programme had been circulated to members and the Town Clerk provided the following updates:

- Stanley Lane improvements – there was a preferred tenderer
- Greenacres Play Area – tenders were being evaluated and the local ward member was being consulted
- Abbey Gardens – footpath & drainage tenders were being drawn up
- Cycling & Walking Map – had been commissioned
- Beaver Project – further information had been sent to DEFRA
- Street Lights – upgrades were underway
- Mary Webb Play Area – had been done
- Quarry Solar Lights – were in and had held up well in the floods
- Football Foundation EOI – Sean McCarthy had been discussing Stage 2 application with the Football Foundation and Shropshire FA
- Height restrictions barriers had now all gone in and there has been positive feedback from the residents
- Drainage works on the County Ground would be started first but the water table was still to high for works to begin
- Moston Road – further conversations required before progressing

RESOLVED:

That the Report be noted.

89/21 FOOTFALL

The Project Manager reported that during January and February, the expected drop in total visitor numbers was as in previous years. Figures had remained fairly consistent especially with Quarry visitors remaining high.

Flooding towards the end of February certainly had an impact on visitor numbers as well on the counting equipment in the Quarry. Whilst all efforts had been made previously to prevent damage to the equipment, high level floods of the river meant equipment had needed to be removed where possible resulting in a period of approximately five days when the Quarry counters were not operational but areas were accessible.

RESOLVED:

That the Report be noted.

90/21 FISHERIES

The Outdoor Recreation & Asset Manager reported:

Mousecroft Pool – all tree work had been completed by Western Power, with no issues received during the work. The previous grant application for three platforms was successful and the fisheries were looking to bid in the 2022-23 financial year to construct another three platforms.

Monkmoor Fishery – due to the bad weather and flooding the laying of the stone surface had been delayed. Once the lane dried out the work would be completed at the earliest opportunity.

Oxon Pool – the vermin problem had been resolved and was completed over a couple of days, so there was reduced risk of other wildlife being affected.

Reabrook Fishery – new signs still waiting to be installed, this would be done in conjunction with other sites and when ground conditions improved.

Radbroke Pool – the three replacement platforms had been installed and it was pleasing to note the continued maintenance of the outflow had meant that during the recent heavy rain, the surrounding paths were not flooded.

County Ground and Quarry – during the close of the fishing season (15 March-15 June) the pegs would be inspected and repaired as they were prone to damage during flooding. All would need re stoning once all risk of flooding had passed.

Emstrey Fishery – the additional car parking arrangements were still under discussion but appeared to be going well. The five platforms had not been installed due to high river levels.

Belvidere Fishery – grant application for the three platforms had been submitted.

Sydney Avenue – grants had been submitted for the four replacement platforms and result of the bid should be known by the end of March.

New signage – these had not been done yet and the last flood had delayed the work again. All locations would be completed at the same time and would include a new sign for the disabled platform at Radbrook Pool.

Family Academy – would commence from Easter, with a total of eight events running until the end of the summer. Staff were now qualified to organize and supervise coaching sessions and grants were being applied for to host an open evening event subject to covid guidelines.

Angling competitions – Shrewsbury had hosted two competitions from the original four, however with poor water quality and lack of fish, the organisers had withdrawn future competitions until the water quality and surrounding environments improved.

Members thanked the Outdoor Recreation & Asset Manager and expressed their concerns on the issues surrounding the poor water quality. The Town Clerk reported previous discussions on the issue of combined sewer outflows at the Finance & General Purposes Committee and a resolution had been taken to hold a public meeting although this had not been possible due to Covid restrictions. The Council had worked closely with the Angling Trust and Phillip Dunne the MP for South Shropshire as he had presented a Private Members Bill on the subject of Combined Sewer Outflows and had been given commitment from DEFRA that this would be address. Officers were in regular contact with Severn Trent who did recently appointed River Wardens to look at this issue.

Members asked that the Town Clerk endeavour to convene a public meeting as soon as possible and invite Severn Trent and other local activists who were striving to improve the quality of waterways and may be able to provide some good quality information to inform the debate.

Councillor Roberts reported that as a local resident of Radbrook, she had observed that the paths around Radbrook Pool had been flooded during the recent flooding event.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the report be noted;**
- (ii) That the Town Clerk convene a public meeting as soon as possible;**
- (iii) That the Town Clerk write to Severn Trent to express members concerns.**

91/21 TEAM SHREWSBURY

The Team Shrewsbury report had been circulated prior to the meeting and the Office Manager provided an update. Claremont Place was still experiencing issues with individuals urinating and drug taking. There were also large numbers of vehicles travelling through the small archway and often damaging the property. The Community Safeguarding Partnership were currently reviewing the issues which residents were experiencing.

Shropshire Council were currently obtaining costs for deployable cameras, however there would be ongoing maintenance costs with these cameras, including the relocating of cameras. Costs were not yet available and would be provided at a future meeting.

Child Exploitation leaflets would be shared with members via e-mail designed to raise awareness on how to recognise signs of exploitation and the reporting of any concerns.

Councillor Wilson expressed concern about river safety, in particular sections of the river that remained unfenced.

Councillor Mosley reported that there was significant opposition to fencing along the river for aesthetic reasons so there would need to be further discussions and consultation about the risks and the health and safety aspect. Where the fencing had been done along the Castlefields stretch, it remained unfinished, there were supposed to be ladders to enable people to climb out of the water but these had not yet been put in place.

The Town Clerk reported that the River Safety Working Group had risk assessed the whole length of the river bank and there was an acceptance that there was never any possibility of fencing the all bank for various reasons including public opposition and the potential issue of getting people out if they fell in.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Report be noted.**
- (ii) That The Town Clerk contact Shropshire Council regarding the unfinished fencing.**

92/21 EVENTS

92.1 Events Programme for 2022

The Outdoor Recreation & Assets Manager reported on the events programme. It was pleasing to see that more events for this year were confirmed. There were a couple of new Bands who had asked to perform in the Bandstand. The organisers of the Carnival had reported that for logistical reasons the Carnival would not be taking place in 2022 but they had rebooked for 2023 and had changed the month from June to July. He reported he had been approached by many wanting to organise charity concerts in support of Ukraine, but it was not possible to organise large concerts as this went against Council Policy and the terms of the Licence but there was to be a charity fun run on 26 March.

Councillor Dean expressed concern about the back to back concerts on one weekend in July which he felt this was a burden to those living locally. The Outdoor Recreation & Assets Manager said that it was within the Council's Policy and within the terms of the Licence. Every effort was made to minimise disruption to the local community and parts of the Quarry would remain open to the public throughout.

Councillor Wilson requested that a Ukrainian flag be flown from the Quarry flagpole in support of the Ukrainian people. The Town Clerk reported that currently the

Council had not been able to source one as demand for Ukrainian flags nationally was high.

RESOLVED:

That the Report be noted.

92.2 Town Council's Policy on Security Planning

Members considered a draft policy on the Town Council's approach to security planning.

The Town Clerk had previously reported on the need for a Security Plan to set out the Council's position on how it would protect the public and staff from terrorism. As could be seen from the Plan there were a number of statutory duties to protect the public and the consequences of such could be quite onerous on not just the Council as a Corporate Body, but the Town Clerk personally as the Premises Licence Holder and the Outdoor Recreation & Assets Manager as the Designated Premises Supervisor.

Much of the need for this process came from the outcome of the Public Inquiry into the Manchester Arena Bombing in 2017. That Inquiry made quite radical recommendations to Government to create a Statutory Duty to Protect the public in what would become Publicly Accessible Locations. These would include places like restaurants and theatres and shopping centres but also parks and open spaces. This also extended to normal activity and not just during events and the need for staff to be aware of what a terror threat might look like and equally importantly what to do in the event of a serious credible terror threat.

The plan set out the Council's process in developing individual Security Plans for events and activities but also what its requirements would be for organisations seeking to use its assets for events. The Policy set out the reasonable, proportionate and relevant measures that would be put in place to mitigate any risk as far as possible, how it would assess any Threat, Risk & Harm to the public, how it would document the fact and how it would liaise with staff and stakeholders to ensure terrorism awareness becomes its normal way of working.

The draft Policy had been shared with the Safety Advisory Group and the Counter Terrorism Security Advisers at West Mercia Police and all were of the view this needed to be in place now and officers become accustomed to this way of working ahead of any statutory protect duty coming into place and being forced to bring in measures reactively. This was about not being complacent in any way shape or form and working in a multi-layered "Team Shrewsbury" decision making and operational delivery process.

These were challenging times and the terror threat remained severe in this country. People might think that there was no reason that there should be a terror threat in this county and this town but there was no reason to suggest there should not. It was timely in that this has been reviewed this against last year's events programme

in the park as well as events the Town Council organise and it was ready for the new events season.

The Town Clerk emphasised the need for Council to have this approach and be seen to be leading the way so that Shrewsbury was recognised as a safe place to host events and a safe place to attend events because the economic impact of the event programme facilitated in the Quarry added greatly to the vitality and viability of the town.

Therefore, the Committee was asked to recommend adoption of this Policy and to diarise its review annually.

Councillor Wilson thanked the Town Clerk and Officers for the work they had put into preparing this document and stressed the importance of the review in keeping the policy robust as it operated.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) That the Approach to Security Planning Policy be adopted;**
- (ii) That the Approach to Security Planning Policy be reviewed by the Recreational & Leisure Committee annually.**

92.3 Revisions to the Council's Outdoor Music Events Policy

Members considered a draft policy on the Outdoor Music Events.

The Town Clerk reported that this policy fitted well with the Security Planning Policy Document.

The Council operated a Premises Licence for Events in the Quarry Park and whilst it worked well in consolidating conditions and the Council being able to control matters, it placed a huge responsibility on the Council not just as a Corporate Body but also the Town Clerk personally as the Premise Licence Holder and the Outdoor Recreation & Asset Manager personally as the Designated Premises Supervisor.

There were also a number of other Premises Licences that the Town Council operated, the other key one in question was the one that covered the town centre.

When the Town Council was established twelve years ago, if anyone wished to book the Quarry, they simply filled in the application form, paid the fee, filled in the Risk Assessment and confirmed they had Public Liability Cover and officers had little involvement. Now the emphasis is on Town Council Officers to undertake stringent Due Diligence to ensure that Event Organisers have followed the necessary Licensing Conditions of our Premises Licence. The 2003 Licensing Act has four key objectives that we have a duty to comply with – Prevention of Crime & Disorder, Public Safety, Prevention of Public Nuisance and Protecting Children from Harm.

The key documents required from the Town Council's Premises Licence are Event Management Plans, Security Plans and Noise Management Plans and all need to

work in harmony with each other to ensure good quality events that are safe and enjoyable for the public. The Policy sets out how this will be done, what measures Event Organisers need to follow and how officers confirm and document the levels of Due Diligence undertaken and equally mechanisms for addressing any public discontent with events whilst they are taking place. Much goes on behind the scenes in managing events in the Quarry. Decisions are not taken lightly. Officers liaise closely with Safety Advisory Group Colleagues.

The development of an Events Policy is a requirement of the Town Council's Premises Licence and was last updated in 2018 when the Town Council requested amendments to that licence. Over 1.5million visitors to the park every year and well over ¼ million of those attend events. Shropshire has the biggest portfolio of events in Shropshire, Worcester and Hereford; in fact this side of Birmingham. The Town Clerk stressed that as one of the largest, most influential Town Councils in the country being seen to do things properly was essential. Like the Policy on Security Planning this Committee would need to review this policy annually.

Councillor Dean raised concern that this document had not been publicised on the Town Council website ahead of the meeting and wondered where that left this Committee in terms of recommending approval. Councillor Mosley pointed out that this Committee would only be recommending approval and any decision would need to be ratified by Full Council.

Councillor Dean again raised concern about the disruption to local residents and said that he would like to see an addition to the policy that prevented two consecutive nights of music. The Town Clerk pointed out that any changes would not only affect the music events but also potentially the Flower Show and the Food Festival which were both two day events.

The Town Clerk responded that music concerts attracted high numbers of people and the number of complaints were extremely low with only six complaints received last year. The Premises Licence included significant buffers which prevented events actually meeting the boundaries of the park and it was very specific of where the noise was monitored from and the events were monitored on a regular basis including by the Shropshire Council Out-of-Hours Team. There was a requirement of the organisers to actually monitor them so they did keep well within the boundary limits of the premises licence maximum sound levels.

Councillor Roberts expressed concern at costings and the price of refreshments within these events. The Town Clerk clarified that within the booking form it was made clear to organisers that they must allow people to leave and return to the venue at will which enabled people to go into the town centre or they were able to bring their own food in food in if they wished.

The Outdoor Recreation & Asset Manager reported that the Policy was based on the Premise Licence which several years ago had been the subject of consultation when a revision of that licence had been done. Organisers booking the Quarry often complained the conditions were more severe than anywhere else they tended to go.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) That the Policy for Outdoor Music Events in the Quarry & Other Council Owned Land be adopted;**
- (ii) That the Policy for Outdoor Music Events in the Quarry & other Council Owned Land be reviewed by the Recreational & Leisure Committee annually.**

Councillor Dean left the meeting

93/21 SHREWSBURY IN BLOOM

Minutes of the Bloom Committee meeting of 8 February 2022 had been circulated ahead of the meeting and the Head of Operations reported on activity.

Sustainable floral planters in New Street commissioned by Shropshire Council as part of the traffic calming and pedestrianisation measures had been due to go out but this had been postponed due to flooding and were now awaiting traffic road closure to enable them to be done. There were a number of planters in the town centre that Shropshire Council had put in and there were due to be planted with sustainable plants shortly. The trees had arrived at the Nursery and the shrub order was awaited.

Upgrade and refurbishment of the bus shelters was going out to Tender and the Council had started on the green roofs plant propagation; this was going well and there was enough material to do 3-4 green roofs so these were being prepped in the nursery.

The Nursery Open Evening was planned for 9 June and this would be publicised on the website. Preferred date for Bloom judging was around 21 July before the schools broke up and it was hoped to include Abbey Gardens and Monkmoor Meadows in the Parks & Open Spaces Category.

The planting programme was underway with plants coming in and cuttings being taken and behind the scenes at Weeping Cross staff had been busy allocating trees for the Queen's Green Canopy. He reminded members that there was a due process and any requests for additional planters needed to be directed through the Town Clerk for consideration by the Bloom Committee.

Members expressed positive feedback from the constituents particularly on the planting in the Quarry.

Councillor Mosley asked if members could have information about which bus stops were going to be treated so they could explain more fully to residents. He also mentioned that some time ago members had been asked to give locations that they felt would benefit from additional planters, particularly to enhance the approaches to and from the town.

The Head of Operations confirmed that this was on the Councillor Wishlist and this would be revisited to assess which ones were practical for consideration. He confirmed that a list of bus shelters due to have sedum roof would be circulated to members and that Neighbourhood Wardens did regularly clean and inspect the bus shelters.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Minutes of the Bloom Committee meeting of 8 February 2022 be accepted;**
- (ii) That the update be noted.**

94/21 LOCAL POLICING CHARTER PRIORITIES

Prior to the meeting the Team Shrewsbury – Local Policing Charter Priorities had been circulated and members were asked to approve the list of policing priorities for the next quarter that were proposed to be sent to West Mercia Police. The Town Clerk and the Office Managers had spent time chatting through the best way to present the priorities to the Safe Neighbourhood Teams in Shrewsbury and how in turn they would get feedback back to the Council. Superintendent Bill had recognised that there were still processes to iron out in operationalising the Charter but through Council members needed to keep feeding into the process as required.

Town Clerk reiterated the Office Manager's words and reported that Superintendent Bill was keen to issue feedback and to give a flavour as to how they were addressing some of these, there had been a long conversation with him about drugs misuse and the fact that some arrests made outside of the county were starting to have positive impacts locally. He was keen to provide as much information as possible but his view was that reviewing priorities every six months rather than every three would give been opportunity for feedback from some of these issues.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Report be noted;**
- (ii) The Committee approves the priorities for the April 2022 submission.**

Councillor Gillam left the meeting during consideration of the next item

95/21 RECREATION GROUND MATTERS

The Town Clerk reported that along with Councillors Bentick, she had met with representatives of the Trinity Church to discuss plans for the Glebe Field and to discuss their aspirations for the Church Road Recreation Ground. Details of those discussions were set out in the report circulated to members prior to this meeting. Staff had not been instructed to undertake much work on this as it was imperative that the Town Council establish its position on developing parking options on the Church Road Recreation Ground and that was a matter for this Committee to consider. Following the publication of the agenda, a number of representations had been made by residents of Meole on the development of additional car parking; these had been forwarded to members of the Committee.

Councillor Bentick set out his wish to address the issues of road safety in the Church Road area including the level of unauthorised parking and speeding and he saw the proposals by

the Church to open up recreational space at the Glebe Field would allow for the Church Road Recreation Ground to accommodate more parking to address these issues.

The Head of Operations gave background history to this area and the fact that the residents saw the Recreation Ground more as a Village Green. Arboricultural Officers at the Town Council had reviewed the Tree Report commissioned by the Church and questioned suggestions that no parking could be developed on site.

Members raised the following comments:

- There was no long-term commitment by the Church to develop the Glebe Field for recreational amenity but there was a wish on their part for a long-term commitment to parking at the Church Road Recreation Ground
- Highways matters was the responsibility of Shropshire Council, not Shrewsbury Town Council
- The Town Council had declared its Climate Emergency and resolved to commit to promoting active travel; members did not see installing car parking on the recreation ground meeting that commitment

RECOMMENDATION:

- (i) That there be no plans to extend car parking provision at the Church Road Recreation Ground;**
- (ii) That a more effective and efficient solution be sought to white line the hard standing area to maximise existing car parking provision**
- (iii) That Officers would continue discussions with the Trinity Church with regard to the use of the Glebefields**

Vote

Councillor Bentick – Against

Councillor Pardy – For

Councillor Roberts – For

Councillor Wilson – For

Councillor Vasmer - For

96/21 ALLOTMENTS

The Town Clerk reported on operational meetings held with the Allotment Associations; the notes from the recent meeting had been circulated This was an opportunity for the Head of Operations and herself to share information with the Allotment Associations and for them in turn to ask things of the Council. Both sides found it a useful exercise.

The key messages can come from the last meeting were that all of the sites were vibrant and they were coming out of the COVID doldrums quite well. They were all run well by Allotment Associations with Allotment Holders giving their time freely to support the running of these sites and that volunteer value should not be underestimated. All of the sites were quite conscious of biodiversity issues and the moving away from the use of chemicals and pesticides and providing natural habitats which was very comforting to see.

There had been a discussion at the meeting about demand and whilst there was a strong waiting list, it was not a list that was running away with itself and beginning to trigger a need to find further land albeit this should be kept in the back of minds when future Site Management Plans start to be developed as the Local Plan Review is adopted and those parcels of land come through the planning system.

The Head of Operations echoed the Town Clerk's comments and offered a thank you to all the associations who were all volunteers whom without their hard work and dedication the Town Council would not have such a good number of allotments and ploholders. Their feedback was much appreciated and every penny that was taken through fees went back into allotments.

Councillor Bentick, an allotment holder himself, also echoed thanks for the dedication of the groups who operated the allotment sites. He had estimated there to be more than 200 on the waiting lists and as the country moved into a situation where there was potentially likely to be a global shortage of food, allotments were vital. He openly supported a possible increase in the number of allotments in Shrewsbury. If the numbers on the waiting list were to continue to be in high, he felt Council should consider this quite seriously.

Councillor Mosley reported that Castlefields Allotments Committee had been particularly complimentary towards the Town Clerk and the Head of Operations for the help, support and guidance they been given.

Councillor Vasmer was concerned about the expansion of the town and that areas possibly just outside the town being excluded from consideration for plots. The Town Clerk pointed out that all the areas outside of the Town were serviced by Parish Council which had the same statutory duty to consider allotment provision for its residents as the Town Council did and it was not the responsibility of the Town Council to meet and demand for allotments from outside its boundary.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

Councillor Mosley & Councillor Vasmer left the meeting

97/21 COMMUTED SUMS

The Town Clerk gave an update on negotiations with developers and transfer arrangements:

- (a) ***Copthorne Barracks Play and Open Space*** – offsite contributions to play (£30,498 - £20498 for Shorncliffe Drive & £10000 for Silks Meadow – to be paid on 75% occupancy) and open space (£115,000 for sports pitches & associated facilities at County Ground – paid on 50% occupancy)
- (b) ***Barratt Homes/Bovis Homes – Mytton Oak Road*** – Phase 1 adopted; Snagging Phase 2/3 commenced. The contracts for sealing and signature have been received and the Accountant is working out the final Commuted Sums to be paid on site. Then plan to start to proceed with the development of play on site.

(c) **Shrewsbury South Urban**

- i. Sutton Grange site – ongoing – likely transfer in 2021/22
- ii. Bellway Homes site – discussion on land adoption and adoption of acoustic fencing
- iii. Galliers site – early discussions on land adoption
- iv. Community Centre – location on the site

(d) **Sweetlake** – Development of play area and future adoption of open space – Play complete. All open space adopted. In process of checking receipt of the final s106 payments for play

(e) **Crowmoor House** – s106 agreement for offsite play & open space contribution to be used for Upton Lane & Monkmoor Recreation Ground – two-staged payments on trigger on percentage occupied properties. Council to bankroll work at Upton Lane Rec;

(f) **Harlescott Infants/Juniors site** – Offsite contributions to sport. Initial discussions have taken place with Sports Development at Shropshire Council on how the contribution might be spent. Potentially looking at drainage on Kynaston Road Recreation Ground to use the £34k of allocated funds

(g) **Radbrook College site** – Open space adoption – officers met with Floreat Homes on site – likely adoption later in the 2021/22

98/21 CLOSING REMARKS

In closing the meeting, the Chairman thanked Councillors for attending and taking part in this virtual Town Council meeting and also thanked the staff involved in this meeting. All papers relating to this meeting could be found on the website www.shrewsburytowncouncil.gov.uk.