

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

**Meeting of the Recreation & Leisure Committee
Held in Committee Room, Livesey House, 7 St John's Hill
At 6.00pm on Wednesday 6 March 2024**

PRESENT

Councillors: E Roberts (Vice Chair), B Bentick, C Lemon, A Mosley, K Pardy, A Wagner.

IN ATTENDANCE

Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Stuart Farmer (Acting Operations Manager), Ruth Jones (Office Manager), Danny Powell (Acting Operations Manager) and Michelle Farmer (Committee Officer).

88/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED:

Apologies received from Councillor Davies, Gillam & Wall.

89/23 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.
Town Clerk – Helen Ball	Declared a Prejudicial Interest in the Amplify Project as she was a Trustee of The Hive.

90/23 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Recreation & Leisure Committee meeting held on 17 January 2024 were submitted as circulated and read.

Councillor Lemon voted to abstain as he was not present at the meeting on 17 January 2024.

Councillor Mosley commented that there was a wording error in Min 78.2. The minutes should read "there were still residual concerns" and not residential concerns as shown.

RESOLVED:

That upon the correction of the wording at Minute 78.2, the minutes of the Recreation & Leisure Committee meeting held on 17 January 2024 be approved and signed as a correct record.

91/23 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Min 63.1 – The Town Clerk had met with the Shropshire Horticultural Society about the Flower Show, and progress was made in ensuring the play area in the Quarry remained open during the Flower Show. The Acting Operations Managers had met with the Showground Manager on site to determine arrangements.

92/23 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Town Clerk reported on the following:

- The Castle Walk Nature Trail infrastructure was planned for installation.
- Drainage work at Kynaston Recreation Ground had been installed – there was some additional work that needed to be concluded.
- Beaver Project was progressing – they were awaiting the contractor to return to install the final pieces of infrastructure.

Councillor Roberts reported that she had an incredibly happy resident in her ward thanks to the drainage work that had been completed and thanked the Town Council for the work.

Councillor Mosley commented on the Dana Footpath and urged progress on this item as action had stalled. He proposed that the Town Council expressed concern and deplore the ongoing delay of the Dana Footpath and call upon all parties to resolve the issue and get the works carried out.

RESOLVED:

That the Capital Programme report be noted.

93/23 MARTYNS LAW

The Town Clerk updated the Committee on Martyn's Law and how it might impact on the Town Council and to also provide direction on commentary for the existing Home Office Consultation.

This Committee had previously been appraised about the need for Martyn's Law. Named after an individual who lost his life at the Manchester Arena in May 2017, the Terrorism Protection of Premises Bill was designed to place a statutory duty on owners of land and buildings that were frequented by public to protect them from any extremist/terrorist incident.

Counter Terrorism prevention had been on the Town Council's radar since 2017 when Lets Rock was the first major concert after the Manchester bombing and Officers were required to put measures in place to protect the public.

Since that time, the Council had worked under a Security Management Policy which was considered by this Committee annually.

In May 2023, the Home Office published the draft bill, which was considered by the Home Affairs Select Committee, which reported back on its findings to the Home Office in early Autumn. As a result of those recommendations, the Home Office was further consulting on various aspects of the Bill and the consultation period expired on 18th March 2024.

The Bill dealt with Qualifying Premises, Qualifying Events, the provision of a Regulator and the duty to co-operate and co-ordinate with others and sets out the penalties for non-compliance.

Going by current knowledge of the Bill, the following Town Council activities would be in scope of the legislation:

- Shrewsbury Market Hall
- Castlefields Community Centre
- Ditherington Community Centre
- Grange Youth Centre
- Quarry Park – Krazy Races, Food Festival, Lets Rock, Shrewsbury Flower Show & Oktoberfest

For premises with a capacity of 100-799 there would be a requirement to meet various standard tier requirements around detailing the operational procedures in protecting the public from a terrorist attack. For those premises and events with a capacity in excess of 800 more detailed plans would be required which would include physical measures to prevent a terrorist attack.

The Town Council was well sited on the provisions with the Town Clerk sitting on the SLCC/NALC Joint Working Group nationally which liaised with the Home Office. Implications for both the Standard and Enhanced Tiers were being looked at. All larger event organisers were aware of the need for their Event Management Plans & Security Plans to start to address the provisions of the proposed legislation so that by the time the legislation was enacted, it was a normal way of working. All front facing operational staff had undertaken Action Counters Terrorism Training and were comfortable with what to do in the event of Suspicious Packages, Suspicious Individuals, Vehicles used as Weapons and Marauding Attackers. The Town Clerk had also begun to liaise with officers responsible for other Public Buildings in the town that would be in scope of this legislation; these included the Shopping Centre, Castle, Theatre & Museum to ensure there was a consistency of approach in dealing with similar incidents and there was the clarity of communications across the town.

Currently the Home Office was consulting on the Standard Tier Arrangements which now included the following requirements:

- Notify the Regulator that they were or had become responsible for premises within scope of the legislation.
- Have in place procedural measures that could be expected to reduce, so far as reasonably practicable, the risk of harm to individuals at the premises in the event of an attack and have the necessary training and awareness of staff to undertake those procedures.

Removed from the original Bill was the requirement to complete a Standard Terrorism Evaluation and ensure that people working at the premises have specific Counter Terrorism Training.

There was much angst within the Local Council sector about whether these measures posed difficulties for the Councils but given already existing duties under other legislation it was the view of Officers that if legislation was required to protect the public, then measures should be put in place. It was also argued that having a Standard Template, in the same way we operate Fire Risk Assessments under a Standard Template, would ensure consistency across public buildings. Equally undertaking Counter Terrorism Training, similar to the training all operational staff had undertaken created terrorism aware public servants and members of the public.

RESOLVED:

(i) That the contents of the report be noted;

(ii) That the Town Clerk respond to the Consultation in as set out above;

(iii) That the Town Clerk continued to prepare the Council for the rollout of legislation.

94/23 FOOTFALL

Stuart Farmer, Acting Operations Manager, updated the committee on footfall.

Visitor numbers throughout the Quarry had continued with a similar trend over recent months. Visitors to the Quarry throughout January and February had been affected by flooding and adverse weather conditions, however an expected increase on January figures occurred during February in line with previous years and this was expected to continue throughout the spring and summer months.

The increase in new visitors between January and February could indicate an increase in tourism visits to the park such as coach trips that dropped off and collected from the top of the quarry.

Events during the spring and summer season were expected to bring similar attendances as previous years, April would see the return of canoe concession to the park as well as a return of the trampolines and reverse bungee.

- The counters that were located in the Market Hall and the Square had been inspected by the contractors who were currently assessing them for accuracy following a recalibration. Figures from these counters had not been included due to possible inaccuracies. Hopefully, there would be some data at the next Recreation & Leisure Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the Footfall Report be noted

95/23 FISHERIES

95.1 Shrewsbury Town Fisheries

The Town Clerk commended the proactive work of the Town Fisheries and their Bailiffs. They

had improved the fisheries no end, not to mention the land those fisheries sat against. There was a lot of good work encouraging and engaging young people into the sector and the work they had done in testing the river and its tributaries had been extremely beneficial in the Angling Trust gathering a bigger picture of the river.

Andy Jones from the Shrewsbury Town Fisheries had supplied a report to Committee which had been circulated to all members prior to the meeting. His report noted that this year their first project was to transform Radbrook Pool with better access and attention to improve the biodiversity of the pool. During the last heatwave they had to attend the pool to battle against a serious water oxygen crash of which was prevented with our water pumps and the help with the Environment agency to prevent fish loss.

Their aim, which would be in stages, was to replace all but one fishing platform with new high build platforms including an extra disabled platform. One current platform, which was not fishable, would be relocated to a new position. The existing would be removed and replanted to wild. New pathing would be installed either side of the woodland path to join the existing pathways where it tended to get very muddy. To improve the water surface area and help get more surface water movement, they wished to open up an area to create an air tunnel and cut back an area of tree branches that had overgrown the pool surface by as much as twenty feet. Once cut back some water weed planting would be instigated in the margin to improve oxygen content in the water.

An Angling Trust AIF Environment Agency grant had been applied for to hopefully help them with this project that would transform the pool with easier access for anglers and the local residents and to protect it from further oxygen problems. Any tree works permissions and agreement would be sought via Town Council staff prior to any works.

For Sydney Avenue they shall be replacing two more river platforms that had deteriorated and were in need of replacement with new high build platforms. In addition, in the Quarry Park, they also needed to replace four river platforms that had suffered from severe flooding damage with new high build platforms. They also needed to repair a number of other platforms after initial inspections. The flooding had caused some serious bank erosion and there were three trees down in the Quarry and another down on the County Ground. They have been reported to the Environment Agency for removal at some point.

They had applied for a second Angling Trust AIF Environment Agency grant to assist them with this project.

At Monkmoor they had recently replaced the gate on the lane entry with a new extensive gate and in addition, once the wet weather had subsided and the Monkmoor lane had dried out sufficiently, they would be conducting works on the badly potholed section to help strengthen the lane to help illuminate this problem. This would improve access for anglers and members of the public.

At Emstrey, later in the summer, they wished to add at least another, maybe two, new high build river platforms to replace existing old and deteriorated platforms on the river.

At Mousecroft & Oxon Pool they were currently looking at plans for these two pools and would confirm these plans later in the year.

A number of coaching events had been planned and confirmed for their junior anglers and also adults for the Shropshire Recovery Forum for this year. The junior events would be added to the website for online booking in March and would be free to attend. The events would be run by our Head Coach Ian James and his team. They were also assisting with a fishing Intervention activity for Belvedere School, and it was hoped to introduce more youngsters to the sport of fishing.

Regarding their website, they had been looking at improving the permit purchase area on the website to try and make it easier to purchase online permits with a simpler system. Any changes would be implemented as soon as possible.

Water testing continued on eight locations on the River Severn and they had now increased regular testing on locations for the Reabrook. A new volunteer had been added to their team for this increase and he was also a water biologist.

In addition, they had set up a new scheme working with Severn Trent on the Reabrook of which was a CSO Safari. The scheme involved closer observation, with the help of location plans, of the CSO outflows and also finding various other unknown out flows of which may be contributing to pollution in the Reabrook. These would be looked at during drier spells and graded as potential problem. i.e., they may have a misconnection of some type or cause and Severn Trent would investigate them, trace them and put the problem right.

RESOLVED:

That the Fisheries report be noted

95.2 Rowley & Fenemere Angling Association

The Town Clerk informed the Committee that there was nothing further to report to Committee at present. She would be meeting the new Environment Agency Place Manager for Shropshire & Herefordshire in a couple of weeks, and this would be added to the list of items to discuss.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted

96/23 TEAM SHREWSBURY

96.1 Update on the work of Team Shrewsbury

The Office Manager provided an update on Team Shrewsbury activities. There had seen a slight increase in a number of the areas, however the majority were comparable. On reviewing the yearly comparisons during November – January, the incidents/issues had reduced, which represented the great work and support that the Town Rangers/Quarry Security and Taxi Marshalls undertook on a daily basis.

Shrewsbury had been successful in receiving Home Office funding for the Safer Streets 5 project. Discussions were currently taking place with various partners for progressing this.

Further information regarding the CCTV operations would follow as part of Shropshire Council's co-ordinated response, the plan was for CCTV to be presented to Shropshire Council cabinet on 17 April.

The Town Council had also been notified that We Are With You were moving their services to 1A Castle Gates on 8 April. Clients would be able to attend from the 22 April. They were also looking to hold an open day event on 13 May, where they would be able to show how teams worked together, what they did and what support was available.

The Office Manager advised that the reporting of issues to the Police was very much encouraged.

Councillor Wagner asked if Team Shrewsbury would be publicising the Open Day and the Office Manger agreed to investigate this.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted

96.2 Policing Priorities

The Office Manager informed members of the Committee that the April priorities had been collated and was presented to Members as confirmation, prior to submitting them to the Police. The next submission would be required for 1 July, however the next Recreation & Leisure Committee was on the 10 July. The priorities would therefore be submitted to the Police in readiness for 1 July and ratified at Recreation & Leisure Committee on the 10 July.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted

96.3 Hosting of the Knife Angel

The Town Clerk asked members to consider whether Council would be supportive of the Knife Angel visiting the Town.

The Knife Angel was a piece of art with a strong social change message. The Sculpture took two years to create and was made up of 100,000 knives following a Knife Amnesty campaign involving 400 Knife Banks being distributed across police forces in the country. In total 250,000 knives were taken out of circulation

The Knife Angel was always intended to educate children, young people and adults about the harmful effects that violent behaviour had on communities all across the country. It had also helped to raise better awareness, helped those carrying knives to renounce violence as a solution for solving disputes, and encouraged leading bodies to create better initiatives to turn the tide on aggressive behaviour. It symbolised a call for change whilst acting as a National Memorial for victims of knife crime and their loved ones.

The Knife Angel was on a national tour where host towns and cities worked with the community to raise awareness of knife crime. Shrewsbury were planning to have the Knife Angel in 2020 but then COVID happened.

The Town Clerk and Youth & Community Manager had visited the British Ironworks Centre to discuss the potential for the Knife Angel to visit Shrewsbury. This could be co-ordinated with the Rangers as well as Youth Workers to highlight the harmful effects on the community of knife crime. Discussions were in their infancy and a date had not yet been agreed nor had a location.

Members agreed that the Knife Angel would look good in the Square and it would be putting out a good, positive message to all residents.

Councillor Lemon asked if amnesty bins would be put in place if they did host the Knife Angel and it was confirmed that there would be bins in locations.

RESOLVED:

(i) That the contents of the report be noted;

(ii) That the Committee supported the principle of hosting the Knife Angel in Shrewsbury

96.4 Anti Drink-Spiking Project

The Town Clerk introduced Vince Dovey and Neville Street from 1st & Bowery who wanted to talk to Committee about their anti drink-spiking initiative and to see how the Town Council could help promote it.

Vince thanked the councillors for the opportunity to talk about the project they were running and their plans for “phase 2” of the project.

Their anti drink spiking campaign was set up as a response to a clear need for a simple to use, cost effective answer to an issue that was of concern to the public, authorities and the night-time economy.

They had developed a coordinated approach to supplying venues with test kits and a simple to use but effective way of reporting the number of tests carried out and the results whether they were positive or negative. This information would provide a clearer picture of the issue whilst allowing the Police and other agencies to target their resources. Research highlighted that those venues with an anti drink-spiking project in place instilled confidence in the public’s choice of venue which in turn benefited those venues and supported the night-time economy.

The test strip was developed and validated for the detection of GHB, Ketamine and amines such as Cocaine and amphetamines. If a member of the public had been spiked presented themselves to A&E the cost to the NHS would be of £732; if they required Police/Ambulance attendance, the cost would be £2434.

The project sought to work with venues rather than against them, offering training on how to use the test strips, how to record the tests and how to inform their customers on the issues surrounding drink spiking.

The project had initially been funded by the Police & Crime Commissioner and had the full support of West Mercia Police. The project aimed to reduce cases of spiking by visiting venues asking them to sign up to this project. So far 15 venues across the town had already done so. They were hoping that the number of venues supporting this project would rise.

The second phase of the project aimed to:

- Offer 1000 test strips to members of the public to use in venues that were not currently signed up to the project;
- Offer 1000 “business cards” with a QR code on them to allow members of the public to record instances where they believed they have been spiked;
- Work with the Street Pastors to distribute the above to people on nights out;
- Give the Street Pastors the ability to record instances of drink spiking that they came across whilst carrying out their patrols;
- Use the above to report in the scale and scope of drink spiking in the town, to support council, police, NHS and other agencies to target resources.

The cost of rolling out Phase 2 was £700 and would allow them to be up and running in a very short space of time. The support of the Town Council would be wonderful as not only would it offer a joined-up approach for the town, but it would also allow them to get the message to a much wider audience. The project could not only protect members of the public, but it also worked to support the night time economy whilst saving the police and NHS money, at a time when their resources were stretched. They would be happy to work with the Town Council on a joint publicity drive prior to any launch of phase two, and to include Town Council logos on the cards that they handed out. They believed that their project enhanced the reputation of the town and as they hopefully rolled out the project to towns and cities across the region (and country), they were proud that Shrewsbury was at the heart of this initiative.

Councillors asked if there were any information they could put out on their social media pages of which it was agreed information would be distributed out.

Councillors were very supportive of the project and its aim but before the Town Council considered any funding for the second phase it was suggested that it was confirmed the test strips worked before going ahead and that due diligence was required and could there be an endorsement from the Police.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) That 1st & Bowery be thanked for their informative presentation;**
- (ii) That the Committee supports the involvement of the Town Council in the Phase 2 project;**
- (iii) That Council allocates £700 to fund the second phase of the project.**

97/23 QUARRY

97.1 Quarry Events Programme for 2024

The Town Clerk updated the Committee on the Quarry Events for 2024. A draft list for 2024 events had been provided to Committee with some of the regular large events returning to the Quarry next year including the Food Festival, Lets Rock and Oktoberfest. Krazy Races were also returning to the Quarry this year. All the larger events were confirmed and all were starting to feed in their event planning arrangements.

The Town Council had a Desktop Exercise with the larger event organisers in a couple of weeks which would also involve Police, Fire & Ambulance as well as the Emergency Planning Team. This exercise was intended to test emergency planning capabilities so that in the event of a live emergency organisers know how it works and most critically everyone who needs to know is sighted on what the process is.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted.

97.2 I.T Connectivity in the Quarry

The Town Clerk provided a report to consider proposals to install IT connectivity in the Quarry.

This Committee had already been appraised of the Quarry being part of a regional bid to improve IT connectivity in town and city centres and in particularly parks where large-scale events took place and where the existing IT connectivity could not cope with usage from large numbers being in attendance. Currently large event operators had to buy in temporary IT connectivity at a cost to ensure that traders could make point of sale payments.

Shropshire Council, working with Worcestershire County Council and Bath & NE Somerset Council submitted a collective bid to the DSIT – Open Networks Ecosystem Fund for funding to support town centres and events. The Bid was successful, and officers had been working on developing the project.

There had been a number of meetings on-site in the Quarry to look at locations for the necessary infrastructure. The locations and mock-ups were shown to Members at the meeting. The locations had been chosen for the best connectivity as well as the least intrusion to the park both operationally and from a planning conservation perspective.

This project would allow for better connectivity for not just the public at large but also event traders who found existing bandwidth not strong enough.

There was now a need to work at pace to access the Government funding and discussions were taking place with Planners to determine the level of Permitted Development Rights that could be utilised. It was hoped that the infrastructure would be in place by June to allow the larger events to test capacity.

RESOLVED:

(i) That the contents of the report be noted;

(ii) That the Council supported the installation of infrastructure as presented to increase connectivity in the Quarry.

97.3 Amplify Project

The Town Clerk firstly declared a Prejudicial Interest in this project as she was a Trustee of The Hive.

The Amplify Project was a project that their Youth & Community Manager had been engaging with, utilising the expertise of the larger event organisers in the Quarry so that young people would follow them through the event calendar, learn what it meant to organise an event with a view to organising their own event.

The Town Council had developed meaningful partnerships with The Hive over many years delivering jointly created and managed projects to provide young people with arts related projects.

Officers had been working with The Hive staff to develop a project that captured the potential experience gained by young people working with the large event organisers to provide capacity for young people to organise their own event in the park. This would also tie into the work in planning for a Keep Safe Festival this year and the Deputy Mayor's aspirations to hold a Youth Event in the park during his Mayoral Year. It was anticipated that the Town Council Youth Group that met weekly at the Hive would be targeted to take part in this project.

An application was submitted to the Arts Council, which was successful. This allowed for a further bid to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund allowing the project to be expanded to address Anti-Social Behaviour. This too had been successful. The initial bid required some element of match funding.

For a number of years Lets Rock had provided a community contribution to further the arts and sustain events in the park. This accumulating fund had been used to purchase infrastructure to support events. It was proposed to utilise £5000 of that fund to act as the match funding for this project.

The Town Clerk, during her annual discussions with the larger events organisers, had encouraged all of them to contribute time and expertise to this project. Recognising that managing events was a specialist activity, many events were folding due to a number of pressures including costs and legislation and that there was a need to bring on the next generation of event organisers.

The Quarry was a frequented location for young people from across the town and the prospect of being able to assist young people to organise a young persons' event was quite exciting and provided distraction activities from other forms of behaviour.

In supporting the proposals, Councillor Mosley asked could that young people from around the area be invited to join in with this project, making it a collaboration with the wider Youth Services. Members agreed.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted;**
- (ii) That the Town Council's involvement in the project be supported;**
- (iii) That £5000 from the Let's Rock fund be released to cover the match funding elements to release the wider funding.**

98/23 PLAY AREAS

98.1 Upton Lane

Stuart Farmer, Acting Operations Manager, provided an update to Committee. Upton Lane had a new play area installed recently by Kompan with the play area equipment being made of recycled materials.

Unfortunately, the play area had been vandalised quite badly with a large knife. Boards and swings had been slashed and caused a lot of damage, potentially causing injury to anybody who used it. Due to this vandalism the play area had to be totally closed to the public to ensure their safety whilst replacement parts arrived. It was hoped that the parts would be arriving within the next week and the play area would be re-opened as soon as it was made safe. The incident had also been reported to the Police.

Councillors asked if wildlife cameras could be installed in this location but it was confirmed that there was nothing close enough to the area to place a camera on.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

98.2 Play Area Improvement Schedule

The Town Clerk reported that previously this Committee had reviewed a a schedule of play areas in need of upgrade. These had been fed into the Visioning Action Plan. The Town Council Play & Horticultural Development Officer had prioritised this list in accordance with need and condition, and it was proposed to replace or refurbish 3 to 4 play areas a year for the next 3 years, utilising some of the existing Play Reserve, some Neighbourhood Fund where criteria allowed and in the case of the new development sites S106 money that had been allocated.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the report be noted;**
- (ii) That the schedule of play upgrades be approved.**

99/23 SHREWSBURY IN BLOOM

99.1 Shrewsbury in Bloom 2024 preparations

The Town Clerk updated Committee on the activity of the Bloom Working Group; this now involved some key staff from various teams, giving the group more impetus. The route had now been set and they were starting to look at who would be involved on judging day. There were lots of new locations on this year's route and both the Weeping Cross depot and the new Town Council Offices at Livesey House were featured which judges had not visited before.

Danny Powell, the Acting Operations Manager added that it was good to have staff members included in the decision makings for Shrewsbury In Bloom, providing their suggestions, giving feedback and having an impact on the final route.

Plans for Shrewsbury in Bloom had started a lot earlier than previous years which was better for staff so it would not lead to a last-minute rush to get work completed before judging day.

Baskets and planters had been decided by the depot nursery staff and they also had students from Conover College assisting them.

Councillor Mosley asked if the robotic marker machine had been received and Danny confirmed that it had been received and training had been completed on it today and the machine worked well.

Councillor Lemon asked if there was a timetable for the Bloom route; this would be circulated once confirmed.

99.2 Shrewsbury In Bloom Group meeting

The notes of the Shrewsbury in Bloom Group meeting held on 22 February 2024 were submitted as circulated and read

RESOLVED:

That the notes of the Shrewsbury In Bloom Group Meeting held on 22 February 2024 be accepted and approved.

100/23 ALLOTMENTS

The notes of the Allotment Secretary meeting held on 14 February 2024 were submitted as circulated and read.

The Acting Operations Manager, Danny Powell, reported that it had been a long time since the Town Council had organised face-to-face meetings with Allotment Holders, so the decision was made to resurrect the six-monthly meetings. Dates for future meetings had been sent out to all Allotment Secretaries.

The meeting was attended by Bowbrook, Castlefields, Column, Greenfields, Heathgates, Meole Brace and Monkmoor Allotments. Each allotment secretary provided updates to the

Town Council and any assistance requested by them at the meeting had now been completed by Town Council staff.

Councillor Mosley reported that the meeting had been appreciated by allotment holders and congratulated the Town Council for setting up the meetings again.

RESOLVED:

That the notes of the Allotment Secretary Meeting held on 14 February 2024 be accepted and approved.

Councillor Wagner left the meeting.

101/23 TREE UPDATE

101.1 Ash Die Back Report

The Town Clerk reported that Adam Clifford' (Countryside Team) Ash Die Back report had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting. Ash Die Back work continued, and it would be something that the Town Council would have to deal with for many years to come. It was not something that could be stopped so it had to be managed. The report showed that the team had a good plan for identifying the work, dealing with the trees and any replanting. It was agreed that Ash Die Back would be reported to Committee on a regular basis.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted.

101.2 Town Council Tree Strategy

The Town Clerk reported that the Town Council's Tree Management Policy had been reviewed. It had now been updated to take account of new initiatives, community engagement and what to do with Ash Die Back. A lot of work had gone into the policy testimony to the fact the Council was responsible for around 120,000 trees.

RESOLVED:

That the revised Tree Management Policy be adopted.

102/23 MEMORIALS

The Committee Officer and Executive Assistant reported to Committee that in 2012, Shrewsbury Town Council introduced a 10-year lease on any new memorials placed on their land, the majority being placed in the Quarry & The Dingle. There was a total of 132 benches in the Quarry & Dingle and 55 of the 132 were on 10-year leases.

The 10-year leases were now coming up to their expiry date and the Town Council wished to implement a programme for a rolling renewal lease on payment of an appropriate fee. Enquiries elsewhere had suggested £250.00 for a memorial bench and plaque and £50.00 for a shrub & plaque as an appropriate fee.

If the applicant wished to continue with their memorial in the location an application form would be completed agreeing to this new 5-year lease. If the applicant did not wish to continue the inscription plaque would be removed and the memorial offered to someone else on their waiting list. The existing Policy on the dedication of Benches, Trees and Shrubs within Town Centre Parks had been redrafted to reflect the need for a renewal process and had been circulated to all Members.

There were 77 out of 132 benches that were agreed pre-Town Council and there was very little paperwork to determine agreements or contacts of those who entered into agreements. Some of these benches were coming to the end of their lifecycle and were in need of replacement. These could follow the new style of benches elsewhere in the Quarry. The difficulty remained in the Dingle around uniformity in the wooden benches.

Given that inscriptions would have been on these benches for well in excess of the current 10-year policy, it was proposed to commence a programme of renewal. This was unlikely to be an easy task given the lack of contact details. In the same kind of process in identifying cemetery memorials, notices shall be placed on those affected benches, in the Quarry noticeboards and on the Town Councils website to give notice that the plaque would be removed. Many Councillors asked if a repayment scheme would be possible as some customers may struggle to raise the money to continue with their memorials. This would be discussed with the Town Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer to see if it would be possible.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted;**
- (ii) That the amended Policy on the Dedication of benches, trees & Shrubs within the Town Centre Parks be approved;**
- (iii) That the suggested fees be accepted;**
- (iv) That a new procedure on dealing with SABC benches on Town Council Land Policy was approved.**

103/23 BATHING WATER STATUS

The Town Clerk updated the Committee on the Bathing Water Status application submitted via the Clean Rivers Working Group to DEFRA.

This Committee was aware of the work of the Clean Rivers Working Group in bringing partners together to support the submission of an application to DEFRA for a stretch of the River Severn in Shrewsbury to be designated with Bathing Water Status. A comprehensive application was submitted in 2023 which detailed huge support for the designation from

not just the public, but both Shropshire Council and Shrewsbury Town Council as well as many organisations with an interest in activities on the river.

The application was subsequently considered by DEFRA and following further information being submitted had now been included in the Government Department's public consultation to consider 27 different sites across the country. The Consultation had opened and closed on the 10 March. Details on the consultation were appended to this application.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the Report be noted;**
- (ii) That the Committee congratulates those members of the Working Group who worked hard to submit the application;**
- (iii) That the Council submits representation to DEFRA supporting the Bathing Water Status designation of the River Severn in Shrewsbury.**

104/23 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Acting Operations Manager, Stuart Farmer, updated Committee on the recent tender process for the Christmas Lights 2024 – 2026.

Councillors Moseley & Wilson volunteered at a previous Committee Meeting to assist him with the selection of the Christmas Lighting contractor. This had now been agreed with both Councillors and the winning contractor would be announced at Full Council in March.

105/23 COMMUTED SUMS

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

- (i) *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) - funds in relation to landscaping at the County Ground have been drawn down.
- (ii) *Barratt Homes/Bovis Homes – Mytton Oak Road*** – Phase 1 adopted; Snagging Phase 2/3 commenced. No identified date for transfer. Developer had requested early transfer, but certain works needed to be completed ahead of transfer.
- (iii) *Shrewsbury South Urban***
 - 1. Sutton Grange site – ongoing – likely transfer in 2023/24 – recent meeting with Taylor Wimpey to discuss logistics for transfer.
 - 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 – forms received for drawn of funding. Money had now been received and his could be discharged from the list.
- (v) Harlescott Infants/Juniors site** – Offsite contributions to sport. Approvals for use of the funds at Kynaston Road Recreation Ground for drainage works – contribution for the drainage had been received so this item would now be discharged from the list.
- (vi) Radbrook College site** – Open space adoption – officers met with Floreat Homes on site – likely adoption once all phases are complete.
- (vii) Weir Hill** – Agreements to adopt the land at a future time have been signed -meeting with Taylor Wimpey looking at the possibility of the countryside land to be transferred ahead of the POS on the development site.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

106/23 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.