

**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 15 January 2025**

**PRESENT**

Councillors P Gillam (Chair), E Addams, B Bentick, M Davies, J Dean (substitute for C Lemon), P Moseley (substitute for Councillor Parady) & A Wagner.

**IN ATTENDANCE**

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

**47/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**RESOLVED:**

**That apologies be received and accepted from Councillors Lemon & Parady and Dany Powell (Acting Operations Manager)**

**48/24 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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**49/24 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the Recreation & Leisure Committee meeting held on 6 November 2024 were submitted as circulated and read.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the minutes of the Recreation & Leisure Committee meeting held on 6 November 2024 be approved and signed as a correct record.**

**50/24 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

**Min 37/24** Police & Crime Commissioner – A subsequent meeting with Mr Campion had identified his willingness to enter a partnership with the Town Council and the BID regarding supporting the wider Ranger Project. The Town Clerk was currently working on a partnership agreement and also had a discussion about CCTV. Whilst the PCC would not fund ongoing monitoring, he was happy to consider supporting capital costs which would help to facilitate remote working.

**Min 43/24** River Severn Partnership – The Town Clerk was still awaiting a reply to a request for additional information about the Reabrook Natural Flood Management Project.

***Councillor Wagner joined the meeting.***

## **51/24 BUDGET – 2025/26**

### **51.1 Fees & Charges for 2025/26**

The Town Clerk reported that the Town Council were in the final throes of budget setting. The final Finance & General Purposes Committee would be held on 20 January ahead of them setting their Budget at Full Council on 27 January.

The Committee were shown the proposed Fees & Charges list for the next financial year. The Town Clerk explained that the accountant had increased the rates in line with inflation. Whilst there were a lot of lines, they did receive significant sums that made a huge difference to the core budget. It was a matter of policy to raise the Fees & Charges proposals with the Recreation & Leisure Committee ahead of Finance & General Purpose agreeing the final rates.

### **51.2 Recommendations for consideration of the 2025/26 budget**

The Town Clerk asked the Committee whether there were any items they wished to recommend to the Finance & General Purposes Committee ahead of them making the final decision.

Additionally, the Town Council were consulting the public on proposals to enhance various environmental maintenance functions including bins & bench maintenance, footpath clearance, litter picking, fly tipping, flyposting and graffiti. They had already received over 200 responses which were supportive of the Town Council proposals. The consultation responses would be analysed for F&GP on the 20 January and would report final details to Full Council on 27 January.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- (i) That the Fees & Charges as presented be recommended to the Finance & General Purposes Committee for approval;**
- (ii) That no further recommendations be made by this committee.**

## **52/24 CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

The Town Clerk had no further updates for Committee other than what was presented at the previous meeting. The Town Clerk reported that for the new financial year a new spreadsheet would be created and any existing actions would be transferred to the new plan.

#### **RESOLVED:**

**That a new Capital Programme update be noted.**

## 53/24 FISHERIES

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

Coaching events were once again being planned for Juniors, Shropshire Recovery Adults and also Fish Talk Release Adults for Health and Wellbeing. Last year they were all well attended, and full details of dates would be detailed in further reports once all was confirmed.

At Mousecroft pool the installation of a new gate with side swing wicket was confirmed. The gate would be of the same design as the gates on Monkmoor and Oxon Pool, to further enhance the fisheries. Completion should be by the end of March at the latest.

Weather permitting, it was hoped that by the end of March they could complete in addition, some surface maintenance on the lane potholes, clearing of the platform frontages to preserve angling access and the levelling of the footpath area where it tended to flood over now that the water was much better retained.

At Radbrook Pool as reported previously, they had completed all the new platforms as part of an Environment Agency AIF Grant. As part of the grant, they did need to complete the small footpath areas and some tree works by the end of March. They were hoping to get a dry spell to complete this work to satisfy the grant.

They were currently in the process of applying for two Environment Agency AIF grants and one of the grants was for three replacement platforms that were required at Sydney Avenue, an additional platform at Monkmoor and a further replacement for Emstrey. This was in the process of being costed and the application must be completed by the end of January.

At Oxon Pool, a second grant application was for an additional fishing platform at Oxon Pool and maintenance required for some of the existing platforms. Full details would be in a future report once the application was completed by the end of January.

The fisheries continued its water testing on the River Severn and Reabrook. Looking at the results the consensus was there was no improvement on water quality and in the main the results were worse, particularly with the phosphate results.

Councillor Bentick commented that the Reabrook fed into the River Severn and there was currently no quality water testing taking place. A volunteer group had offered to test the Reabrook on a regular basis and he asked if funding could be used for this. He also commented that there had not been any bailiff water testing at the Reabrook since 2023.

The Town Clerk reported that bailiffs did routine testing at the Reabrook and that they did not do invertebrate testing. She felt this request was best placed with the Clean River Working Group that maintains an overview of wider water quality testing.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (i) That the Fisheries report be noted;**
- (ii) That the matter of additional water testing on the Reabrook be considered by the Clean Rivers Working Group.**

## **54/24 TEAM SHREWSBURY**

### **54.1 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 October and November, however on reviewing the yearly comparisons, issues had reduced quite significantly in a number of areas, the other areas were comparable. Security was regularly receiving positive feedback – a couple of comments were: thanks for a job well done, they felt safer knowing that security patrolled every day & a thanks for the work they had been doing as it had made a significant improvement to the area.

The local policing team were holding a Community Engagement event on Sat 18<sup>th</sup> January, 11am at Monkmoor Recreation Ground. This was an opportunity to raise any concerns there may be and to find out what they were doing to tackle the issues which mattered to members.

Prior to the festive period, West Mercia Search and Rescue carried out river patrols which were a success.

The River Safety Group were currently compiling an Open Water Safety Policy, which would be utilised throughout the County. This would be taken to Shropshire Council for ratification, on completion.

Councillor Bentick commented that members of the Youth Council felt the town centre was not as safe as they would like it to be due to large groups of teenagers. They had asked how this could be improved. The Town Clerk replied that this was being looked at and that there were more patrols around the town. There would be more presence around the town with a proposed new Town Council team along with the rangers and possibility of increased lighting and monitoring CCTV.

Councillor Addams reported that over the Christmas period a woman had been harassed in the Quarry. The Town Clerk confirmed that this incident had been investigated with positive communications to identify the parties involved.

#### **RESOLVED:**

**That the contents of the report be noted**

### **54.2 Policing Priorities**

The Office Manager provided Policing Priorities. The next quarter of Policing Priorities, starting January, had been submitted to the Inspector and they were listed at this meeting for ratifying. The Inspector had advised that West Mercia Police does not have the power to deal with parking issues, whether it's on a pavement or not and their obstruction powers did not apply. The only place parking on a pavement was illegal was in London. For those that had referred to parking issues, they could submit an additional priority. The parking issues would then be forwarded to Shropshire Council. The next quarter requests would be made

in February, in order to submit in readiness for March start. These would then be ratified at Committee on the 5 March.

Councillor Addams commented that since the visit of the PCC to this committee there had been more reports of theft within the Heath Farm area. Councillor Bentick also stated that there were still ASB issues within the Meole Brace area and it was not reducing.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the contents of the report be noted**

**55/24 QUARRY**

**55.1 Quarry Events Programme 2025**

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

The events strategy for 2025 was well under way and the calendar was already starting to fill up nicely. It was pleasing to report that most of the key calendar events had provisionally booked dates for next year and they continued to receive enquiries from the organisers of new events that they would like to hold.

The events calendar was providing an excellent framework to follow and enabled them to capture all the relevant information required to manage the process more effectively and help avoid any unwanted surprises.

It was their intention to continue to host a broad range of events within the park and with this in mind good progress was being made in developing a 'summer season' of musical performances to be held in the bandstand that were free to everyone to attend and enjoy. All of the bands who had a long history of performing in Shrewsbury had expressed their continued interest and they were also in the process of inviting local schools, colleges, and community groups to have the opportunity to come and play. They already had 14 performances provisionally lined up between May and August with considerable interest was being generated for the other available dates.

2024 had proved to be an extremely challenging year in terms of the weather and consequently the impact on the ground conditions for holding outdoor events. They did manage to successfully mitigate the effects on their event calendar and ensured everything took place as scheduled. However, steps were being taken to try and improve the situation for 2025 with some proactive grounds maintenance work already undertaken. The new mole plough had been used across the bottom section of the main arena and the fairground site below the bandstand, which had helped improve the surface drainage in those areas and removed the issue of standing water which caused so many concerns last year.

Councillor Bentick asked if these events were shown on the Town Council website, and it was confirmed they were.

Councillor Dean asked if somebody wanted to use the Bandstand did they need to approach the Town Council to book, and it was confirmed that they would need to book the bandstand through the Town Council.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the contents of the report be noted.**

**55.2 Hostile Vehicle Mitigation Barriers**

The Town Clerk reported that the Town Council took its terrorism management arrangements very seriously and there were general concerns about keeping the public safe at events with incidents elsewhere showing the potential threat of vehicles being used as weapons. Reference was made to the incidents in Germany and New Orleans over Christmas and the New Year. The Hostile Vehicle Mitigation Barriers were beneficial in two ways – clearly stopping an incident, but also giving out a community message that events were safe.

Hostile Vehicle Mitigation barriers were not cheap to buy but they were also not cheap to hire and similar to what the Town Council found with buying crowd management barriers, making the investment would prove cheaper in the long-term. Staff had been investigating options.

Councillor Bentick asked if they had considered the cylindrical steel barriers that were in place in London. It was confirmed that they were considering these for the Quarry but the cost for these would be more than the proposed hostile mitigation barriers and they didn't provide the flexibility of use particularly for events.

Councillor Dean stated that it was tragic something like this even had to be considered but these were sadly the times. He liked the design as they were bright but not offensive and believed a good choice had been made. He enquired how many staff would be required to handle the barriers and the Town Clerk confirmed that it would be two and training would be provided but they were not difficult to use.

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (i) That the report be noted;**
- (ii) That the principle of purchasing Hostile Vehicle Mitigation Barriers be agreed;**
- (iii) That the Town Clerk commence a tendering process with a view to submitting final proposals to Recreation & Leisure Committee for approval.**

**56/24 RECREATION GROUND MATTERS**

**56.1 Grounds Maintenance update**

The Operations Manager reported that once again, the weather had been the major factor in their changing work programmes. From the dry warm period in early November, when they were still grass mowing and heavy machinery could go on the ground, to the first snow of winter when staff moved to indoor work. During this period numerous staff were involved in the setting up and manning road closures for Remembrance Sunday, Christmas Lights Switch

On and Carols in the Square as well as erecting of the Christmas trees around town including the new tree in the Quarry. Thanks also went to the Administration staff who had produced the Carols Booklet and carried out the administration work to make these events a success.

Within the Logistics Team the Tractor Hedge cutting finished in Mid-December. Playground inspections and maintenance were ongoing across Town Council sites but on a reduced frequency during the winter months. This had released staff to carry out other work i.e. tidying of footpaths, allotment site maintenance and setting up of barriers for Christmas Lights Switch On and Carols in the Square. Vehicle and machinery winter servicing was ongoing.

In the Countryside and Green Space team work on and around the Beaver Compound continued. The Team had been carrying out Ash Die Back work and general winter duties across their sites. The Arboriculture team were still working through their programmed work but had been out clearing up after the storms. Shrub bed maintenance across the town was ongoing. High usage areas in the Quarry had been mole ploughed at 3 metre intervals to help relieve compaction and remove lying water quicker. Verge mowing stopped with the first fall of snow; it would restart in the Spring when ground conditions improved.

Within the Amenity Team, all Spring bedding and bulb planting was completed before the first snow. Shrub bed maintenance had been carried out in the Quarry, Shrewsbury Castle, Shrewsbury Library and in other locations within the Town Centre. The Nursery staff had taken more cuttings from their stock plants to increase the number of plants they had for next summer. The zones in the greenhouse which were now empty of plants had been deep cleaned and power washed. They had purchased fifty small Christmas trees, twenty-five Picea abies at 75p each and twenty-five Abies Nordmanniana at 65p each. They were going to grow these on to see how long it took before they could use these in the town centre instead of buying cut trees. At the same time, they had purchased 5 x 6 feet Christmas trees which were rootballed and were going to be planted in large containers which could then be used at locations they usually put cut trees. This should save an amount of money and was more climate friendly than cutting trees down. Updates would be given on how this experiment was progressing. The pupils from Condover College had returned for another year of work placement with the Town Council. They were in the greenhouse one day a week with their mentor. Thanks went to Town Council staff for their engagement and help with these young people. Quarry staff were edging the paths in the park and a road sweeper and gully emptier had been into the park to clean the paths after the flooding. The new Christmas tree was erected in the Quarry in November and had been well received by the public. It was hoped that would become a regular attraction at Christmas.

The Recreation and Formal Space Team had continued the mowing of fine turf areas when ground conditions were favourable. The aeration programme of fine turf was on schedule, but they had stopped aeration of winter sports pitches until the ground conditions improved. The use of heavy aeration equipment on wet ground destroyed the soil structure, this then slowed the natural drainage of water through the soil. Hedge cutting, path edging and shrub bed maintenance were ongoing at Recreation grounds across the town. At All Saints Recreation Ground in Castlefields, a row of Lime trees had been pollarded and other trees on the site pruned to allow more light and wind movement. This would reduce the conditions for disease on the fine turf. The team had put in a new gate at Greenfields Recreation Ground to replace the gate on to the Wildlife area. The inside of the hedge on the wildlife area had also been cut. Football fixtures had been cancelled for 3 weeks so far this season. Most teams had played 50% of their league fixtures by the Christmas Break. They had already started to receive bookings for summer 2025.

Councillor Wagner commented that the Christmas tree in the Quarry was good, and he had received many positive comments and hoped it continued for next year.

Councillor Moseley asked what a mole plough was and was informed that it was an effective drainage system that was a new piece of equipment for the Town Council to use and it would be used several times at the bottom of the Quarry to help relieve compaction.

Councillor Dean asked if there was an update on the Beavers and he was informed that the compound had been signed off and all reports submitted. Once they had the necessary licences and a family had been allocated, they would go to Edinburgh Zoo for two weeks before coming to Shrewsbury. Councillor Moseley asked if members could visit the compound before the beavers were released but was informed that there was only the walkway which was already open to the public, there was nothing else to show just the old riverbed.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the contents of the report be noted.**

**57.2 Greenfields Recreation Ground Update**

The Town Clerk updated Committee on the recent engagement with the Greenfields Community Group and activity on site following acquisition of the land adjacent to the existing Recreation Ground.

The Town Council continued to engage with the Greenfields Community Group on improvements to the Recreation Ground. The site they bought back had been cleared, with all holes re-filled. They had installed new gates to allow for maintenance access and there were new woodchip pathways similar to those laid in other Countryside sites. This would be managed as a Countryside site, with tree planting, grass pathways, wildflower planting and woodchip paths. Ironworks specialists and fencers have reviewed existing fencing to see what they could make good and what would need replacing; proposals and costings were expected.

The Town Council had also been undertaking tender works for the installation of Adult Gym Equipment for which the group had £20,000 or lottery funding and Solar Lights which the group had around £17,000 set aside. They had a preferred contractor for the Gym equipment which was within the Group's budget and they recommended to proceed with them.

The preferred solar light installation was the same as the lights as had been installed at Stanley Lane Recreation Ground in Meole but the Group only had half of the necessary funding. In the same way the Town Council had set aside Neighbourhood Fund money for the Meole installation, it was recommended that Council matches the group's funds to fully complete the project.

Councillor Moseley asked who would be responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the adult gym and it was confirmed that it would be Shrewsbury Town Council as they were the owners.



Both projects would form part of the Tender Report to the next available Finance & General Purpose Committee.

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (i) That the update be noted;**
- (ii) That the Council proceeds with Adult Gym as preferred to be funded by the Greenfield's Community Group's Awards for All grant award;**
- (iii) That the Council proceeds with the Solar Scheme as preferred to be part funded by the Greenfields Community Group's available funds with the remainder funded from the Neighbourhood Fund.**

**57/24 ST CHADS CHURCH – SCROOGE'S GRAVESTONE**

The Town Clerk had submitted a report regarding the works completed to repair Scrooge's Gravestone which was vandalised in St Chads Churchyard. She had to thank the team at Midland Masonry, who were at the time undertaking work for the Town Council on the Balustrade and in the Dingle and had agreed to do the repairs at no charge. The most difficult matter was to persuade the Diocese of Lichfield to agree to the works and the Town Clerk had to make numerous phone calls and submit so extensive information for the matter to be considered. Whilst she was granted emergency approval to proceed, she still had to complete an Interim Faculty Application and still needs to submit a Full Faculty Application for which the Town Council must pay £472.50 for permission to undertake work in the church yard.

Councillor Bentick suggested that if anything similar were to happen again that maybe they could consider crowdfunding. The Town Clerk hoped this would not be required and commented that she had received many offers of very generous donations to pay for the repairs to the vandalised gravestone, but given the repairs had been done for free, it did not seem appropriate to force potential donors to fund an arbitrary charge made by the Diocese.

**RECOMMENDED**

- (i) That the update be noted;**
- (ii) That the fee of £472.50 be authorised.**

**58/24 SHREWSBURY IN BLOOM**

The Operations Manager reported that the date for Heart of England in Bloom judging 2025 was 22 July.

They were waiting to hear on the judging date for Britain in Bloom which was the national competition. They had been informed that the Small City category was unable to run independently, due to on other Small City Category entrants being nominated by the

regional bloom groups. This meant that the Small City and City categories were to be merged. Royal Horticultural Society had approached the Town Council to see if they wished to continue in the competition. Officers did not see this as a problem given that the entry is judged against a set criteria and Shrewsbury would have the added benefit of having a longer tour time.

Bloom committee meetings had also been arranged and diary entries sent out to all members on the committee. The first meeting would be held on 20 February at 2.00pm at the Weeping Cross depot.

Councillor Bentick asked if Meole Community Group would be involved within the bloom route this year and it was explained that once the bloom route had been organised, they would be informed.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the update be noted.**

**59/24 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 Phase 2/3 commenced. No identified date for transfer. **Developer has request early transfer, but certain works need to be completed ahead of transfer. Staff have walked the site recently.**
- (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) *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.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the update be noted.**

**60/24 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](http://www.shrewsburytowncouncil.gov.uk).