



Shrewsbury

Town Council

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
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PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

THE QUARRY & DINGLE—The Quarry & Dingle are used for a wide range of events, from the annual Flower Show, to bandstand performances and the Shrewsbury Food & Shropshire Kids' Festivals. We also welcome over 1 million visitors to see the spectacular landscaped gardens.

SHREWSBURY IN BLOOM—Shrewsbury is famous for its horticulture and the majority of the floral displays are the responsibility of the Town Council and its dedicated Grounds Maintenance Team. More than 300,000 blooms are grown in our own Greenhouse each year, with 30,000 plants alone being used for the town's centrepiece in the Dingle, which won the Horticultural Excellence Award in the 2016 Heart of England in Bloom Awards.



The Award Winning Dingle



The Quarry Splash Park

PUBLIC FIELDS & OPEN SPACES—The Town Council looks after the majority of playing fields, recreation grounds and open spaces in Shrewsbury. In addition, we keep over 120 miles of highway verges and hedges trimmed and look after in excess of 30,000 trees throughout the town. We also manage more than 250 acres of Countryside Land within the town boundary. Many of these sites are Special Sites of Scientific Interest, Local Nature Reserves and Community Woodlands.

PLAY AREAS, MULTI-USE GAMES AREAS, BMX TRACKS & SKATEPARKS—We look after more than 50 play facilities in the town. They are inspected weekly and kept in good order. We regularly upgrade our facilities, with the Quarry Play Area & Splash Park being the most recent project.

YOUTH SERVICES— Since the launch of Young Shrewsbury in 2016, we have run regular junior sessions in various locations in town and have recently added senior sessions, detached youth work and a Youth Forum based at The Hive in the town centre. Youth workers are also contracted to work alongside a number of senior schools.



SPORTS FACILITIES—The Town Council owns a number of Recreation Grounds with sports pavilions, football pitches and cricket wickets, bowling greens, tennis courts and croquet lawns. These facilities are used by many local teams in the Shrewsbury area. We have been working with local sporting clubs to improve facilities. We also look after the Golf Course grounds for Shropshire Council.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES—We own community centres in both Ditherington & Castlefields which are run by local residents in the area. We have also installed noticeboards throughout the town and in each of the wards, to help residents keep up-to-date with what we do. We look after hundreds of streetlights and bus shelters throughout the town.



TOURISM—The Town Council contributes greatly to improving the tourism offer in the town. We maintain the public conveniences in the town centre; we have an extensive planting programme; and we spend upwards of £50,000 each year making sure the town has fantastic Christmas lights and great Christmas events to come to, including Carols in the Square.

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

OVERVIEW 2017/18



Leader Cllr Alan Mosley

Shrewsbury Town Council, with a population of over 70,000 residents, is one of the largest and most influential Town Councils in the country. However whilst we do play an influential role in local government, we are first and foremost a council that is firmly rooted in the community it serves.

With its motto of “Putting Shrewsbury First”, the Town Council prides itself in being the voice of Shrewsbury, supporting local communities and local initiatives, providing good quality play and recreation areas for all, providing facilities and activities for the young and generally promoting the town as a great place to live, work and visit.

Part of our role has been to lobby for the delivery of services that affect the town, and this year, we have been forthright on a number of issues locally that will ordinarily affect our residents. These have included making representations about how the changes to the Council Tax Benefit Scheme will affect our residents. We have made representations about the future of library services and we have been delighted to see that the Library in Castle Street will continue to be a centrally-funded service. We have been vocal alongside the Business Improvement District and the Quarry Swimming & Fitness Forum in lobbying for the retention of the Quarry Pool in the town centre and we have committed to working with Shropshire Council to see this valuable facility redeveloped. There have also been consultations about car parking charges, and whilst there has been some increases to local parking charges, we have protected commuting town centre workers and visitors from excessive ‘long-stay’ charging originally proposed.

The next year is going to see our involvement in not only the Local Plan Review and housing numbers for the next 20 years, but also the development of the Big Town Plan Masterplan for Shrewsbury. We feel that it is very important to have a long-term plan for our town, detailing what residents want to see but also showing the level of returns and improvements we would expect from future development. This has been an excellent example of the Town Council working with Shropshire Council and the Business Improvement District and other groups and stakeholders with one common goal.

Much of our role as a Town Council centres around providing good quality services that residents can use and enjoy, facilitating healthier lifestyles, local activities and affordable events.

Last year, we saw the first full year of the Quarry Play Area and Splash Park in operation. This £375k facility has been a huge success with children clamoring to use the park on the odd warm summer days. Named after Shrewsbury’s most famous son, the Darwin Islands of Adventure has been featured on TripAdvisor as a great free day out. For this season we have added more features to the Splash Park to make it even more exciting.



The Quarry Splash Park

We continue to improve other play areas and quite recently, a new design for the Dark Lane Play Area was agreed following considerable involvement of the young people locally.

Young people have featured heavily in our work programmes and we have been delighted with the positive work that our #YoungShrewsbury Youth Service has been doing with young people in some of the most disadvantaged areas of the county. With various activities from indoor sessions, BMX activities and meetings on street corners to more intense one-to-one sessions, our Youth Workers have been key to changing the lives of young people locally.



The Town Council has continued to be at the forefront of establishing greater co-operation and partnership-working in Shrewsbury through its active role in leading #TeamShrewsbury. This multi-agency partnership, made up of the two councils, Police, Fire, Business Community, Housing Associations, University and many more, has created a platform where we can share information and intelligence, develop joint solutions to problems and generally make a difference. We have held a number of Community Action Days and local areas have seen improvements. Team Shrewsbury has also been instrumental in the town achieving Purple Flag Status for the third year running, taking

action to reduce homeless numbers and begging in the streets, and directing resources to those who genuinely need support. To date over £3,000 has been directed to genuine homeless people.

National recognition has continued this year with the Market Hall being voted Britain's Favourite Market. The public were invited to vote for their favourite market and we were delighted that our Market Hall was in the Top 6; following a visit by judges as well as "mystery shoppers", the verdict was that we have a market that is vibrant and going places. All testimony to those who trade from there.



Shrewsbury Market Hall



The Town also entered the RHS Britain in Bloom Competition and, as ever, a Gold Award was secured. Last summer, a BBC camera crew followed our Shrewsbury in Bloom team around the town as we prepared our floral features and we were extremely proud that Shrewsbury was one of the 15 communities featured in the BBC2 Series Britain in Bloom.

Some projects we organised can be quick whilst others seem to be more timely. We have projects like the Dana Footpath, Wayfinding Signs for the town and our long-term plans to replace our streetlights with more economical LED replacements that are nearer to fruition and all will bring added benefits to the town. One project that has been well received this year has been the new Christmas lighting displays. Respectful of the Town's heritage but with a modern, and in places youthful theme, the Christmas lights received gasps of delight when the Mayor switched them on. But that wasn't without its complications, as staff had to clear tonnes of snow and ice from the Square so that everyone could enjoy the festivities.

All this shows that Shrewsbury Town Council is a Council that looks after the interests of its residents 52 weeks of the year, with Councillors and staff taking great pride in doing what is good for the town. But it is something we cannot do alone. In addition to the excellent work our staff undertakes, I want to thank the many members of the public, stakeholder organisations, businesses and charities who have supported our ambitions and given positive endorsement for our plans and we look forward to working with them in years to come.



THE MAYOR OF SHREWSBURY

The office of Mayor in Shrewsbury dates back as far as 1638 and is therefore steeped in history and tradition.

The unpaid role is an extremely demanding one. The Mayor and his/her consort are the official ambassadors for the town and represent Shrewsbury at functions and events across the county and beyond. He/she also presides over meetings of the Council and ensures business is carried out efficiently with regard to the rights of Councillors and the interests of the community.

The Mayor of Shrewsbury continues to be one of the busiest in the county and he/she regularly supports the work of the town's voluntary and community groups, raising the profile, and much needed cash, for local charities. The Mayor is involved in major events such as Battle of Britain Sunday and the Remembrance Day Parade, both large, logistical events organised by Shrewsbury Town Council. The Mayor also oversees the installation of Freeman of Shrewsbury and ceremonies are usually held twice a year at Shrewsbury Castle.

This year's Mayor is Councillor Jane Mackenzie who took office in May 2017.



Councillor Jane Mackenzie,
Mayor of Shrewsbury

Born in Coventry, Jane is a Consultant Speech and Language Therapist and Art Therapist with over 25 years experience working for the NHS. She has travelled extensively, including the Middle East, Israel and Africa. With a Scottish heritage, she lived in Aberdeen for four years before moving to St Albans to study Art Therapy when she was in her twenties. In 1985, she moved with her husband, Peter, and two young daughters to Aberdyfi on the Welsh coast, where they lived for fifteen years, and she learned to speak Welsh in order to carry out her NHS job effectively.

After this, she made her home in Shrewsbury, and became the honorary secretary of the National Labour Finance and Industry Group. In this role, she brought together business leaders, ministers and senior civil servants, in order to develop Government policy for the Financial and Business sector in England and Wales.

Following this, she was appointed as England Policy Officer for the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists, and keeping her home in Shrewsbury, travelled down to London each week for seven years. She worked within Westminster and Whitehall and led national campaigns to raise awareness about communication disability. Whilst in this role she established an All Party Parliamentary Group in Speech and Language Difficulties, which is still active in The House of Commons.

Back in Shrewsbury, Jane became an Independent Director on the Board of Shropshire NHS Community Trust, a role she carried out for four years until March last year. Over the years, she has fallen in love with her adopted town, delighting in its historic heritage, and enjoying the beautiful surroundings. This led to a desire to serve the local community, and she was elected as both a town and unitary Labour Councillor for Column Ward in 2013.

Jane still volunteers locally and in her spare time enjoys the Arts, walking, gardening and travel. She is happy that all four of her children and her two wonderful grandchildren, still live in Shrewsbury and is honoured to have been given the opportunity to serve as Mayor in this historic and unique town.

Throughout her Mayoral year, Jane has been raising money for local people recovering from addiction, and has successfully held four major public events, raising a grand total of over £23,000. She intends to set up a Charitable Trust in order to continue this valuable work.

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Finance & General Purposes Committee - Chairman Councillor Alan Mosley



The Finance Committee is responsible for the overall running of the Council, reviewing the Council's budget, setting policy and looking after the Council's assets.

Budgetary pressures from elsewhere have been our biggest concern this year, with reductions in Youth Service funding from Shropshire Council being a huge challenge, particularly at a time when we have seen a need to invest further in services for young people rather than reduce funding. The Committee took the big decision to take Youth Service funding into core budgets rather than rely on the uncertainty of the external funding.



The Town Council sees the work it does in partnership with others as key to making sure Shrewsbury remains a vibrant town. Alongside the Business Improvement District and Shropshire Council, we have jointly commissioned projects to look at better use and promotion of the town. This has seen us

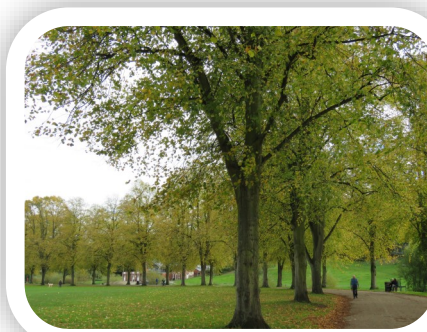


**SHREWSBURY
BUSINESS
IMPROVEMENT
DISTRICT**

investing in a Wayfinding Scheme that has attracted £250k of Local Enterprise Partnership Funding, contributing £25k in developing a Masterplan for the town and paying for a Geosensing initiative to help us understand who uses the town and how often.

Our relationships with Shropshire Council remain strong, and aside from our Grounds Maintenance Contract looking after the Sports Village, cemetery, highway verges, trees and roundabouts, we are in discussions about future plans for the town which will see the Town Council being even more involved in sharing and managing facilities.

I have been delighted that officers from the Town Council and Shropshire Council have worked with the Shropshire Horticultural Society to develop an accessible access from the Dana into the town centre and I look forward to work commencing in time for the Summer season.



We are always conscious about finding environmental solutions to projects, and developing sustainable lighting solutions is important. Our ageing footway lighting stock needs to be replaced and we are looking at LED upgrades and in addition, we are also trialling solar lighting in the Quarry, both of which are likely to reduce our revenue costs going forward.

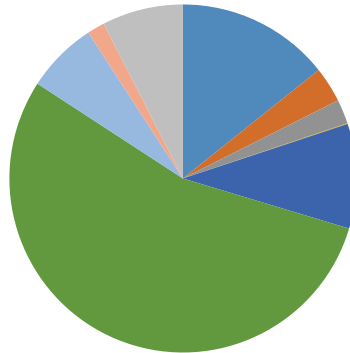
But it is not just about what we do, it is about what we can do to help others help themselves, and we have been happy to financially support a number of community organisations on projects from raising awareness of the dangers in life with the Shrewsbury & Oswestry Crucial Crew to helping people with hearing difficulties with Signal. But it is also about supporting projects that marks Shrewsbury's heritage; we have been happy to support a lasting tribute to Wilfred Owen in the year the town marks the centenary of his death.

The Finance Committee has worked hard to maintain the finances of the Town Council and at £45.63 for a Band D Rate, Shrewsbury's levy on the ratepayers continues to be one of the smallest in the county. Despite a small increase in the precept to protect and promote important services, the value for money we provide is second-to-none and residents can be assured that this will continue.

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2017/18

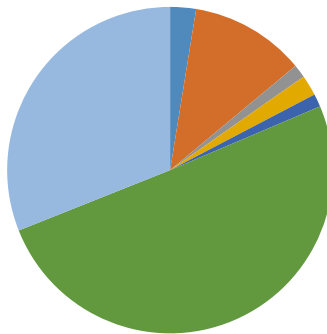
Summary of the Shrewsbury Town Council Budget 2017/18 and where the money is spent

Where the money goes £3.127 m



- Management & support costs £447k
- Markets £71k
- Youth, Community & sports facilities £304k
- Infrastructure £208k
- Planned upgrades / New services £236k
- Democratic £103k
- Residential & commercial buildings £2k
- Grounds & allotments £1,705k
- Christmas lights £51k

Sources of income £3.126m



- Grants £80k
- Residential & commercial rents £41k
- Community & sports facilities £40k
- Precept (council tax payer) £970k
- Markets £357k
- Interest & Investment income £64k
- Grounds & allotments £1,574k

The notice of appointment of auditor and the exercise of electors' rights will be publicised in June for a period to inspect accounts commencing
29th June 2018 - 9th August 2018

The accounts will be published on the website from **2nd July 2018**

RECREATION & LEISURE COMMITTEE

Recreation & Leisure Committee Chairman – Councillor Kevin Pardy



The Recreation & Leisure Committee oversees the day-to-day management of our recreational and amenity spaces, ensuring that parks and play areas are maintained to a high standard; that the Quarry has a good mix of events and activities taking place throughout the year; and that the Town Council's estate overall contributes to Shrewsbury being a great place to live, work and play.

In a way, whilst other committees deal with baking the cake, the Recreation & Leisure Committee's role is putting the jam and cream in the cake and the cherry on the top. They look after the services and assets that mean a lot to the residents of Shrewsbury.

Our award-winning flagship asset, the Quarry, continues to be a place that so many enjoy; with grounds and the Dingle maintained to exacting horticultural standards and an events programme that brings excitement and vibrancy into the town, the park offers something for everyone. Last year saw the return of the 80s concert and this year, we look forward to hosting the 2018 Recovery Walk, a national activity designed to raise awareness of recovery from alcohol and substance misuse. The Quarry is also home to the very successful Parkrun, a weekly free run that now attracts over 500 runners every Saturday. Last year, the Parkrun concept hit national headlines after a Parish Council threatened to charge for the event. It is events like this that we believe the Quarry is designed for and with good collaboration between our staff and event organisers, these events can carry on without any upset.



This Committee had the remit to develop a new plan for Christmas Lights. The debate about whether to have white lights or coloured lights is probably as heated as whether you like Marmite or not, but I believe the Committee and staff had the right approach to developing proposals and, as a result, we have had nothing but good comments about the displays.

Members also oversee any upgrades to play facilities, recreation grounds and open space, and we are always keen to maximise our investment in this area. We pride ourselves in having some of the best recreational facilities that are used and looked after well. This year, we saw the fruits of our efforts in designing the Quarry Play Area and Splash park; a huge investment by the Town Council, but one which is loved by old and young alike.

My report should not end without comment about our Bloom efforts. I personally am proud and privileged to be part of the Shrewsbury in Bloom group, which oversees our floral endeavours and I, for one, take huge pride in how well we manage our Bloom efforts. The recent BBC2 series "Britain In Bloom" showed off our campaign for all to see and in such a short space of time, we have had visitors come to Shrewsbury purely on the back of that programme.



PLANNING COMMITTEE

Planning Committee Chairman – Councillor Nat Green



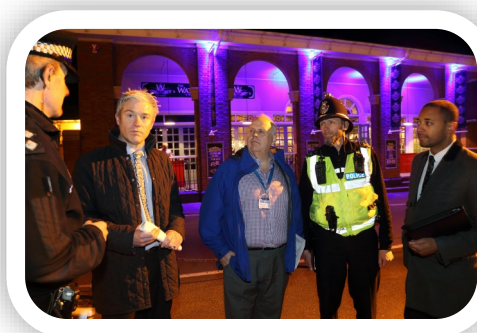
The Planning Committee continues to be the busiest of the Town Council's standing committees, meeting every three weeks to consider planning applications. It's not uncommon to consider upwards of 1,000 planning applications a year (about a quarter of the county's total). The Committee also looks at trees and their management, highways issues and licensing.

This year, the Committee has continued to have in-depth discussions with developers for some of the major development sites in the town; these have included developments off Ellesmere Road, Preston Street and strategic sites like the Prison, the Stew and the Tannery Building. These discussions have been useful in helping to understand some of the complexities of these sites and submit more complex representations that reflect local need.

Our role as a Planning Committee is to consider the materiality of all planning applications in our area. Whilst we are not the final deliberator of the application (that rests with Shropshire Council), we have been able to influence the decision, the design and suggest mitigating measures that makes development more acceptable locally.

The Committee will have a key role as Shropshire Council looks to reviewing the Local Plan and we have committed to working with them to look at the best solution to addressing the housing needs in Shrewsbury. Here, housing design and those all-important community features are important, including open space, play and recreation.

One of the keys to making housing work is ensuring the town's highway network is appropriate, that it can cope with development and that it remains accessible even during times of an accident. We have had a number of discussions with Highways engineers about the Shrewsbury Integrated Transport Plan and in particular, large projects like the North West Relief Road (and we await the outcome of the bid to government with interest) and associated schemes like the recently finished Meole Brace Roundabout and the proposals for the resurfacing of Pride Hill; here we have been able to influence the design so that it is more user-friendly, but also in times of budget constraints, isn't a drain on the public purse going forward.



Members of the Planning Committee have a role and influence over licensing and in a town like Shrewsbury, with a vibrant Night-Time economy that can be very important. We are blessed in having a strong residential community in the town centre that brings life into Shrewsbury's core, but sometimes managing that economy can prove difficult.

A YEAR IN PICTURES



SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL CONTACTS

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Gary Farmer Operations Manager	gary.farmer @shrewsburytowncouncil.gov.uk 01743 257651	Overall responsibility for Grounds Maintenance, Parks & Open Spaces, Toilets
Andy Watkin Responsible Financial Officer	andy.watkin @shrewsburytowncouncil.gov.uk 01743 257657	Overall responsibility for finance, payroll, pensions, insurance
Ruth Jones Office Manager	ruth.jones @shrewsburytowncouncil.gov.uk 01743 257656	Manages Admin Support Staff, Adhoc Projects, Team Shrewsbury Co-ordinator
Rebecca Oliver Committee Clerk	rebecca.oliver @shrewsburytowncouncil.gov.uk	Services Council & Committee meetings, Manages Planning Register
Carol Pullen Town Clerk & Mayor's Secretary	carol.pullen @shrewsburytowncouncil.gov.uk 01473 257655	Secretarial services to the Town Clerk & Mayor, Organises the Mayor's Diary & Civic Events
Hilary Humphries Communications Officer	hilary.humphries @shrewsburytowncouncil.gov.uk 01743 257649	Bloom Co-ordination; Press & Social Media, Memorial Benches
Coral Kelly Finance Administrator	coral.kelly @shrewsburytowncouncil.gov.uk 01743 257652	Raising Orders, Processing Invoices, General finance support to other staff
Mike Cox Outdoor Recreation & Assets Manager	mike.cox @shrewsburytowncouncil.gov.uk 01743 257659	Responsibility for Sports Pitch Bookings, Market Hall, Quarry Events
Mike Pugh Technical Officer (Grounds & Arboriculture)	mike.pugh @shrewsburytowncouncil.gov.uk 01743 257661	Responsibility for external contracts, tree planting, land ownership
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Mark Harris Asset Maintenance Officer	mark-harris @shrewsburytowncouncil.gov.uk 01743 257658	Responsibility for Council Buildings, Pavilions, street lights, bus shelters
Stuart Farmer Technical Officer	stuart.farmer @shrewsburytowncouncil.gov.uk 01743 257648	Technical support to the Operational Management, Co-ordinates Bloom Hanging Baskets
Adam Purnell Youth & Community Development Officer	adam.purnell @shrewsburytowncouncil.gov.uk 07710 716063	Manages the Youth Service
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Matt Wilcoxon Green Space & Countryside Team Leader	mathew.wilcoxon @shrewsburytowncouncil.gov.uk	Manages Countryside, Cemetery, Grass Cutting, Tree Works
Danny Powell Recreational Green Space Team Leader	danny.powell @shrewsburytowncouncil.gov.uk	Manages Recreation Grounds, Football, Cricket & Bowling, Golf Course
Mark Bowen Amenity Team Leader	mark.bowen @shrewsburytowncouncil.gov.uk	Manages Quarry, Castle, Crematorium, Roundabouts, Greenhouse

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCILLORS

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