

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL
Meeting of Council
Held at Council Chamber, Shirehall, Shrewsbury at
6pm on Monday 30 September 2024

PRESENT

Councillors D Vasmer (Mayor), E Addams, B Bentick, R Dartnall, M Davies, J Dean, P Gillam, N Green, K Halliday, C Lemon, P Moseley, A Mosley, K Parry, A Phillips, A Wagner (Deputy Mayor), B Wall & R Wilson.

IN ATTENDANCE

Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Amanda Spencer (Deputy Town Clerk), Stuart Farmer (Acting Operations Manager), Andy Watkin (Head of Resources) and Michelle Farmer (Committee Officer).

Seven members of the public were also in attendance.

30/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CODE OF CONDUCT

Shropshire Councillors	Twin hatted members declared personal interests in matters relating to the Town Council's relationship with Shropshire Council
Councillor A Phillips	Declared he was the ward member for exempt Item 19 on the agenda – Greenfields Recreation Ground

31/24 MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL

The minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 24 June 2024 be submitted as circulated and read.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Full Meeting of Council on 24 June 2024 be approved and signed as a true and accurate record.

32/24 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising to report from the Town Clerk.

Councillor Wilson stated that Finance & General Purpose Committee were to consider the future format Annual Town Meetings, but he didn't believe this had yet been discussed. The Town Clerk said that it had been agreed at Finance & General Purpose Committee that this and the format of the Annual Meeting of Council would be looked at by a Working Group. This would be convened later in the autumn.

33/24 ANNOUNCEMENTS

33.1 MAYORAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Mayor reported that since he had returned to undertaking Mayoral Engagements after the General Election, he had been able to attend many events including the his Charity Afternoon Tea held on Flower Show Sunday and also the charity event the he held in the Dingle to support his two charities: Omega and Shropshire Mental Health Support. This event included Shropshire Youth Theatre performing extracts from a Midsummer Night's Dream.

Councillor Wagner joined the meeting.

33.2 TOWN CLERK ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Clerk had several announcements for this meeting.

- Remembrance Sunday would be held on 10 November. There would be the usual Parade from the Castle at approx. 10.30am and they would parade to the Quarry for a short service, a 2-minute silence & wreath laying. There would also be a 2-minute silence in the Square on 11 November which the Mayor would be attending and this was a wider invitation to all members.
- Shrewsbury had once again shown that it was blooming marvellous by winning the annual Heart of England in Bloom competition. The results were announced at an awards ceremony in Coventry on 20 September. Shrewsbury had won the Horticultural Excellence Award, achieved Gold Standard in the Small City category, winning that category and the overall winner in the Heart of England in Bloom competition, which judges said was awarded to the town as it had demonstrated a consistently high standard in all areas of the judging criteria. Speaking to the judges afterwards they said that to say the Bloom Committee had taken a year out of the competition, they had returned stronger than ever, the standards of floral features were exceptional, and the roundedness of the entry really showed that this was a town in bloom competition. The Town Clerk said praise needed to be given to Danny Powell & Stuart Farmer, the Acting Operations Managers, who had both worked exceptionally hard this last year to galvanise the team and really engage them all in feeling part of this bloom entry. The success in the regional competition meant that they had been nominated to represent the Heart of England in Britain in Bloom next year, incidentally alongside Oswestry who won the Town Category, so exceptional news for Shropshire.

Councillor Vasmer proposed a vote of thanks to Danny & Stuart and to all the staff involved in Shrewsbury in Bloom. Councillor Wilson agreed with the vote of thanks and suggested that something should be done for all the Town Council staff to say thank you.

- The Town Clerk updated Council on the Academy of Urbanism Competition. The Mayor had accepted a nomination to take part in the Great Town award from the Academy of Urbanism. The Town was last nominated in 2013. The Academy was an eclectic mix of very academic planners, architects, urbanists and generally accepted professionals in their field. Every year academicians nominated entries to their annual competition and a panel in turn shortlisted them into five different categories, one of which was The Great Town & City

Award. This year the finalists were Shrewsbury, Bath & Lewes. This was a great accolade to already be shortlisted as a finalist.

The task was to justify that Shrewsbury was a great town, so officers set about putting together a portfolio of evidence which was presented to the judges who visited Shrewsbury on 4 September and were taken on lengthy tours showing the whole urban grain of the town by the Town Clerk and Operations Managers. There were many stops offs to people of interest and influence within the town and a working lunch was organised at which the Leader of the Town Council, Councillor Alan Mosley, and the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Alex Wagner, were in attendance. This working lunch gave an opportunity to update the Judges in more detail about the Big Town Plan vision.

The Town Clerk had received some positive feedback from the judges who thanked her for such an inspiring tour. The Town Clerk thanked all the staff for their efforts from the planning of the day, the production of the portfolio and ensuring the day went smoothly. It should never be underestimated how hard putting things like this together were. The results would be announced on 13 November in London and the Mayor would be attending this event along with the Town Clerk.

- The Town Clerk asked Council to consider the need to fill a vacant position on the Berwick Almshouse Charity following the recent resignation of Councillor Addams. The Charity was keen to see the position filled as soon as possible. The Town Clerk clarified that the Mayor was always an Ex-Officio member of the charity alongside one Shropshire Councillor and two Shrewsbury Town Councillors. Currently Councillor Mrs Moseley was the only other Town Councillor on the Committee.

Councillor Pardy nominated himself for this vacant position and Members were happy to support his nomination.

- The Town Clerk reported that Shropshire Council would be vacating Shirehall and moving to the Guildhall by the end of the year; this posed a potential problem for where the Town Council would hold Full Council meetings. The Town Clerk asked whether Full Council meetings could be held at Livesey House by default, unless it was felt a large venue was required. There were problems finding suitable locations that could meet the Town Council's IT requirements to broadcast meetings. Members felt that Livesey House was not big enough to hold Full Council and enquiries should be made as to the possibility of using the Guildhall.
- The Town Clerks final announcement was that this meeting would be the last for the Deputy Town Clerk as she was leaving the Town Council to start a new job. Councillor Mosley thanked Amanda for the work she had done whilst with the Town Council and he had received congratulatory and pleasant comments regarding her commitment to the Town Council. He added it had been refreshing to have her on board. Council members thanked Amanda for her professional and friendly manner towards all Members and thanked her for her service and support.

34/24 PUBLIC QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

The Town Clerk reported that standing orders had been followed in seeking questions ahead of the meeting, but she had accepted questions up until 4pm on the day of this meeting.

One public question had been received from Mr Jones:

“With SCC now charging £56 a year for handling green compostable waste, with STC using and needing green compost, for there gardening teams,

What can STC offer the local people of Shrewsbury?

1, collection of green compostable waste as a roadside collection,

2, storage of green compost,

3, manufacturer and the use of this waste,

1A, can STC make a business model, from, collecting, handling, manufacture and reselling of this green compostable waste. we all know, prices of fertilisers are on the increase and this industry is not very, planet friendly,

Would this business model meet any climate change remit the council has signed up to.”

The Town Clerk replied that the Town Council did generate a lot of green waste through its horticultural services activity and in the past, they had explored the possibility of composting their own waste and using it in their own operations. This would require them having sufficient land to create the infrastructure to be able to mulch the green waste and keep turning it to allow it to break down. They could not develop a robust enough business case to undertake such an operation. Therefore, it was far more economical both financially and environmentally to work with Shropshire Council to compost collectively. This meant that Shropshire Council also benefitted from increased landfill credits.

Whilst the Town Council did have climate emergency commitments to reduce their carbon footprint, they were working with Shropshire Council on their Biochar project which could potentially give them a better route to disposing of our green waste and having a more usable waste product. In terms of a kerbside service, they currently did not have the capacity to undertake such a large infrastructure heavy process both in terms of collection, processing and sale.

Councillor Dean suggested that this question be re-visited by the Climate Change & Nature Recovery Committee. The fallout of the decision made by Shropshire Council regarding the green waste was also impacting community gardens. There was a need to explore what the Town Council could contribute to.

RESOLVED:

That this question would be added to the next Climate Emergency & Nature Recovery Committee agenda for consideration.

35/24 MOTIONS FROM MEMBERS

Plant Based Food

Councillor Lemon presented his motion to Members. He proposed that;

This Council agree to:

Ensure that food provided at all council catered events and meetings was plant-based by default, preferably using ingredients sourced from local food producers and to explore via the Council's Climate Emergency Committee opportunities to promote the benefits of plant-based eating to the local community.

In March 2019, this Council passed a motion declaring a Climate Emergency. It then established what was now the Climate Emergency and Nature Recovery Committee and set up a Climate Change website outlining initiatives the Council was taking to become Carbon Neutral by 2030, with pages outlining initiatives including a section titled 'What You Can Do' aimed at residents of the town. However, at the moment there was nothing there pertaining to how we can tackle Climate Change through what we eat and drink, two of the most important drivers of the Climate Emergency.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and EAT-Lancet Commission had pointed out in multiple reports that substantial reductions in demand for animal-based foods were vital for achieving climate targets and for keeping food production within planetary limits. The Lancet Planetary Health journal published in November 2021 showed that sustainable, plant-based diets can be up to a third cheaper than diets that included a traditional ratio of animal-based food.

Aside from the science, there was a shared understanding in our society that we needed to eat less meat and consume less dairy. One of the most effective ways to reduce carbon emissions and free up land for nature was to cut back on animal proteins. Eighty five percent of the land used to feed us was used for livestock farming, even though meat and dairy only accounted for one third of our calories.

Leading on from this and at a national level, one of the recommendations of the Government-commissioned National Food Strategy report published in 2021 was a long-term shift in our food culture. Another of the recommendations of the report was a Good Food Bill which would make it incumbent on Local Authorities in England to develop food strategies with reference to national targets and in partnership with the communities they serve. In June 2021, the Committee on Climate Change recommended that UK-wide consumption of beef, lamb and dairy should be reduced significantly. Putting those directives together, it made sense for Shrewsbury Town Council to move towards making all meetings and events the Council catered for plant-based by default. Such a move would not by definition be prescriptive but would provide a lead aligning with the advice and conclusions of the bodies outlined already in this introduction to the Motion.

Shrewsbury Town Council had a relatively modest carbon footprint generated by the food and drink it provided at functions and meetings, but by passing this motion it could add significantly to the direction of travel towards becoming Carbon Neutral by taking a lead in highlighting that what we eat and drink really does matter. It also kept open an educational

aspect by asking the Climate Emergency and Nature Recovery Committee to explore further the opportunities to encourage behaviour change via the Council's activities.

Councillor Mosley proposed an amendment to this motion which was as follows:

This Council recognised that there could be an adverse effect of some animal products on climate change. In this respect all catering would offer plant-based options in the future.

Councillor Mosley added that he had nothing against providing plant-based food and he was not against Climate Change, but he was against it being provided by default. It was not representative of the rest of the town.

Councillor Lemon could not accept the amendment as he said that offering plant based was already in place. He suggested that members at an event could request meat or dairy if they required it.

Councillor Wagner was concerned about the message that this motion was sending out to farmers and the Town Council should be seen to support local producers. Shrewsbury was the County Town to a rural county, and as such the Town Council should be supporting farmers and producers, so he was not able to support the original motion as it stood.

Councillor Dean was shocked at the responses from Members as they needed to be offering guidance to help people transition and reduce waste, there needed to be a shift in people's diets. They should be looking at local suppliers which could promote the idea of balanced diets. He was appalled that members were abdicating responsibility, and he would not support the amendment to the motion.

Councillor Addams commented that functions held by Shrewsbury Town Council did cater for all. She agreed that the Town Council should promote plant-based food, but meat and dairy should still be provided.

Councillor Phillips thanked Councillor Lemon for producing this motion as there was a genuine argument for choice. The Town Council should lead by example and investigate where suppliers source their food. He commented that 'default' was not the correct word, but the Town Council should make some improvements to reduce intake.

Councillor Gillam commented that he had been a vegetarian for 40 years and he had sympathy with this motion. He thanked Councillor Lemon for bringing the motion to Council, but he was concerned that in its present form it could alienate people, but it was still a good motion.

Councillor Dartnall understood why the motion had been put forward and we should recognise that a change of diet was required, and we have a spectacular local food industry that should be recognised. She stated that the amendment should support all the comments made and support change but in a less extreme way.

Councillor Davies said that we should support agriculture and help our farmers, growers and food producers. She suggested that the 'default' was a step too far and urged to support all varieties.

Councillor Pardy commented that without the amendment he could not vote for the original motion as he didn't agree with being told what to eat. The Town Council should test the water and see how it goes in future events.

The Mayor thanked all members for their comments on this motion and asked for a vote to accept the amendment to the motion.

This Council recognises that there could be an adverse effect of some animal products on climate change. In this respect all catering would offer plant-based options in the future and that Council should explore via the Council's Climate Emergency Committee opportunities to promote the benefits of plant-based eating to the local community.

RESOLVED:

That the amendment be agreed

The amended motion was accepted by 15 Councillors For, 2 Councillors against.

In considering the amended motion, Councillor Davies detailed her roots as the daughter of a Welsh Beef & Sheep Farmer and how important it was to promote and support British farming and that everyone should look to source quality local food particularly given that 2 out of every three farmers were struggling with rising production costs.

RESOLVED:

This Council recognises that there could be an adverse effect of some animal products on climate change. In this respect all catering would offer plant-based options in the future and that Council should explore via the Council's Climate Emergency Committee opportunities to promote the benefits of plant-based eating to the local community.

The motion was agreed by 125 Councillors For, 2 Councillors against and 2 abstentions.

Six members of the public left the meeting.

36/24 MOVEMENT & PUBLIC SPACE STRATEGY

The Town Clerk presented the Shrewsbury Movement & Public Space Strategy to the Council for formal adoption. The Strategy aimed to improve transportation, public space, health, and environmental outcomes in Shrewsbury. The strategy aligned with Shropshire Council's commitment to integrated transport systems and active travel options, supporting Shrewsbury's vibrancy, accessibility, and economic activity. Key objectives included reducing vehicle emissions, encouraging modal shift, and improving air quality.

Key Aspects of the Strategy:

1. **Strategic Vision:** The MPSS built on the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan (2018) to enhance movement, accessibility, and environmental quality. The plan prioritised pedestrian and cyclist-friendly spaces, reducing traffic in the town centre.
2. **Public Engagement:** A nine-week public consultation revealed positive sentiments towards 21 proposed interventions designed to make Shrewsbury inclusive and vibrant.
3. **Key Principles:** The strategy focused on reducing traffic, improving public transport, reallocating road space for pedestrians and cyclists, and enhancing cross-town sustainable transport.
4. **Ten-Year Vision:** The strategy outlined a phased, adaptive, and flexible delivery plan subject to detailed surveys, assessments, and funding availability.

5. **Inclusivity:** The MPSS emphasised creating safer, accessible public spaces for all, including protected characteristic groups.
6. **Consultation Feedback:** The strategy reflected consultation feedback, with revisions to enhance details on proposed outcomes, interdependencies, and next steps.
7. **Next Steps:** Immediate actions included traffic modelling, feasibility studies, parking strategy development, and a freight and servicing strategy to support businesses.

The Town Clerk reported that previously the Big Town Plan Partnership commissioned Phil Jones Associates to work with them to develop a long-term Movement and Public Space Strategy. The Town Clerk and Leader had been part of that Strategy Board to develop the plan and many members had been involved in various consultations and satellite working groups. The Strategy had previously been presented to Council as a draft, which then went out to public consultation and the various documents presented at the meeting were the final documents taking into account the consultation. It had already been presented to Shropshire Council Cabinet for adoption at which it had received cross-party support and the Shrewsbury BID Board would do likewise.

Councillor Mosley commented that he had been on the steering group for 5 years where there had been high cooperation between the three partners: Shrewsbury Town Council, Shrewsbury BID and Shropshire Council. The strategy was not just about stopping cars but to make the town a more pleasant and vibrant place. It would improve air quality, encourage people to walk more and make Shrewsbury a better place to live.

Councillor Wilson said this would be money well spent and finding money for this was welcome; it had been a long time coming. There were new proposals on buses which was so vital to many residents. There had been encouraging comments from the MP and she needed to be encouraged further. This was a momentous moment as no town in the UK had gone for this approach and the Partnership should be moving towards implementing this as soon as possible. He did comment that the current station gyratory works were at the wrong place at the wrong time and were not part of this strategy. Councillor Wilson commented that safe and secure places were required for bikes and there should be fairness and equality for Under 18 bus fares. Some don't qualify for funding so free bus fares should be extended to all students regardless of their age.

Councillor Dean supported this and said that the Town Council needed to use the leverage this would provide. They needed to adopt active travel and make use of this good piece of work.

Councillor Phillips mentioned Electric Vehicle Charging points and that more were required within the town. Installing more points would attract more tourism to the town.

Councillor Dartnall commented that this was an amazing piece of work and it would make huge changes. It had taken a long time to complete but it would improve lifestyle habits and reduce congestion. She welcomed the strategy and look forward to it being implemented.

Members who had been present at the Youth Town Council that afternoon, asked the Town Clerk to raise their concerns about Movement. The Town Clerk reported that the Youth Town Council wished to see safe and secure places for bikes and bus fares for all students in full time education; one member of the Youth Council in full time education had celebrated his 18th birthday in September and was no longer eligible for free transport to college.

Voting for the Movement Strategy was unanimous.

RESOLVED:

That Shrewsbury Town Council:

- (i) Supports the adoption the MPSS as a material consideration in planning decisions;**
- (ii) Uses the document in the consideration of its comments to the Planning Authority;**
- (iii) Works with Big Town Plan Partnership Stakeholders to implement the 10-year delivery plan.**

37/24 END OF YEAR AUDIT

The Head of Resources reported that he had received confirmation that day of the completion of the External Audit from PKF Littlejohn. He would formally report the outcome of the Audit to Finance & General Purpose Committee but he was required to publish the completion of the accounts in accordance with the Accounting & Audit Regulations by 30 September. He confirmed that the notices had gone on to the Town Council website and noticeboards and all duties had been completed.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the Town Council notes the completion of the 2023/24 Audit;**
- (ii) That all relevant notice of completion be uploaded to the Council Website and placed on Noticeboards.**

38/24 CHANGE TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Town Clerk informed Committee of a procedural matter in relation to Committee Membership.

Councillor Dartnall wished to come off the Planning Committee in favour of Councillor Pardy and she in turn would become a nominated substitute.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Kevin Pardy replace Councillor Rosemary Dartnall on the Planning Committee

39/24 RECREATION & LEISURE COMMITTEE (MINUTES ENCLOSED)

The Minutes of the Recreation & Leisure Committee held on 10 July and 4 September 2024 were circulated as read.

Councillor Phillips requested the following amendments:

Min 27/24 - the word 'centre' should follow 'town.'

Min 28/24.- That the following be added: Councillor Phillips asked if an officer could give a suggestion of outline timetable of works.

RESOLVED:

- (i) **That the minutes of the Recreation & Leisure Committee meeting held on 10 July 2024 be received and adopted;**
- (ii) **That upon the amendments as requested by Councillor Phillips be added the minutes of the Recreation & Leisure minutes of 4 September 2024 be received and adopted.**

40/24 FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on 15 July and 9 September 2024 were circulated as read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 15 July and 9 September 2024 be received and adopted.

41/24 PLANNING COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 25 June, 16 July, 6 August, 27 August and 17 September 2024 were submitted as circulated as read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 25 June, 16 July, 6 August, 27 August and 17 September 2024 be received and adopted.

42/24 WORKING GROUPS

42.1 CLEAN RIVER WORKING GROUP

The minutes of the Clean River Working Group meeting held on 10 September 2024 were circulated as read.

The Town Clerk added at this point that the Bathing Water sign was now in situ.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Clean River Working Group meeting held on 10 September 2024 be received and adopted.

One member of the public left the meeting.

42.2 CITY OF SANCTUARY WORKING GROUP

The minutes of the City of Sanctuary Working Group meeting held on 26 July 2024 were circulated as read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the City of Sanctuary Working Group meeting held on 26 July 2024 be received and adopted.

42.3 NEURODIVERSITY WORKING GROUP

The minutes of the Neurodiversity Working Group meeting held on 17 June and 18 September 2024 were circulated as read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Neurodiversity Working Group held on 17 June and 18 September 2024 be received and adopted.

43/24 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That in accordance with s1(2) Public Bodies (Admission of Meetings) Act 1960, members of the public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that the following items being considered involve the disclosure of confidential information.

The Mayor advised that live streaming of this meeting would now stop. He thanked members of the public for logging in. All papers relating to the meeting could be found on the website www.shrewsburytowncouncil.gov.uk

44/24 PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Personnel Committee meetings held on 19 September were circulated as read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on 19 September be received and adopted

45/24 GREENFIELDS RECREATION GROUND

The Town Clerk reported that pursuant to additional legal matters in relation to Greenfields Recreation Ground, Officers were to attend a Mediation Meeting later in the year. The Town Clerk detailed the likely outcome and sought members authority of the acceptable outcome of that meeting.

The Mayor proposed that the Town Clerk and Head of Resources be given delegated authority to make their valued judgement on how to proceed at the meeting, in conjunction with the Leader of the Council and any legal advisers present. In seconding the Mayor's proposal Councillor Dean stressed the need for the whole council to be clear on the required outcome and Officers should be given the Council's full support

RESOLVED:

That the Town Clerk & Head of Resources be given collective delegated authority to proceed with a decision in the best interests of the Council, in conjunction with the Leader of the Council and the Town Council's legal advisers.

47/24 CLOSING REMARKS

The Mayor thanked members and staff for their attendance and closed the meeting.