

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

**Meeting of the Recreation & Leisure Committee
Held in Council Chamber, Shirehall
At 6.00pm on Wednesday 18 January 2023**

PRESENT

Councillors: K Pardy (Chair), B Bentick, P Gillam, C Lemon, A Mosley (substitute for Councillor Roberts) and D Vasmer (Substitute for Councillor Wagner).

IN ATTENDANCE

Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Gary Farmer (Head of Operations), Mike Cox (Outdoor Recreation & Asset Manager), Ruth Jones (Office Manager), Stuart Farmer (Projects Manager) and Michelle Farmer (Committee Officer)

55/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED:

That apologies be accepted from Councillors Roberts, Wagner, Wall and Amanda Spencer (Deputy Town Clerk)

56/22 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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57/22 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

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

RESOLVED:

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

58/22 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Min 51/22 – Town Council Events – The Town Clerk reported that all of the Town Council organised events (Remembrance and the two Christmas Events) went off without any issue and this was predominantly due to having good Event Plans in place and everybody knowing what they were doing.

The Town Council had been watching the recent debate about whether Shropshire Council would begin to charge for Road Closures on events; this was due to be considered by Cabinet on 18 January 2023 but was withdrawn pending further consideration.

59/22 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Town Clerk reported the following:

- The new office upgrades were going to plan, time and budget. The Projects Manager was overseeing the project.
- Kynaston Road Tenders were almost ready to start.
- Moston Road Tender had been awarded and now awaiting a start date.
- Radbrook Upgrades to Changing Facilities – shortfall to be funded by Fisheries surplus – The Town Council would like to start tender process which would be overseen by the Projects Manager and the Outdoor Recreation & Asset Manager.
- Monkmoor Tennis Courts Lights was out to tender.
- Beaver Project – all DEFRA Licences for building the compound and releasing the Beavers were now in place as was all the construction funding. The tender had been published, and the flood risk assessment was awaiting sign off. Partnership working with the Wildlife Trust had been excellent.
- Bus Shelter replacement programme had started – The Projects Manager was overseeing the project.

Councillor Mosley commented that the new bus shelters looked good, and he asked the Projects Manager if there was a list of all the bus shelters to be replaced. The Projects Manager confirmed that there was a list that could be shared with Councillors to identify replacements within their wards. This project should be completed this financial year.

Councillor Lemon asked if there were any further planned bus shelter replacements after this current programme. The Town Clerk reported that all of the allocated budget had been utilised and it would be a matter for council to allocate further funds.

Councillor Vasmer enquired about the old Monkmoor Tennis Courts. The Town Clerk reported that they had previously received an indicative cost for repairs, this remained on the capital plan and would be looked at in due course.

RESOLVED:

That the Capital Programme report be noted.

60/22 FOOTFALL

The Projects Manager updated the Committee on footfall in the town. Visitor numbers had continued to follow a similar pattern as previous years with a small drop off in November and December compared to September and October. The average of new visitors had remained stable although the overall figure had reduced. Whilst total visitor numbers had dropped off in recent months the percentage of new and repeat visitors had remained relatively stable throughout the 12-month period.

The Projects Manager also commented that the raising of the electrics within the lamp columns in order to protect them had worked during the recent flooding.

Councillor Mosley commented on the footfall reports produced that show the Market, Quarry and Square combined. He asked if it would be possible to produce separate reports for the Market and the Square as there were already separate ones for the Quarry. The Projects Manager confirmed he would contact Elephant Wi-Fi further on this to see if it would be possible to produce separate reports.

RESOLVED:

That the Footfall Report be noted.

61/22 FISHERIES

The Outdoor Recreation & Asset Manager updated the Committee on Shrewsbury Town Fisheries.

Mousecroft Pool - Two of the three new platforms had been installed at this site, which had been funded from a £3,000 grant from the Environment Agency. The third platform would hopefully be installed within the next two weeks to complete the project.

Monkmoor / Belvidere Fishery. Some additional boundary signage was to be installed on the boundary at Belvidere, this should be completed this month.

Oxon Pool. Having been closed for long period due to concerns about water levels, the pool had reopened just before Christmas as the levels had fully recovered. Regarding the boundary fence, it had been decided the Anglers would instigate the repairs this spring, to make the site more secure.

Reabrook Fishery. They had completed the installation of the new signs. The Rivers Trust had sent a very good report with respect to a fish survey after the installation of the new fish weir pass. The report confirmed that a much healthier number of mixed species were now migrating up the Reabrook compared to prior the installation.

Radbrook Pool. A plan of some tree work that was required at the pool had been forwarded to the Contracts and Arbs Officer, as this work could not be completed by the fisheries team. During the period of the pool being frozen, lots of timber debris was thrown onto the ice by youngsters. They also had reports from residents of youngsters walking on the frozen ice and even riding bikes on it. Temporary signs had been made warning of the dangers of walking on ice. The signs would be put up during the winter period and removed in the spring and stored until the following winter. The fisheries team cleared all the timber after the pool had thawed, and it was disposed of. They had spoken to the Countryside manager to ask if pruned timber in the future could be shredded and used on the surrounding paths, to reduce the risk of debris on the ice again.

County Ground and Quarry Fishing - platform numbers 53 and 57 in the Quarry were in need of repair. Unfortunately, the wooden washboards were either badly decomposed or were missing from the banks due to ageing. They cannot complete a suitable repair on these platforms as they had part of the washboards incorporated into their construction. Riverbank erosion during high water was likely to become more of an issue whilst the boards were missing or damaged. A tree trimming plan had been submitted to Mike Pugh (Contracts and Arbs Officer) to consider, as some of the fishing access was affected by some of the branch growth.

Emstrey Fishery. The New car park had been completed and was in use by members.

Water Keepers / Bailiffs Team - The Fisheries Manager had confirmed that they now had 18 individuals in the team of which 14 now carried throw lines and body cameras as part of their duties. Further throw line training was in the pipeline, they were just waiting for when it was convenient for the Fire Service to provide the extra sessions. Further enforcement and fisheries training would be implemented throughout the year, to make a stronger trained team.

Water Testing. The Fisheries team were now testing the river water quality on a weekly basis and collating the results for ourselves and the Angling Trust. The Nitrate and Phosphate levels were still in most cases higher than permitted levels for a clean river. In addition to these tests, the fisheries management team would shortly be adding an Ammonia level test to water testing activities. Ammonia could test for sewerage content to add to the results, to give a better understanding of its impact. There were particular concerns with the health of the river especially at the County Ground and Quarry from Coton Hill down to the weir. In the angling world, this section was historic for its silver fish fishing and was always sold out. They now struggle to get a handful of anglers for their general open matches due to the poor sport, and this was very disappointing as it had a direct impact on the fishing tourism, and local economy during the winter months.

Plans for 2023 - Some grant money may be available to apply for during the coming months and this additional funding may contribute towards more improvements to the fisheries, Junior Academy and training. More details on improvements and maintenance work schedules would be available for future meetings. The fisheries manager had also been assisting other Angling Associations, as they had noticed permits are now sold online. They felt this was an extremely quick and safe method of selling permits and so the fisheries manager is offering advice as to the advantages and disadvantages and how to move forward with regards the online sales and issuing of permits.

Councillor Bentick enquired if other chemicals were being monitored, including nitrogen and phosphate, and asked if the Committee could have updates on results and if information could be shared. The Outdoor Recreation & Assets Manager confirmed that these were being tested. All testing results/information was sent to the Angling Trust who were currently surveying the whole of the River Severn. He confirmed that reports from them could be circulated to Councillors.

Councillor Bentick also enquired if the Reabrook & Radbrook were being monitored. The Outdoor Recreation & Assets Manager was unsure about Radbrook but that he would check this. Councillor Bentick also enquired about a tree that was still down on the Reabrook and that it had been reported a while ago, but no action had been taken. The Head of Operations confirmed that this tree had been looked at by the Countryside Team and it had been reported to the Environment Agency for removal.

Councillor Mosley commented that the vegetation along the river was overgrown, and some action needed to be taken to reduce it. The Head of Operations would look into this further.

RESOLVED:

That the report is noted;

62/22 TEAM SHREWSBURY

The Office Manager provided an update on Team Shrewsbury activities. ASB figures had increased, however they were now receiving additional reports from the Quarry and Town Rangers Security reports.

The Bleed control kits which was approved at Finance & General Purposes Committee would be ordered directly from the Control the Bleed Organisation.

As the temperatures had dropped, Shropshire Council had activated SWEPP (Severe Weather Emergency Protocols). Rough sleepers would be invited to take shelter at 70, Castle Foregate. The night shelter would be open from 22:00pm till 08:00am offering communal accommodation, hot drinks and snacks.

Partners had reviewed the current issues and the key themes were Rough Sleepers, River Safety & Youth. Today, they had attended the first strategic meeting looking at the rough sleeper issues. Following the successful funding bid of £1.4m from the Office of Health Improvement and Disparities, Shropshire Council launched the RESET project with Partners in readiness for launching to the public in March. The project was to support individuals rough sleeping or those at risk of rough sleeping and would include:

- Ensure engagement was maintained when moving into accommodation, in providing a wraparound support for meeting their holistic needs.
- Individuals subjected to substance misuse would be targeted.
- Implement a multi-agency and multi-discipline team from January (partners would be invited).
- Base from the ARK.
- Countywide
- Tap into resources to make it clear what the team was about for the most effective collaborative working.
- Link into Community Sectors i.e. Samaritans, Suicide Prevention etc.
- Provide an outreach provision to work with those individuals who do not present themselves to traditional services.

Councillor Vasmer commented on current damage to cars in the Cherry Orchard area and asked why they were not showing on the reports. The Office Manager informed that the ASB report only related to matters on ASB logs that were completed and not matters reported to the Police. This would be mentioned at the next Team Shrewsbury meeting.

Councillor Mosley commented that a review was required on the investment made in security as the reports showed an increase in ASB. The Town Clerk reported that in applying for Safer Streets funding there would inevitably be an increase in reported activity as there were more eyes and ears on the streets. The security teams were making significant headway in changing behaviours and attitudes on the streets. Feedback from staff, residents, visitors, shoppers and businesses were excellent.

Councillor Gillam commented on the Rough Sleeper figures as there was a large increase. The Office Manager confirmed that now they were receiving additional reports the figures had risen, highlighting the issues being faced. This had been discussed with the Shropshire Council Host Team

and Public Health to address the rough sleeper/drug and alcohol addiction and they hoped to target individuals who were causing the issues. The Town Ranger and Quarry Security reports were picking up these issues.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the Team Shrewsbury Report be noted.**
- ii) That the RESET Project Manager, once in post, be invited to a future meeting.**

63/22 SAFER STREETS 4 FUNDING

The Town Clerk provided Committee with an update on Safer Streets 4 Funding. All of the Safer Streets Initiatives were developing well, and this was shown with the Home Office Team saying that this was the best Safer Streets 4 project in terms of delivery. A project like this was driven by data and then they used the project outcomes to see how it could deliver change and it was working on two of the Central SNT's key priorities – Rough Sleeper Behaviour and Shop Lifting. Feedback from the public, businesses, visitors, staff and strategic partners was excellent and they regularly receive compliments on their activities. They were certainly keeping streets safe.

Councillor Mosley raised a question regarding the Taxis in the evening and the issue of supply. He asked if there had been any discussions with local taxi companies. The Town Clerk confirmed that there had been discussions with Veezu (owners of Go Carz) and Hackney Carriages. Taxis were either licensed through Shropshire Council or Wolverhampton City Council. Taxi Marshals had received licensing training and they had been instructed to review live fares with Private Hire drivers and liaise with all taxi drivers in the area. Relations with Hackney Carriage and private hire drivers is improving as a result. Taxi Marshalls were also assisting people accessing taxis and working with Street Pastors when party goers were incapacitated.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

64/22 POLICING CHARTER

The Office Manager reported that Members were asked to provide their Policing Priorities, requesting areas for concern. Those showing on the current list would be submitted to the Police for March onwards.

Councillor Mosley asked that his priorities were as previous and asked that the report be updated.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

65/22 RIVER SAFETY

The Town Clerk provided Committee with an update stating that Officers had previously reported to this Committee as well as Full Council and the Finance & General Purposes Committee on matters relating River Safety.

This Committee agreed to the commissioning of a joint piece of work with Shropshire Council to risk assess the river and establish recommendations. They were considered by both the Town Council's Finance & General Purposes Committee and Shropshire Council's Cabinet in December with mutual recommendations to accept the report and work towards the development of a Working Group under the Auspices of Team Shrewsbury.

Finance & General Purposes Committee agreed to the development of a Working Group under Team Shrewsbury, conditional upon Member involvement; it was agreed that Councillor Mosley would be the Town Council's Representative.

The Committee also agreed to set up a Town Council Working Group with Councillors Mosley, Parry, Green & Dean. This had not yet been able to meet fully due to a misunderstanding of members. An initial meeting looked at potential Terms of Reference and also looked at the Draft Action Plan that the Town Clerk had prepared which showed recommendations from the River Safety Report as well as a list of activities already being undertaken by partners.

The Town Clerk & Office Manager had met the Assistant Director Homes & Communities and details of the Team Shrewsbury Working Group were discussed. A meeting would be convened early February and members requested the Town Council's Working Group meet before that date.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

66/22 QUARRY

The Outdoor Recreation & Asset Manager updated the Committee on the Quarry Events Programme for 2023.

He commented that it was pleasing to see that the diary was coming together with a varied calendar of events. Some events had cancelled or postponed for 2023 for reasons given at previous committee, and some events listed were still considering whether to go ahead or dramatically alter how they would run things, due to the current economic climate, but they were working with some of these groups to see if there were alternative ways of operating. They did have events returning after a couple of years away and some new events which would bring a new audience into the Quarry.

The Town Clerk raised the issue of changes to legislation. In early 2023, the UK Government would introduce new Protect Duty legislation, designed to improve the protection of publicly accessible places from terrorist attacks. The legislation was intended to ensure that businesses and organisations are better prepared to deal with – and respond to – serious incidents. This would split events in terms of the number of participants. A Risk Assessment of the Quarry would need to be completed following this new legislation.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Quarry Events Report be noted;**
- (ii) That an update be provided at the next Recreation & Leisure Committee in March regarding Protect Duty and responsibilities placed on the Town Council**

67/22 SHREWSBURY IN BLOOM

The notes of the Shrewsbury in Bloom Group meeting held on 29 November 2022 were submitted as circulated and read.

The Head of Operations provided an update to Members on Floral sponsorship of roundabouts in Shrewsbury. Shrewsbury Town Council had relinquished the beds on Shropshire Council locations and the floral structures had been removed, especially where Shrewsbury Town Council/Shrewsbury in Bloom had made a financial contribution. Shrewsbury in Bloom were currently looking at other sponsorship ideas between themselves and Shrewsbury Town Council that could be offered to local small businesses who could not afford to sponsor large traffic islands.

The Head of Operations also commented on the support Shrewsbury in Bloom offered to local businesses and schools. He confirmed that bulbs had been distributed to Crowmoor School; the Ambulance Station – for the area where staff sit on their breaks; Stanley Lane Recreation Ground – where local residents planted both trees as part of the Queen’s Green Canopy project and bulbs; the Barnabas Centre – Shrewsbury Town Council had donated plants and bulbs and Belle Vue residents where Councillor Halliday had facilitated a bulb planting day.

Councillor Bentick thanked all involved for their assistance with the tree planting day that had taken place in Stanley Lane. The event had been well received by local residents.

Councillor Mosley enquired about the planters on Castle Gates and if they would be put in place soon. The Head of Operations confirmed that this would be going ahead.

RESOLVED:

That the notes of the Shrewsbury in Bloom Group Meeting held on 29 November 2022 be accepted and approved.

68/22 RECREATION GROUND MATTERS

68.1 Poplar Island, County Ground

The Outdoor Recreation & Asset Manager provided an update to Committee regarding the feasibility of a disc golf course on Poplar Island, Frankwell. He had written to the disc golf organisers stating that Frankwell was not an ideal location and recommended Shorncliffe instead, but this would not be big enough. Greenfields was also considered but as this was a landfill site it would not be suitable.

Officers suggested the Sports Village or Golf Course and the organisers had been advised to contact Shropshire Council to check further on these proposed locations.

68.2 Church Road Recreation Ground

The Head of Operations reported that further to the Recreation and Leisure report on 7 September 2022, minute 32/22 (i) Church Road Recreation Ground – Response from Councillor Bentick’s request to formalise the basketball hoops at the hardstanding. It was recommended the Town Council looked at the potential option of a half court and move one

of the baskets to Stanley Lane Recreation Ground. Costings would be looked at and Officers would develop plans and bring them to a future Recreation and Leisure Committee.

Four options had been costed out, however currently there was no budgetary provision available for the project. The Head of Operations went through each Option and asked Members to consider the options available and agree on a preferred option which would be taken to the Finance Committee for further consideration.

Councillor Bentick stated that the area was currently used for parking and all local groups and residents asked for the maximum amount of parking to be retained, although the area is not formally marked out for parking. He also requested that the basketball court now be relocated to Stanley Lane Recreation Ground.

Councillor Mosley proposed that they agree to Option one which was a reduced playing surface area of 120 metres square, which was fenced containing one basketball hoop at the existing location, minus the marking out of parking bays.

Members questioned whether the Town Council should be removing recreational facilities to allow more parking when the council was promoting active travel and reduction in car journeys. The Town Clerk reported that Shropshire Council was looking to submit a bid to active Travel 4 Fund, focussing on issues in the Meole area.

Councillor Vasmer suggested that the decision be deferred until the next Recreation & Leisure meeting to await more details on the Active Travel bid for the Meole Brace area.

RESOLVED:

That the matter be deferred to the next Recreation & Leisure Committee on 15 March where a final decision on Church Road Recreation Ground would be made.

69/22 COMMUNITY ALLOTMENT

It was reported at the last meeting that Shropshire Council were seeking any requests to set up Community Allotments on their land to be directed through Parish & Town Councils. The Town Clerk had been in contact with Shropshire Council's Community Asset Transfer Team and they were still awaiting guidance on the format they needed to follow. Once the format was known they could start to work with groups who had expressed an interest in parcels of land owned by Shropshire Council.

The Head of Operations had issued preliminary guidance on the type of things they thought that Shropshire Council would request; this would also follow if it was on Town Council land. He and the Town Clerk had been working on a draft Licence to Cultivate on any land belonging to the Town Council. A community allotment had already started at the Grange Youth Centre, and this was progressing well.

RESOLVED

- i) That the update be noted**
- ii) That the matter be considered further once Shropshire Councils guidance on Community Allotment was published.**

70/22 COMMUTED SUMS

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

(i) Cophthorne 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). Payments were being requested for upgrades to the County Ground.

(ii) Barratt Homes/Bovis Homes – Mytton Oak Road – Phase 1 adopted; Snagging Phase 2/3 commenced. No identified date for transfer

(iii) Shrewsbury South Urban

1. Sutton Grange site – ongoing – likely transfer in 2021/22
2. Bellway Homes site – discussion on land adoption and adoption of acoustic fencing
3. Galliers site – early discussions on land adoption
4. Community Centre – location on the site

(iv) 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;

(v) 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. Payments were being requested for drainage works at Kynaston Road Recreation Ground

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

(vii) Weir Hill – Agreements to adopt the land at a future time have been signed

Councillor Lemon enquired re Radbrook College Site as residents had heard it would not be adopted until Phase 4. The Town Clerk said she would re-check the Section 106 agreement on this.

Councillor Mosely raised the current Local Government Boundary Commission Consultation regarding their proposals for new council division boundaries for Shropshire Council. Weir Hill is recommended to form part of the Severn Valley division.

Group Leaders were preparing a response to the consultation document in readiness for Full Council.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

71/22 CLOSING REMARKS

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