

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

**Meeting of the Recreation & Leisure Committee
Held Virtually on Microsoft Teams
At 6.00pm on Wednesday 4 May 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 E Roberts (Vice Chair), B Bentick, P Gillam & R Wilson. Also in attendance, Councillors J Dean (substituting for C Lemon), A Mosley (substituting for K Pardy), Mrs P Moseley and D Vasmer (Substituting for A Wagner).

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) & Michelle Farmer (Committee Officer).

99/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED:

That apologies be accepted from Councillors Lemon, Pardy, Wagner and Wall.

100/21 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.
------------------------	--

Councillor Alan Mosley joined the meeting.

101/21 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Recreation & Leisure Committee meeting held on 9 March 2022 were submitted as circulated and read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Recreation & Leisure Committee meeting held on 9 March 2022 be approved and signed as a correct record.

102/21 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

66/02 – Dana Gardens - This was a request to fell a group of trees at the Dana Gardens. A report was circulated to all members. The applicant did provide a medical report, but it didn't attribute the condition specifically to these trees. The Town Clerk had spoken at length with the Council's Independent Tree Officer who still felt that it did not warrant removal. Committee were asked on their views on how to proceed.

RESOLVED:

That the request to fell trees at the Dana Gardens be refused.

92.2 – Security Planning. Staff had started on Counter Terrorism Awareness Training and officers had been talking to the West Mercia Police Counter Terrorism Support Advisor on how best to secure public spaces both during normal time but also during events.

94/21 – Local Policing Charter – The Town Clerk attended a meeting of Parish Clerks with the Shropshire Policing Commander who suggested that policing priorities would be reconsidered every 6 months and not every 3 months. New priorities were scheduled for consideration by this Committee in July.

103/21 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

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

- Moston Road – The Head of Operations had met with Councillor Parry on site, and they had discussed a plan for the site.
- Stanley Lane Recreation Ground – Currently awaiting a construction date for the solar lighting columns so that civils works could be progressed.
- Quarry Working Group date had now been set.
- Greenacres play area construction date was awaited.
- Officers had met with officers progressing the North West Relief Road proposal about possible compulsory purchase of land to facilitate road works. They expressed their objections as a corporate body to the North West Relief Road but have had to suggest mitigation measures to address any loss of land. The Committee would be updated as and when any CPO process begins.
- Upton Lane BMX tracks were both finished.
- Town Centre accommodation had now been addressed. Final designs for improvement works were awaited and the Working Group met with the Architects on 4 May 2022.
- Dana footpath works are still awaiting sign off from the Shropshire Horticultural Society.

Councillor Mrs Moseley commented on Upton Lane and said she was very pleased with the new BMX tracks that have been installed.

RESOLVED:

That the Capital Programme report be noted.

Councillor Vasmer joined the meeting

104/21 FOOTFALL

The Project Manager reported that during March and April, visitor numbers began to rise with events starting again in the Quarry, and Markets held in the Square. Market Hall visitors were also showing a slight increase month on month and this was expected to continue with the planned late nights. Now the Splash Park in the Quarry had also opened he expected to see numbers increase.

Councillor Dean asked if the canoe contractor was now in place in the Quarry. The Outdoor Recreation & Asset Manager confirmed that the contractor had been in place since the 1 April, and they appeared to be busy and hoped for a good summer.

RESOLVED:

That the footfall report be noted.

105/21 FISHERIES

The Outdoor Recreation & Asset Manager reported that:

Mousecroft Pool - The previous grant application for three platforms was successful and the three fishing platforms had been installed, a recent application for a further three platforms was successful, these would be installed later in the year.

Some additional work had been done on some overgrown willows and the branches had been chipped on site and used on pathways. The pool bank work that was completed two years ago appeared to be working well, with no significant loss of water during the dry spells. Reports were coming back that this fishery was fishing extremely well, with the fish being of good quality.

Monkmoor Fishery - It was planned for the stone chippings to be laid within the next couple of weeks. The relationship with the farmer continued to grow and he had agreed in future years to level the lane prior to each season commencing.

Oxon Pool - No problems recently encountered. Membership of this facility was proving extremely popular with 78 members signed up to fish this specialist facility.

Reabrook fishery - Bailiffs were working in conjunction with Severn Trent to map all the outflows along the Reabrook. When clearing vegetation, pipes were being exposed that were not recorded on any plans, so it was a useful exercise to pinpoint where pollution was entering the water course, so immediate action can be taken to prevent reoccurrence. Signs along the fishery have not yet been installed due to other volunteer commitments. It was programmed to be done over the summer holidays.

Radbrook Pool - The pool was regularly patrolled, and bailiffs had a good relationship with the residents who live immediately around the pool.

County Ground and Quarry - All the pegs had been inspected and repaired. The next job would be to strim the grass around the pegs to ensure safe access. This would be done closer to the start of the fishing season.

Emstrey Fishery - Unfortunately grant applications for improvements to the Emstrey fishery were not successful, and so the fisheries team would have to decide whether improvements to the car park were the priority or five replacement fishing pegs.

Belvidere Fishery - Grant application for the three platforms had been submitted but unfortunately it was unsuccessful.

Sydney Avenue - Grants have been submitted for the four replacement platforms, unfortunately it was unsuccessful. The existing platforms would be made safe, and they would be replaced in due course when funding allows.

Family Academy - Sessions would commence on the 28 May, then there will be sessions on the 23rd July 20th August and 17th September. The events have been supported by the Angling Trust and additional sessions may be introduced between these dates.

Water Quality - The water quality of the fisheries was a concern and a hot topic at the moment. The bailiffs were working in conjunction with the Angling Trust to study the quality of the river as part of the Water Quality Monitoring Network. Training had taken place with four of the bailiffs so they would be able to test the quality on a regular basis, this equipment would also allow them to monitor the quality of the pools, so if oxygen levels were low (during periods of prolonged sunshine), action could be taken.

The data was not replacing statutory monitoring undertaken by the environment agency or water companies or to challenge their data, but to fill gaps in data collection so local networks could have a more informed understanding of the water quality and so it may show patterns in water quality, trends and over time potential problem sites or regions.

Councillor Mosley asked if the Town Council owned the land either side of the river on Sydney Lane as there had been several camper vans parked there which don't appear to be fishing.

The Outdoor Recreation & Assets Manager confirmed that the land was owned by Shropshire Council and that fisheries had also noticed the camper vans and they had reported this matter to Shropshire Council as the Town Council have no grounds to enforce.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the fisheries report be noted;**
- (ii) That the Outdoor Recreation & Asset Manager contact Shropshire Council and enquire what is happening regarding the parking of vans on the riverbank.**

106/21 TEAM SHREWSBURY

The Team Shrewsbury report had been circulated prior to the meeting and the Office Manager provided an update. The March figures showed ASB issues had reduced apart from alcohol issues which was predominantly broken glass etc in public spaces, however compared to last year's figures, ASB had increased. Claremont Place continued to suffer with individuals urinating on a regular basis. They were also experiencing a high number of vehicles entering through a small archway daily, causing damage to properties. A further Safeguarding Partnership meeting was taking place on 5 May.

Shropshire Council had received quotations for additional CCTV potentially the figures would be included in the Safer Street 4 funding submission. Partners were keen to progress the partnership working for the Town Rangers Security, as working in conjunction with the Police and Youth teams, it would provide a safer environment for all to enjoy. Currently the Quarry and the Town was in the Top 10 places for Anti-Social Behaviour issues in the West Mercia Police area, and last year the public were pleased that the security was in place, as it made them feel safer.

The next submission for the Local Policing Charter was scheduled for July. Details requesting areas for concern would be forwarded next month for approval at the Recreation & Leisure Committee on 6th July.

Inspector Saf Ali had been promoted and Inspector Ben Tanfield would be joining the Safe Neighbourhood Team on Tuesday 10 May, he was currently the Patrol Inspector for Shrewsbury. Also, Sergeant Becky Thomas would be returning to the Town Centre for a short while from the 1 June.

Councillor Mosley raised the matter of River Safety issues and that he had attended a meeting of Team Shrewsbury regarding river safety, and he hoped that there would be some agenda in mind to discuss river safety issues in the near future.

The Office Manger commented that this was noted on the report and it would be on the Team Shrewsbury tactical meetings going forward. On the report there is also water safety resource material and educational material. Councillor Mosley requested a further invitation to the Team Shrewsbury meeting regarding river safety.

Councillor Wilson stated he had spoken to the Town Clerk and enquired if River Safety could be shown on the next agenda for the Recreation & Leisure Committee to discuss further.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) That the Team Shrewsbury report be noted;**
- (ii) That river safety be put on the next agenda for Recreation & Leisure Committee**

107/21 EVENTS

The Outdoor Recreation & Assets Manager reported on the events programme for the Quarry for 2022. Events were up and running again although there were still a couple of events to be confirmed. Over the Easter period, there were over 75,000 visitors to the Quarry whilst events were on which was pleasing to see.

Councillor Wilson raised a question over the funfair in the Quarry over the Easter period. He had received comments from residents over their concerns from the funfair in the Quarry and the Fake Festival. They were concerned that the noise generated was from early in the morning to late into the night for over a week. The Outdoor Recreation & Assets Manager reported that he had only received two public complaints during this time. The funfair had closed at 6.00pm rather than 9.30pm so he was unsure where the noise was coming from as the Fake Festival only lasted for one evening.

Councillor Dean reported that he had only received one complaint regarding the noise, but he had received comments from residents regarding their concerns about the diesel fumes generated from the funfair. He asked whether more fossil fuel free fun fair could be looked at and whether there was any best practice in the industry. The Outdoor Recreation & Assets Manager explained that operators were aware of the situation regarding diesel, and as diesel is expensive, they are looking at ways to reduce their diesel usage. Event organisers did have access to electric supplies whilst in the Quarry. Officers would continue to work with the Showman's Guild on ways to reduce consumption and make it more environmentally friendly.

RECOMMEND:

- (i) **That the Events report be noted;**

108/21 TOWN RANGER PROJECT

Members considered the Town Clerk's report on the proposal for Town Rangers. Last year, the Town Council had to resort to commissioning security staff to address Anti-Social Behaviour issues in the Quarry and that these measures were resolved but there was only a resource to run cover between April-August. Many of these ASB issues were now returning and on top of that they had some really disturbing incidents with some of the Town Council staff when they had tried to close facilities. This had resulted in the Town Council losing a lot of staff time due to work related stress and a general reluctance to close these facilities on their own. A staff resource had been identified that could be utilised in a bigger economies of scale project to begin to address endemic issues in the town centre and the Quarry, which was flagged on the West Mercia Police top 10 hotspot areas.

This project had the buy in of both the BID and Shropshire Council, who were keen to work collaboratively and had agreed to a similar resource to what the Town Council had available, which meant something could be done 52 weeks of the year.

The Town Council had gone through a tender process and were reviewing seven different proposals. Officers had looked at various options from not doing anything at all, to doing things in collaboration with others, officers believe this was the most efficient route. The Town Clerk said that this project needed to progress as soon as possible and most definitely by the Jubilee weekend. The benefits to this approach were that facilities could be left open longer and re-jigging of staff roles would mean that they could ensure cleanliness of facilities.

The Head of Operations commented further stating that of the eight staff based within the river loop of the town, six had received personal threats to themselves and contractors had received serious threats to their safety. The Town Council had a duty of care to all staff and staff morale was low over the rising ASB issues.

Councillor Mosley commented that there were two aspects to this proposal. The first was the process in which this proposal came about. Members were now being asked to make decisions retrospectively on matters that should have been brought to the Recreation & Leisure Committee previously so they could have had some input in to the process as it went along. Instead, the decision had been made by officers and agreed with partners before that last Recreation & Leisure meeting as there had been no mention of it and no member involvement.

Councillor Mosley also said that this proposal had not been raised at any Group Leader meetings. A contract referred to in the tender process closed on 29 April but on 4 May, Members were asked to make a decision to move forward. The consequences from this was that it appeared Committee meetings need to return to face to face meetings and there needed to be a review of the officer delegations.

Councillor Mosley asked how the plans for the security additions would work? How would the staffing work out in this contract? No details of hours on and off duty? How many rangers would there be and where would they be located? There would be a lot of responsibility on them, and this needed more thought. Councillor Mosley would have preferred to see actions that addressed the symptoms of the problems the Town Council are facing, and not just reactions to the causes. There was not enough policing around the Town and Quarry and that the Town Council should be looking at the Youth Service to see if there was more money that could be put into them rather than the Town Ranger project. Councillor Mosley was not against collaboration, but he commented that the Town Council appeared only to be concerned about the Town Centre, and that there are plenty of ASB issues outside of the town centre which are not being addressed.

Councillor Mosley asked Members that this project is set aside until they can have a more detailed look at the functions being proposed, how some staff difficulties can be resolved instead of putting a large amount of money into a project that he didn't feel would have the impact, and more importantly that no members had been given the time to absorb and consider the issues set before them and he did not approve of the way it had happened.

Councillor Vasmer fully supported Councillor Mosley stating that it should have been discussed fully with Members and he was also unhappy with the way it had been done and it should not be approved.

Councillor Wilson also agreed that Members could not agree to an item retrospectively. They had no figures to look at on how much it would cost the Town Council and the partners. Councillor Gillam also agreed with other Members and that he didn't agree with the way this project had been brought to Members.

The Head of Operations reiterated his comment regarding the Duty of Care the Town Council had to its staff and the comments made by Members did not address the issues they face.

Councillor Mosley suggested a Quarry Working Group meeting to meet with Town Council staff to talk to them about their difficulties and how they can move forward.

The Town Clerk pointed out to Members that if the Town Council were pulling out of the Town Rangers project that they would need to let Shropshire Council and Shrewsbury BID know as they are very keen to continue with the project.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Town Council takes no further involvement in the project pending a review of the issues raised and other possible solutions.

Vote to support Councillor Mosley's recommendation:

Councillor Wilson – Abstain

Councillor Dean – Support

Councillor Bentick – Support

Councillor Gillam – Support

Councillor Roberts – Support

Councillor Vasmer – Support.

109/21 SAFER STREETS 4 FUNDING

The Town Clerk had prepared a report about the Safer Streets 4 Funding but commented that in light of the recommendation made by Council on the Town Ranger project, a lot of the Town Council involvement was based on expanding the Town Ranger project and if they are to take no further action then, she was unsure on what role they could play in the Safer Streets 4 funding and it is all about having a process and match funding that is available to it. The Town Clerk said that as the closing date was next week, she was unsure what more could be done.

Councillor Vasmer said that there were a lot of ideas within the proposal that didn't involve Town Rangers and there were lots of things they could do in support of young people and other initiatives. He didn't see why it had to all be based around the Town Rangers. Couldn't the Town Council look at recruiting security staff as they did last year instead, and he felt a report could be put together by the deadline date.

Councillor Dean agreed with the comment raised by Councillor Vasmer and said there was an opportunity to put something together around the remainder of the list.

The Town Clerk commented that the Safer Streets 4 funding required 50% match funding.

Councillor Mosley suggested that the money that would be saved on the Town Rangers could go as the Town Council contribution. The Town Clerk advised that this would not be possible as the vacant toilet cleaner post would now have to be filled.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) That the Safer Streets 4 Funding report be noted
- (ii) That the Town Clerk look to include all matters in the report other than the Town Rangers Project and that if there was a requirement for match funding, that could be dealt with retrospectively by the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

Councillor Mrs Moseley joined the meeting

110/21 SHREWSBURY IN BLOOM

The Head of Operations provided an update on planting arrangements for the town. Spring floral displays were ending, and flower beds were being stripped ready for summer planting.

The Greenhouse Open Evening was taking place in early June and gave an opportunity for residents and visitors to look around the Nursery and the depot facilities.

Shrewsbury In Bloom judging day is Tuesday 26 July. The Abbey Gardens and Monkmoor Meadows would be entered into the Parks and Open Spaces Category.

Councillor Halliday was also looking to enter Belle Vue in the In Your Neighbourhood Category.

Councillor Mosley asked if there would be additional floral blooms going in at Abbey gardens. The Head of Operations confirmed that there would be once a drainage solution had been found.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the minutes of the Shrewsbury In Bloom Group meeting of 22 March 2022 be accepted;**
- (ii) That the update be noted.**

111/21 RECREATION GROUND MATTERS

111.1 Upton Lane Recreation ground Recycled play Area

The Town Clerk reported on the recent tendering for the Greenacres Play Area, and it had become evident that many play providers were starting to develop play facilities that are completely green. These facilities were now coming with the same warranty as facilities that are constructed from traditional materials. Given that the Council had declared its Climate Emergency, the Town Clerk asked how the Committee would feel to developing a play area with fully recycled facilities. There are two play areas planned; the replacement of Upton Lane and a brand-new facility at Bowbrook Meadows, development which will shortly be adopted.

Councillor Mrs Moseley reported that she had discussed this with the Town Clerk and that whilst she agreed to the idea in principle, she would like to be assured on the robustness of these materials.

Councillor Dean agreed that it sounded like a good initiative, but he would also like some reassurance or a report/pictures of places that have already used fully recycled materials but agreed in principle that it was the right way to go.

The Town Clerk would discuss this further with the Projects Manager with a view to bringing more detailed proposals to the Committee.

111.2 Shorncliffe Recreation Ground Masterplan

The Town Clerk and Councillor Wilson had previously met Redkite on site and received fee proposals for creating a masterplan. Subsequent discussion with Redkite had reduced the scale of work to a Pre-Planning proposal which could be funded within the £5,000 budget allocation. There would however be a need to separately commission a Topographical Survey and an Ecological Survey to assist the process.

Councillor Wilson expressed his wish to see Shorncliffe Recreation Ground as a strategic recreational ground in the same way Monkmoor Recreation Ground fulfils that role in the east, and this commission could determine what is the art of the possible.

RESOLVED:

- (i) Redkite be commissioned to undertake the pre-planning proposal and present findings back to the Recreation & Leisure Committee**

- (ii) **Officers look to commission the necessary Topographical & Ecological surveys.**

112/21 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 - £20,498 for Shorncliffe Drive & £10,000 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). An update has been sought with the developer
- (b) **Barratt Homes/Bovis Homes – Mytton Oak Road** – Phase 1 adopted; Phase 2/3 transfer documents have been signed & sealed and invoice for remaining \$106 money forwarded to the solicitor. Shropshire Council are in receipt of the play area funding and will transfer once the land transfer has been completed.
- (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. Awaiting final CIL Local 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; Payment with Shropshire Council – awaiting transfer
- (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. Further work is needed. Kynaston Road Recreation Ground identified for drainage works.
- (g) **Radbrook College site** – Open space adoption – officers met with Floreat Homes on site – likely adoption later in the 2021/22
- (h) **Weir Hill** – Adoption of Countryside Park – Agreement to adopt signed

113/21 CLOSING REMARKS

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