

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

**Meeting of the Climate Emergency & Nature Recovery Standing Committee
Held at Livesey House, 7 St Johns Hill
At 2.30pm on Thursday 18 April 2024**

PRESENT

Councillors J Dean (Chair), B Bentick, A Mosley, K Pardy, R Wilson.

Alex Grant (Shropshire Wildlife Trust), Chris Bainger (Environment Agency), Frank Oldacre (Friends of the Earth), Mike Dineen (Civic Society) Oliver Rowe (Shropshire Council) and Richard Watkins (Save Our Shropshire)

IN ATTENDANCE

Amanda Spencer (Deputy Town Clerk), Alan Jameson (Admin Apprentice/Climate Change Officer), and Jim Goldsmith (Countryside & Greenspace Manager)

42/23 APOLOGIES

That apologies were received from Councillor R Dartnall, Councillor D Vasmer, Dan Wrench, David Sharpe, Kevin Oubridge, and Tom Endacott

43/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Shropshire Councillors	Twin hatted members declared personal interests in matters relating to the Town Council's relationship with Shropshire Council.
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44/23 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Climate Emergency & Nature Recovery Standing Committee meeting held on 11 January 2024 were submitted as circulated and read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Climate Emergency & Nature Recovery Standing Committee meeting held on 11 January 2024 be approved and signed as a correct record.

45/23 MATTERS ARISING

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that all matters arising were included within the agenda.

Alex Grant informed the Committee that he had his first use of the e-cargo bikes; he described it as being a good piece of kit, and overall, it was a very successful trip. He was also able to see his progress through the tracker installed by Shropshire Cycle Hub

Councillor Wilson asked if they were charging for the bikes. Alex Grant answered that for his first use they had not charged him.

46/23 CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN 2020 - 2024

The Deputy Town Clerk briefed the committee that most of the matters that needed to be addressed on the Action Plan had been completed and that they were now doing things outside of the Action Plan. One example was the creation of a youth council who would work through items such as climate change.

Councillor Dean enquired if the Youth Council would be involved in the Great Big Green Week. He received confirmation that they would be.

Councillor Bentick wished to know the background of the membership, and whether any members were from Meole Brace. He was informed that the membership consisted of a wide variety of backgrounds, but there was uncertainty of whether any came from Meole Brace. The Youth and Community Manager would be circulating further details to members.

The Countryside & Greenspace Manager highlighted that the only initiatives that have remained red on the Action Plan relate to solar and wind power, which are large projects, which would rely on external funding and must be completed in partnership with organisations such as Shropshire.

47/23 GREAT BIG GREEN WEEK 2024

The Deputy Town Clerk provided some details on the upcoming Great Big Green week. She informed the Committee that they had their first meeting the previous week and showed them a list of participants and the dates they would be operating in, which included events from both the Town Council and external partners.

Shropshire Council was mentioned as having provided The Square for the Town Council's use for Great Big Green Week. Stalls would be provided by the Town Council for the use of others.

Town Council staff would also be actively contributing to the event within their respective remits; one example was Andy Hall organising some youth-based activities. In the Quarry there would be demonstrations showing the work the Town Council does, and advice on what people can do at home. There would also be wildflower planting in the Dingle, and plants that would otherwise be disposed of would be given away.

The Countryside Manager mentioned meetings with members of the public where they chat and talk about what they do. Some examples include wildflower planting and tackling ash dieback. He and the Deputy Town Clerk advised that these talks were generally every Wednesday in June, but weather also needed to be taken into consideration.

Councillor Wilson suggested booking e-cargo bikes for the day, which could be used by the Quarry team for getting around.

Richard Watkins suggested a day of carbon literacy training with youth or businesses, which was something that the Deputy Town Clerk was up for discussing at a later time.

Councillor Bentick asked if Shropshire Council received an invitation. It was confirmed they were invited, and that they were contributing to the event with the museum and library; both of these locations would be doing events.

Councillor Dean enquired if it were possible to have a banner over the road and to contact BBC Radio Shropshire. The Deputy Town Clerk agreed to look at these proposals.

Richard Watkins offered to use Save Our Shropshire's website for advertisement.

48/23 PRESENTATION FROM SAVE OUR SHROPSHIRE

Richard Watkins gave a background on his organisation Save Our Shropshire, which was on its third year of existence. Save Our Shropshire provides services such as carbon literacy training approved by the carbon literacy project. His son was his inspiration for co-founding the organisation.

Save Our Shropshire provide a course to town and parish councillors; they have also delivered the course to Shropshire Council and other councils outside of Shropshire, even receiving requests as far as Seaford. They also received requests from students attending Shrewsbury College to provide a course for students.

He added that Save Our Shropshire has developed relationships and worked with organisations such as Marches Energy Agency with plans to work with more organisations; Shrewsbury Chamber of Commerce requested carbon literacy training for small and medium sized businesses with attendance being open to anyone; they would be able to learn such things as how to cut costs and change behaviours.

Councillor Bentick enquired if it were possible to provide something that would take into account a residential point of view, which would provide advice on such things as the many Victorian houses in Shrewsbury suffering from insulation issues. He emphasised the benefits of a specialised course relating to this area.

Richard Watkins replied that the course provided more general information and was tailored towards encouraging people to take matters into their own hands.

The Chair spoke about the fact that heating waste was still very common as people were not adopting electric heating and continued using boilers.

Regarding this point, Richard Watkins explained that he would do something with the Marches Energy Agency specific to Shrewsbury businesses.

49/23 CARBON LITERATE STATUS

The Deputy Town Clerk updated the Committee on the Town Council's carbon literacy status. The criteria had changed just before they were ready to submit their application. However, they were permitted to use the old criteria as that was the criteria that the submission had been based upon.

50/23 EXTERNAL ATTENDEE PRESENTATION

Frank Oldacre of Friends of the Earth gave a presentation about his organisation as well as a background on environmental activism.

He described how environmental activism as we know it started kicking off in the 1960s. People before this time were aware of the issues, but the main focus was on concerns such as workers' rights, living conditions, and women's' rights. Progress in environmental areas were interrupted during WW2. The damage this war caused to people's lives forced them to focus primarily on material conditions as life at the time was very hard. He explained that the shift occurred during the economic boom when people were able to enjoy life. This enabled people think about issues such as pollution of rivers and the air, which was not fully addressed even after the clean air act.

He further explained that during this time concerns about the environment were also accompanied by anti-nuclear opinions, and by 1975 President Lyndon B Johnson declared that CO2 burning was going to cause problems. There was emerging an environment where many people sought to take it upon themselves to do something. One such organisation was Friends of the Earth, which was founded in 1969 and Greenpeace, which was founded in 1972.

Frank Oldacre highlighted that Friends of the Earth's type of activism was orientated to always enact change through the law, Greenpeace felt that more was needed. Initially they worked separately, but recently they increased cooperation with each other. He stressed that Friends of the Earth only use the law and would never participate in actions that break the law, they are bound by a charter and have insurance that relies upon their compliance with the law.

However, Frank explained that within the law there were no restriction on what they could do. Some of the organisation's first actions were to collect empty bottles which they returned to Cadbury, demonstrated against nuclear waste, fracking, etc., but their most significant action was leading the Big Ask campaign, which helped get the Climate Change Act passed. The Climate Change Act was also able to assist them in taking the Government to court for their Net Zero Strategy, which the court ruled as being illegal.

As Frank Oldacre continued, he enlightened the committee of the difficulties that activist groups are facing due to implementation of new legislations.

For the last part of his presentation, he outlined the next steps, beginning by saying that COVID had only been a small blip in the continuing increase in global emissions, and stressed that everyone throughout the world must play their part. He advocated that all countries should accept their responsibilities in environmental affairs and highlighted that the six largest emitters of CO2 contribute around 60% of global emissions. He ended by saying that climate change will remind us that we cannot ignore it.

Alex Grant highlighted that while the United Kingdom's share of global emissions was at 1%, per capita it was releasing emissions at a an above average rate. He further warned that much statistical progress in lowering emissions has come through the outsourcing of manufacturing, which doesn't help with the problem.

Richard Watkins added that when it came to imports and exports, statistics do not consider the CO2 we import.

Chris Bainger asked how many Friends of the Earth members there were locally. He was informed by Frank Oldacre that there were 45 members, but they had lost 3 active members.

Frank Oldacre highlighted some of the activities that members participated in such as campaigning for a pesticide free Shrewsbury.

51/23 CLIMATE WEBSITE

The Climate Change Officer confirmed that all the data from the Commonplace website had been edited and transferred to the new website developed by Web Orchard. This included descriptions of three new initiatives, which were E-Cargo Bikes, Carbon Literacy, and the Marches Energy Trust. The only parts of the website that still required information was the progress tracker, which would be finished upon the completion of the carbon audit, and the section providing advice to visitors.

The Climate Change Officer suggested that it may be a good idea if the Committee could provide some information on the advice section based upon their own expertise.

He agreed that following the meeting he would send a link of the website to committee members.

Enquiries were made regarding the date of making the website live. The committee were informed it would be on the 15th May.

52/23 CLIMATE AUDIT

The Deputy Town Clerk informed the Committee that the report should be near completion and that it would be available for the Committee to have a look at soon.

53/23 OTHER MATTERS ARISING

The Chair once again raised the issue of a lack of female representation within the Committee and that it must be acknowledged that there needed to be more diversity.

54/23 NEXT MEETING

The next Committee meeting will be held on 11 July 2024 at 2.30pm. External attendee presentation to be given by Kevin Oubridge.