

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 5 March 2025

PRESENT

Councillors P Gillam (Chair), E Addams, B Bentick, M Davies, R Dartnall, C Lemon and A Mosley (substitute for Councillor Pardy).

IN ATTENDANCE

Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Stuart Farmer (Acting Operations Manager), Danny Powell (Acting Operations Manager), Ruth Jones (Office Manager), Ian Thorpe (Commercial, Markets & Events Manager), Michelle Farmer (Committee Officer).

Also in attendance were Rebecca Sweeney, Catherine Webb, John McGuinness and Alex Tree from Severn Trent Water and one member of the public.

61/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED:

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

62/24 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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63/24 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Recreation & Leisure Committee meeting held on 15 January 2025 were submitted as circulated and read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Recreation & Leisure Committee meeting held on 15 January 2025 be approved and signed as a correct record.

64/24 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Min 55.2 - Hostile Vehicle Mitigation Barriers – Since the last meeting a tender had gone live on the Town Council website for the supply of the barriers. The closing date for the

tender was today and they were now in discussion with the preferred tenderer to meet their budget requirements. This matter was ever more a necessity given another Vehicle attack this week in Germany.

Min 57.2 – Greenfields Community Group – At the last meeting the Committee discussed the tendering of Adult Gym Equipment. Officers couldn't agree a location with the Group who wished to have the equipment in a different location to that recommended by every tenderer. The Group had since advised that they had sent the money back to the funder, so the Finance & General Purposes Committee had determined the matter now closed. There was also a preferred tenderer for the solar lights, but this was dependent on the Group sourcing the relevant match funding. Local residents were continuing to challenge funds available, and it was understood from the group that legal counsel opinion was being sought on the locus standi of using these funds.

65/24 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Town Clerk updated the Committee on the Capital programme. This was now a new list of projects that were captured from the Visioning Plan and any outstanding projects from the previous programme.

In terms of updates, tenders were about to be published for Tilstock Crescent and Raby Crescent Play Areas and progress was being made with the Dana Footpath having instructed Arroll & Green to undertake the planning process. Officers had also met with the Shropshire Horticultural Society and Shropshire Council's Estates Team about the legal agreement which was now in train.

Councillor Gillam requested the list be updated to show Raby Crescent in the Belle Vue area and not Sutton as shown.

Councillor Mosley commented further on the Dana Footpath progress report he had received from Tim Pritchard (Shrewsbury Programme Manager – Shropshire Council). A Listed Building Consent application would be submitted with a target date of the end of March 2025 with approval being the end of June 2025 at the latest. The target for an agreement with Shropshire Horticultural Society was the end of March 2025. The Town Council were to finalise the costs for all the works by the end of May 2025. Shrewsbury Town Council would take on the construction and hopefully all would be completed by August – End of October 2025. This was good news if the dates could be kept to.

RESOLVED:

That the new Capital Programme update be noted.

66/24 FISHERIES

66.1 Shrewsbury Town Fisheries

The Town Clerk updated the Committee on the work of Shrewsbury Town Council Fisheries.

More time had been spent this year on planning a number of coaching events for Juniors and Adults. Four junior academy events were now listed on the fisheries website for dates in May, July, August and September. Each event would go live for booking three weeks before the event itself. Mousecroft Pool would be the location and their head coach and his team would be running them. A dedicated contact email address had been set up for coaching enquiries on the website.

In addition, they would be running more junior events with the assistance of the Canals and Rivers Trust for schools in Shrewsbury. The Trust, Andy Jones and their head coach organised the events with the schools. Mereside and Severndale schools were so far planned for dates in June, and they were hoping to engage with more schools soon. For adults, they had set up five dates for the Shropshire Recovery Forum and Shrewsbury Ark. These events were currently being finalised.

Fish Talk Release was extremely popular last year, and it was growing in demand again this year. The scheme was to provide fishing coaching to help individuals who were experiencing health and well-being issues or hardship times in their lives. The main aim was to prevent river deaths. Sean Cooke and Dave Morgan had done a fantastic job, and they had tremendous support from local businesses. Fishing Tackle and Bait companies had helped with the events and sponsorship and it was pleasing to see participants, who had never been fishing before, actually excel in the sport and become fisheries members. Fisheries staff were still waiting for dryer weather conditions in order to implement planned works.

At Mousecroft Pool a new gate with kissing gate to the side, repairs to the lane, cleaning out the fronts of the platforms around the pool and also level out the bank where the water floods over a pathway. Also clearing debris out of the pool by fisheries staff.

At Radbrook Pool - clearing out the debris thrown in the pool, replace damaged signs with new strong signage and some new path walkways to be implemented when conditions were dry.

On the River fisheries at Emstrey, Sydney Avenue, Monkmoor, Quarry Park and County Ground had all platforms and signs safety and maintenance checked. Repairs were carried out as required.

In regard to pollution and water testing they continued to water test seven locations on the River Severn in Shrewsbury and also the Reabrook. They were still experiencing Ammonia spikes on the Severn which was possibly from agriculture run off.

Shrewsbury Fisheries had been contacted by Severn Trent Water as they wished to set up a meeting with all Angling Club officials on the River Severn from Mid Wales to Worcester. The meeting was planned for a date in March in Shrewsbury. Angling clubs had been contacted and Severn Trent were confirming the date and venue. The meeting was for Severn Trent Water to reach out to angling concerns about pollution and speak about the Severn Trent Water plans.

RESOLVED:

That the Fisheries report be noted

66.2 Rowley & Fenemere

Councillor Mosley reported to Committee that the Fishing Rights to the Shrewsbury Town Council riverside land at Castlewalk had been held by the Ditherington Angling Association but for many years but had not been taken up. Rowley and Fenemere Angling Association had purchased the rights in 2019 and had been in talks with their officers about facilitating their usage.

He and Councillor Vasmer had only learned about this following the marking of pegs and significant tree works along parts of the riverbank. They were also alerted by expressions of concern by local residents. After further inquiry they identified plans for C14 swims and associated riverbank standing works and raised issues with Helen Ball and Mike Cox (retired Town Council staff). Residents also raised objections, and the Environment Agency was contacted. Correspondence from EA suggested that it was a matter for the Town Council to approve any works.

The Committee had supported a request to purchase the rights but this had been rejected. The Committee further agreed that the Town Clerk, Councillor Vasmer and Councillor Mosley should reflect the concerns and take up negotiation with Rowley & Fenemere. Councillors Mosley & Vasmer sought to restrict usage as much as possible in a bid to protect this well used and very highly valued Countryside Site environment with its unique ambiance along a narrow strip of riverside with an abundance of flora and fauna. Councillor Mosley felt it was difficult to see how the riverbank could be turned into a fishery without significant detriment to its present value to the local community, visitors and to the environment as a whole.

During discussion, Councillor Mosley proposed a Memorandum of Understanding with appropriate controls on usage. This was largely ignored by Rowley & Fenemere. They restated their rights to fish which they said trumped landowner rights.

Issues identified in the Memorandum of Understanding covered:

- Car parking conflicts in residential streets or on already well occupied parks off Underdale Road or at the Weir
- Potential conflict of interest between anglers and walkers
- Night fishing
- Potential contest fishing
- Bailiff arrangements

Councillor Mosley and the Town Clerk met with Rowley & Fenemere on site; Councillor Vasmer was unavailable. Reflecting on the meeting Councillor Mosley further expressed his concerns on the attitude and planning of Rowley & Fenemere who he felt seemed to be continuing with their arrogant 'like it or lump it' approach.

Whilst requesting permission to install three swims this year, they wished to install 4 the following year and 6/7 downstream in following years. They were also asked for further tree works to enhance their swims.

Councillor Mosley said he was veering to the opinion that they should not allow any infrastructure and be very clear that they should not compromise the environment and public amenities in any way by doing works themselves.

The meeting to discuss outcomes and policy did not happen due to pressures of work on other issues.

Councillor Mosley acknowledged that the Town Council could not remove the fishing rights unilaterally, but they could withdraw all support and exercise landowner rights to protect their asset and the use by residents and visitors wishing to enjoy their current activities in the area unencumbered by changes to the characteristics of the riverside in this much cherished facility. The aim would be to minimise their use and hence, interference with those enjoying the current uses.

Councillor Mosley stated that it should be noted the area was much used by residents not just of Castlefields & Ditherington and Underdale but many from Monkmoor, Abbey, Belle Vue and the Town centre. Numerous emails recording objections had been received while a well-attended meeting of the Castlefields Action Team expressed dismay at Rowley & Fenemere's proposals.

With Councillor Vasmer's full support, Councillor Mosley proposed that the R&L Committee resolved to:

- **Recognise the excellent and extensive provision we provide along our fisheries and that provided by others already. These provide more than adequate angling opportunities in and around Shrewsbury.**
- **Withdraw all cooperation from R&F and request that staff do not help in any way. This includes rejecting permission for any infrastructure and any work which impacts on vegetation or wildlife.**
- **Recognise the value of protecting the flora and fauna of the area and be clear that the Council will strictly enforce available rights to prevent harm to the naturalised environment along the riverbank.**
- **Ensure that the established and very well used footpaths along the riverside are not obstructed by anglers and/or their equipment in anyway.**
- **Consider the application of TPOs within the designated area.**
- **Inform the Environment Agency and the Angling Trust of our decisions on this issue.**
- **Review developments after the next fishing season.**

Councillor Bentick enquired if the tree work had been undertaken by the Angling Club. The Town Clerk reported that the tree work was scheduled work across the whole of the recreation ground and had nothing to do with Rowley & Fenemere and no trees had been felled during the process. This was about good tree husbandry.

Councillor Addams commented that there was regular wildlife in this area, and it would be a negative impact if more swims were given as these spaces needed to be maintained. Councillor Gillam questioned whether Rowley & Fenemere were under the misapprehension the Town Council granted permission.

Councillor Lemon commented that the Town Council should let them know their stance before withdrawing any all support.

The Town Clerk queried the factuality of the motion seeking the evidence that supported the statement that there was adequate angling opportunities in and around the town. Angling membership had increased substantially since COVID and the Shrewsbury Town Fisheries

month on month continued to increase the number of pegs; this was contrary to the statement in the motion. The Town Clerk also wished to clarify that the Town Council could not seek TPO status on the trees at Castlewalk. There had been a similar request made by a resident of Castlefields & Ditherington to tree officers at Shropshire Council; this had been declined as those trees were not at risk of being felled. The Town Clerk also questioned inferences that staff do to help Rowley & Fenemere in any way was not helpful. Officers have an excellent relationship with the Town Fisheries and agreed work was always in the best interests of Town Council assets. There needed to be trust in officers and any work proposed would not harm the vegetation on site.

From Councillor Mosley's initial proposal it was suggested that;

- In the first point, "These provide more than adequate angling opportunities in and around Shrewsbury." should be removed.
- The second bullet point should be completely removed.
- To develop an awareness of acceptable work on site with recognition of its public use should be added.
- The application of TPO's should be removed.

The Chairman suggested that a form of words could be brought back to the next meeting. The Town Clerk stressed that this matter had been ongoing for a considerable amount of time, and they could not delay it further by bringing it back to the next Recreation & Leisure Committee in May. Councillor Bentick suggested that a letter was sent to Rowley & Fenemere explaining to them what acceptable rights they had.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee:

- **Recognises the excellent and extensive provision provided for angling along its fisheries.**
- **Recognises the value of protecting the flora and fauna of the area and the need to strictly enforce the prevention of harm to the naturalised environment along the riverbank.**
- **Refuses permission of the Rowley & Fenemere Club to allow the installation of any physical infrastructure on site, and undertaking any work which impacts on vegetation or wildlife**
- **Develops an understanding with the club of acceptable management practices on site within its established fishing rights.**
- **Ensures that the established and very well used footpaths along the riverside are not obstructed by anglers and/or their equipment in anyway.**
- **Informs the Environment Agency and the Angling Trust of its decisions.**
- **Reviews developments after the next fishing season.**

67/24 TEAM SHREWSBURY

67.1 Update on the work of Team Shrewsbury

The Office Manager provided an update on Team Shrewsbury activities. During the past three months, there was a spike in January, however on reviewing the yearly comparisons, they were comparable. Security was regularly receiving positive feedback – recently they engaged with a female whose dog had jumped into the river, they explained the current was

very strong and advised her against it. They suggested coaxing the dog back to the bank which took some time, and the female was thankful for their support.

Shropshire Council had received additional funding from the Government for Winter Pressures. Accommodation would be provided to rough sleepers until the morning of 24th March 2025 at the Shrewsbury Ark. Access was only permitted when individuals had been through the verification process, via Shropshire Council's Housing Options team.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted

67.2 Policing Priorities

The Office Manager provided Policing Priorities. The next quarter Policing Priorities, starting April were presented at this meeting for ratification. As previously advised West Mercia Police did not have the power to deal with parking issues; under the Traffic Management Act 2004, Shropshire Council were responsible for the enforcement of parking regulations on all highways, and off-street car parks. Further details on this would be circulated to members. Councillor Mosley asked that if Councillors hadn't submitted any priorities could the previous months submissions be used as a default. The Office Manager said that this could be done but it did run the risk of priorities not being updated regularly. The Office Manager had chased submissions on two separate occasions.

Councillor Bentick thanked West Mercia Police for putting officers on to Moneybrook Way in the Meole Ward.

Councillor Addams asked if her previous month submission could also be added to this month. The Office Manager agreed as long as there remained three submissions. Councillor Davies pointed out an error on her submissions. Issue 2 should read anti-social behaviour and not anti-social driving. The Office Manager agreed to amend this on the priorities list.

Councillor Mosley enquired as to where the Footfall reports were as they had not appeared on the last couple of agendas. Stuart Farmer, Acting Operations Manager, answered to say that they had met with Elephant Wi-Fi who provide the footfall data and were trying to find a better way to report footfall as some previous reports didn't appear to be accurate. Footfall reports would be back on the agenda once the reporting system had been sorted.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted

68/24 QUARRY

The Commercial, Markets & Events Manager updated the Committee on the Quarry Events for 2025.

The list of events scheduled to be held in the Quarry during 2025 was continuing to grow and it was worth noting how varied the current line-up now looked. It was always their

intention to continue to broaden out the range of events and it was therefore pleasing to see that aspiration starting to come to fruition.

All of the regular events, both large and small, which had become somewhat synonymous with the quarry over the years were scheduled to take place again this year, together with a returning favourite and some intriguing new offerings.

The 'Summer of Music 2025, live at the bandstand' season was also coming together steadily with 14 confirmed bookings (13 Sundays and 1 Saturday) leaving just 3 prime Sunday slots still available within the May to August window. They were waiting on another concert band to confirm their reservation of one of these remaining slots and other bands and schools were being actively canvassed in the meantime.

The aim was for all the bands performing on a Sunday to start at 2pm to provide some continuity and try to build a level of audience expectation. An accompanying promotional leaflet was also being developed, a first draft of which should be available in the next week or so.

This was very much the planning stage of the events calendar and with that in mind they were currently in the process of arranging a date for the 'desktop exercise' with the organisers of their large events. This had always proven to be an extremely valuable activity as it enabled a site-specific focus to be placed on key areas such as security planning, vulnerability assessments, legislative changes and licencing requirements.

They were also looking into the logistics of holding a forum for all the hosts and organisers of large events in and around the town, to better understand the current experience, share ideas, promote best practice and improve communication.

Finally, it was pleasing to report that despite several recent spells of heavy rain there had been no issues reported with standing water on the main arena areas, which suggested the remedial work carried out to improve the surface water drainage had the desired effect. There were further grounds maintenance planned ahead of our first events, including over seeding these same areas ahead of the temperatures starting to rise.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted.

69/24 RECREATION GROUND MATTERS

69.1 Grounds Maintenance update

The Operations Manager reported on Grounds Maintenance. The weather since the start of the new year had been colder than normal, with cold winds, frost and a small fall of snow. There had been numerous dull days with no sun and high winds. This weather had slowed grass growth and spring bulbs were just coming into flower. The positives of the weather were that they had been able to use staff to tidy up locations across the Town. Currently verge mowing was still a few weeks away unless the ground conditions improved.

On the Recreation Team, adult football matches were coming to the end of their season, and some clubs had now finished. The meetings last year with the Sunday League were a positive to this happening. When ground conditions had allowed, they had carried on with their aeration programme. Junior and Ladies football was some way behind, and they had met with Shropshire FA to discuss this. Spring cricket and bowls preparation began when the weather allowed, and cricket fixtures would start at the beginning of May and finish in September. The Shrewsbury Ladies Rounders League returned again this year to the County Ground on Tuesday evenings with 100 plus ladies taking part.

With the cold weather, staff had tidied car parks at their Recreation Grounds and had cut street hedges and swept cycle paths. Maintenance of the Golf Course continued to the end of March, and they had started to remove machinery and materials from the golf course depot.

Aeration work had been carried out on a number of bowling greens in the Shrewsbury area, which the Town Council had invoiced for. Several clubs had asked for their advice on how to maintain their greens.

Within the Amenity Team, the lifting and removal of trees in the Dingle had taken place. These were all inspected by the Tree Officer before work started. Shrub bed maintenance had continued across the Town. Path edging and the tidying of the St Julians entrance to the Quarry had also been undertaken.

The production of this year's summer bedding plants had started in the Nursery. Heliotrope cuttings, fuchsia cuttings and seed sowing had taken place. Several of the wooden square planters in the Mardol Head area had been tidied and extra plants put in place.

On the Logistics Team, playground maintenance (bin emptying and Inspections) had been carried out across the town. The Tractor Flail had carried out work for Shropshire Council, cutting back vegetation along a number of major roads. Town Council staff were working under the guidance of Shropshire Council to carry this work out. Town Council mechanics had been carrying out winter servicing of their machines. They had also carried out fabrication work on a number of in-house projects to reduce the costs.

Two members of staff had undertaken the small stepping up jobs across the town. They had collected in numerous jobs from Councillors, the public and staff. These had been placed on a spreadsheet and a list was issued to them each week. They would undertake the larger jobs once further staff members had been recruited.

On the Countryside and Green Space Team, the beavers had now moved into their new home and Town Council staff were involved in this and the ongoing work to look after them. The Tree team had undertaken the removal of Ash Die Back Trees across the town. They removed forty along Mansell Williams Way. They had also been undertaking pruning, lifting and the removal of trees which had been identified as requiring work across the town.

A number of staff had been in the General Cemetery cutting hedges and carrying out general maintenance. It was to be noted that Cemetery staff were instrumental in stopping an accident on the Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth railway line. A large tree had split in the high winds and a section was in danger of falling across the line. The staff contacted Network rail to request the line closure and notified managers of the danger.

Also, Quarry staff were informed of a dead swan on the river which they reported to DEFRA. DEFRA arrived and removed the swan to check for Avian Flu.

Councillor Addams commented that there had been an increase in dog mess on the Severn Pitches. Danny commented that this was an issue across all football pitches, especially this time of the year when owners let their dogs off leads and due to the darker nights can't see where their dogs had made a mess to clear it up. The Town Clerk added that the Town Council would like to address the issues but were lacking assistance from Shropshire Council. The Town Council would look at new communication methods to get the message across about dog mess and possible new signage.

Councillor Lemon commented on the increased parking on Radbrook Road due to the football matches and enquired about the progress with the extension of the existing carpark. Danny confirmed that they were still awaiting funds from SAHA football club.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted.

69.2 Provision of football on Town Council Property

Shrewsbury Town Council provides football pitches across the Town for all age groups and genders. Apart from providing facilities, they also maintained pitches for Shropshire Council, Small Parish Councils and Schools (Secondary and Primary).

At the beginning of the present football season there were 64 pitches that they had an input into their maintenance, and they were the largest provider/maintainer in Shrewsbury. The Town Councils pitches can be found at:

- Monkmoor Recreation Ground
- Springfield Recreation Ground
- Upton Lane Recreation Ground, Monkmoor
- Church Road Recreation, Meole Village
- Radbrook Road Recreation Ground
- Shorncliffe Drive, Copthorne
- County Ground Frankwell
- Pump Lane, Gains Park

Maintenance was also carried out at:

- Shrewsbury Sports Village
- Shelton Cricket Ground
- Meole Brace Secondary School
- Priory School
- Shrewsbury Academy
- Belvidere School
- 6 Primary Schools

The Town Council had also carried out work for other Parish Councils. The Town Council sites which were free at the present time were:

- Kynaston Rd Rec Harlescott
- Waincott Harlescott
- Greenfields Rec
- Boiler House Pitch (Helipad for Hospital) Copthorne

All these sites either had a single football pitch or a number of different age size pitches at the same location. The range of pitches they marked out and maintained were: 5v5, 7v7, 9v9, Junior and Senior.

They were used by clubs playing in the Shropshire County League (Saturday), Shrewsbury Sunday League and Shrewsbury Junior Football League. They accommodated fifty plus junior teams and five adult teams across their sites. These teams mostly played at weekends with the odd midweek game once the lighter nights started.

The change in climate was having an effect on the timing of pitch maintenance and the periods when games had to be postponed. In the past, winters were colder but drier. This allowed them to carry out more aeration work throughout the winter months and postponements were normally because the pitch was frozen. The downside to this weather was that the grass plant became dormant, and the pitches became grassless by the Christmas period with little chance of regrowth. The new weather patterns meant that they were now postponing games through waterlogged pitches (November onwards) and that their aeration programme was now tailored to the ground conditions. They were also having to use lighter machines which only give them shallow depth when aerating. The warmer climate did mean that the grass plant kept growing for the majority of the year and the plant did help to remove moisture from the soil. With the change in weather patterns, the need to carry out end of season renovation at the right time had never been more important. They needed to over seed and renovate the pitches by the end of May. To not carry out these operations by this date could mean that grass germination may fail, and the ground conditions would be too firm for deep aeration to take place. Once germination takes place, a minimum of three months would be required for the grass plant to tiller and fill out. This would give the plant time to mature and root stronger. This period of time meant that the pitches did not reopen until the first weekend in September.

Town Council football pitches were available to use from the first weekend in September until the last weekend in April. This was an 8-month period or a 33-week season with a 2-week break at Christmas. To mark out and make the pitches usable during August would cause damage to the goal mouths as children on their school summer holidays would be using them daily. They took this decision after complaints were received, that the pitches were poor and clubs felt that they were not worth the hire fee.

The Football Association recommended that grass football pitches should only be used 3 times during a 7-day period. With the number of teams that were now using Town Council pitches, in some cases, they were having 3 games a day on a pitch. This amount of play was unsustainable, and the pitches were now starting to suffer. Grass coverage was reducing, water infiltration after rain was slowing down and their ability to maintain them was compromised because machinery could not operate effectively on them.

The Town Council had invested in some of the most modern and up to date machinery on the market. Robotic Marking System, Sand Bander, Verti Drain aerator etc. All machinery was fitted with turf tyres to cause as little damage to the turf as possible when carrying out maintenance operations. They had experienced members of staff who wanted to provide the

best facilities they could but at the present level of usage, were finding it difficult to achieve this. They needed to consider that five members of staff looked after the Winter and Summer sports. In late April and through September, winter and summer sports were all running at the same time. This number of fixtures placed undue pressure on the staff and the Team Manager became ill last year trying to prepare them all, as well as carrying out his other duties. They were trying to ease this workload on the staff by, when possible, having as little overlap between winter and summer sports as possible. Football finishes at the end of April, Cricket starts the first weekend in May, Football starts first weekend in September and Cricket finishes the 3rd weekend. Apart from cricket and football, depending on when the school easter holidays fall. These staff would also be working on their school contracts, removing football posts and marking out athletic tracks and rounders pitches ready for the summer term.

The Town Council held a meeting with the Shropshire Football Association last week. A wide range of topics were covered with their CEO. The Town Council explained that they were now at saturation point and could not take any more teams playing on their facilities, which they understood. They also talked about spreading junior teams kick off times to help with car parking issues. Having a fixed start and finish dates for season which would not be moved, they would talk to the league secretaries to stop teams calling games off unnecessarily. There was an ongoing discussion around grassroots junior football and another pitch size being added. The Town Council explained that their facilities did not have the room to accommodate anymore pitches. This was a productive meeting, and they understood the Town Councils position and that junior clubs if they wished to keep growing would need to look for other locations to play their fixtures.

The football season on Town Council pitches would run from the start of September to the end of April. The dates for the next 5 years are shown below. Maintenance operations would look at improving surface drainage to reduce the number of postponements each season. They would be working with SAHA football club to finish surfacing their car park. They would be attending the FA consultation on grass roots football. The Town Council would continue to maintain and provide facilities possible within their budgets.

Football Season Dates for next 5 years.

Season	Start Date	Finish Date
25/26	6th/7th September	25th/26 th April
26/27	5th/6th September	24th/25 th April
27/28	4th/5th September	29th/30 th April
28/29	2nd/3rd September	28th/29th April
29/30	1st/2nd September	27th/28th April

Councillor Dartnall asked if it had been made firm to all clubs at the beginning of the season when the season would end. Danny confirmed that they had all been notified by email.

Councillor Mosley enquired about a junior pitch on Greenfields and it was confirmed that no request had been received.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted

Councillor Dartnall left the meeting.

70.3 Severn Trent Water and Roundhill Green

(The Chairman agreed that this item could be discussed at the beginning of the meeting.)

Rebecca Sweeney, Catherine Webb, John McGuinness and Alex Tree from Severn Trent Water requested to attend the meeting to ask members to consider a request to utilise part of Roundhill Green to create surface water run-off drainage as part of the bigger programme to address the Combined Sewer Outflow at Coton Hill.

They explained that Severn Trent were proposing to install a sustainable drainage feature (SuDS) to be situated within the Round Hill Green Playing Field, SY1 2LZ. The proposal was one of several in the Coton Hill area which would help to reduce the flooding of the footpath known as 'Pig Trough'.

The proposal was to redirect surface water from the highway on Round Hill Green that currently discharged directly into the combined sewer network in the area into a bioswale (a shallow vegetated grass channel) where it would be attenuated and discharged either into the ground or back into the combined sewer network at a reduced rate.

Bioswales were designed to attenuate surface water and either infiltrate to ground or discharge it back into the sewer network at a slower rate. They were designed to drain down within 48 hours, so the feature did not retain a permanent water level. Further to this, the features were designed with a top water level control to prevent the bioswale from flooding overland in rainfall events in excess of the design storm. These features were typically up to 1.2m in depth (depending on how much drained into them) with up to 800mm peak surface water level.

Bioswales were designed to a gradient of no steeper than 1:3, normally 1:4. This allowed for "self rescue" should a member of the public fall. Their bioswales and other features had been reviewed by RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents). As an added feature they often included knee high rail fencing when near (within 2m) of footpath to future reduce likelihood of access into the bioswale. Other safety features installed included timber bollards.

These features offered not only surface water attenuation and flood prevention but also provided wider societal benefits including enhanced ecology, health and wellbeing. They want the design of the features to include input from the residents and community groups for the shape of the feature and how these would be planted. The features would be owned and maintained by Severn Trent following construction.

Councillor Dartnall enquired about volumes and what impact this would make. It was confirmed that it could hold 20m³. Severn Trent also stated they aimed to take 100% of

highway/footpaths into bioswales for the area concerned. Surveys were being planned and letter drops to residents would take place soon.

Councillor Dartnall also enquired if this proposal was a direct attempt to deal with the CSO in Pig Trough and Severn Trent confirmed that it was.

Councillor Davies enquired as to how much maintenance there would be once it was installed and who would check any data. Severn Trent Water confirmed they would adopt the assets and a legal agreement with the landowner would be undertaken. They would also agree on easement areas.

Councillor Bentick asked whether standards for new SUDS filtered out heavy metals, fuel byproducts & microplastics. The attendees from Severn Trent agreed to take this question away and return a response to Committee.

Councillor Gillam commented that the residents of Coton Hill were in despair with this ongoing issue and he hoped that this proposal would solve the problem.

RECOMMENDED:

That Shrewsbury Town Council supports the installation a sustainable drainage feature in Round Hill Green to capture surface water drainage and reduce run off into main sewers.

70/24 STEPPING UP TEAM

An update was provided by the Town Clerk & Operations Managers. Members were made aware that they had received a very positive response from the public to their consultation and overwhelmingly the feel of responses was to proceed and increase the council tax. This informed their budget decision making and the precept was increased accordingly.

The Town Council continued to work with Shropshire Council on detail and the Operations Managers would liaise with the Kier Service Manager to ensure that their work co-ordinated with, not conflicted, with their work.

They currently had two Neighbourhood Wardens working on minor Stepping Up Projects and public responses had been encouraging and members would have seen many of the before and after projects they had already undertaken.

Recruitment for the stepping up team had started with adverts to recruit six additional members of staff going live. Operations Managers were sourcing the necessary equipment and vehicles required.

Councillor Bentick asked which projects were being done and where. The Operations Managers informed him that members would be made aware of the work that was in the pipeline. Jobs would be prioritised by the Operations Managers, and they would ensure the jobs were run fairly across the town.

Councillor Addams commented on the fly tipping that was being left at the Moat in Harlescott. The Operations Managers were aware of this issue and were in current talks with

Shropshire Council to assist them with fly tipping issues. They requested that photographs of the fly tipping was sent to them.

RECOMMENDED

That the update be noted

71/24 BEAVERS RELEASE

After years of planning, Shrewsbury Town Council, in collaboration with Shropshire Wildlife Trust, had successfully reintroduced beavers to Shrewsbury. These remarkable ecosystem engineers had now settled into their new home at the Old Riverbed Nature Reserve. The release of the beavers was a significant step forward in wetland restoration and biodiversity conservation efforts in the region.

The project was aligned with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), a framework aimed at enhancing the recovery of nature across the local landscape. The beaver reintroduction supports the Shropshire Biodiversity Strategy, which outlined a commitment to improving biodiversity, enhancing wildlife habitats, and addressing climate change through natural processes.

This initiative involved the introduction of two adult beavers, a male and female, relocated from Scotland. This five-year trial aimed to assess the impact of these keystone species on wetland habitats. The Old Riverbed site, owned by Shrewsbury Town Council, was a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and was protected for its wetland plant species, though it faced threats from invasive vegetation. The beavers would play a crucial role in restoring the habitat and improving its overall ecological health, aligning with the LNRS's goals of habitat restoration and biodiversity enhancement.

The reintroduction of beavers to the Old Riverbed Nature Reserve brings several significant benefits, both for the local ecosystem and the broader environment, with a strong alignment to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and its biodiversity commitment. These include:

1. **Wetland Restoration:** Beavers are natural ecosystem engineers who create and maintain wetland habitats through their dam-building and tree-felling activities. Their return would help to control the spread of invasive willow trees, improve water quality, and restore the balance of the wetland ecosystem. This action contributed to the LNRS's target of improving water management and enhancing wetland environments across Shropshire.
2. **Biodiversity Enhancement:** By improving wetland habitats, the beavers would support a wide range of plant and animal species. The restoration of this habitat would provide better conditions for native wildlife, fostering biodiversity. This aligned with the biodiversity commitment under the LNRS, which emphasised the recovery of threatened species and the creation of more resilient, interconnected habitats.
- 3.
4. **Sustainable Habitat Management:** Traditional methods of managing the site, such as tree removal and grazing, had become unsustainable. The beavers offered a more natural, sustainable solution by helping to manage vegetation and improve water flow in

the area. This approach complements the LNRS's objectives to implement sustainable land and habitat management practices

5. **Community Engagement and Education:** The project provided an opportunity for local communities to learn about the vital role of beavers in wetland ecosystems. The presence of the beavers would raise awareness and build understanding of conservation efforts, particularly in urban areas. This also supported the LNRS's goal of engaging local communities in conservation efforts and encouraging active participation in biodiversity recovery.
6. **Contributing to National Conservation Goals:** This project was part of a broader effort to reintroduce beavers to various locations across the UK. The successful reintroduction to Shrewsbury could serve as a model for similar initiatives, contributing to the restoration of nature across England, Scotland, and Wales. It also aligned with the broader national targets for biodiversity recovery, as laid out by the LNRS and government biodiversity action plans.

The successful reintroduction of beavers to Shrewsbury represented a significant achievement in local conservation efforts and fulfilled a key part of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for the region. Through a carefully planned and executed process, the beavers had been integrated into the Old Riverbed Nature Reserve, where they would play an essential role in restoring the wetland ecosystem.

The benefits of this project extended beyond the immediate improvements to the site's habitat. The beavers' return offered long-term ecological advantages, supporting biodiversity and enhancing the resilience of the wetland ecosystem. This reintroduction was a direct contribution to the Shropshire Biodiversity Strategy and would provide valuable lessons in managing and protecting natural habitats in urban and rural settings alike. Additionally, the project fosters community engagement and builds confidence around beaver reintroduction in urban environments, contributing to a broader biodiversity commitment to restore nature and increase public awareness.

As the beavers settled into their new home, the public was encouraged to respect their space, allowing the animals to adapt with minimal disturbance. This project not only contributed to the recovery of the local environment but also served as a vital step toward reversing the decline in England's wildlife. Through collaborative efforts, including the ongoing support of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, the Shropshire Beaver Project had the potential to influence future conservation projects and the restoration of wildlife habitats across the country.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted

72/24 SHREWSBURY IN BLOOM

The Operations Managers reported that preparations for Shrewsbury in Bloom and Britain in Bloom were underway. The route was currently being discussed and which visitors would be on the route. At the next Bloom meeting on 27 March, they would have a better idea of the route.

More Shrewsbury Town Council staff had also been invited to join the Bloom working group and it was fantastic to have their input.

Councillor Addams commented that she had attended the Bloom meeting, and it was a productive meeting with good ideas for the judging days.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

73/24 COMMUTED SUMS

The Town Clerk gave an update on negotiations with developers and transfer arrangements. They had not reached any trigger points for any further Town Council involvement and would continue to liaise with planners on development progress:

- (i) *Copthorne Barracks Play and Open Space*** – offsite contributions to play (£30,498 - £20498 for Shorncliffe Drive & £10000 for Silks Meadow – to be paid on 75% occupancy) and open space (£115,000 for sports pitches & associated facilities at County Ground – paid on 50% occupancy) - 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 update for Phase 2/3 had been requested. No identified date for transfer
- (iii) *Shrewsbury South Urban***

 - 1. Sutton Grange site – ongoing – likely transfer in 2024/25 – recent meeting with Taylor Wimpey to discuss logistics for transfer. Final snagging was being discussed
 - 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) *Radbrook College site*** – Open space adoption – officers met with Floreat Homes on site – likely adoption once all phases are complete
- (v) *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

Councillor Gillam commented on Sutton Grange and how frustrated the residents were as nothing was being done. They were promised a play area there when the houses were built and still nothing had completed.

Councillor Lemon also commented the same issues as Councillor Gillam but at the Radbrook College Site.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

74/24 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.