

**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 16 January 2025**

**PRESENT**

Councillors Julian Dean (Chair), Alan Mosley, Pam Moseley, Rob Wilson, Bernie Bentick, Elizabeth Addams, and Rosemary Dartnall.

Alex Grant (Shropshire Wildlife Trust), Chris Bainger (ENV Agency), Tom Endacott (Gfleet), Kevin Oubridge (Climate Fresk), Chloe King (Marches Energy Agency) and Frank Oldacre.

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Danny Powell (Operations Manager), Heather Phillips (Finance Officer) and Esme Breeze (Admin Apprentice), Andy Hall (Youth and Community Manager) and two Youth Council Attendees.

**14/24 APOLOGIES**

**RESOLVED:**

**That apologies be received from Councillor David Vasmer, David Sharpe (AECB) and Anna Brennand (Marches Energy Agency).**

**15/24 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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**16/24 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the Climate Emergency & Nature Recovery Standing Committee meeting held on 1 October 2024 were submitted as circulated and read.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the minutes of the Climate Emergency & Nature Recovery Standing Committee meeting held on 1 October 2024 be approved and signed as a correct record.**

**17/24 MATTERS ARISING**

**Re Min 05/24** Action Plan – The Town Clerk had enquired with the accountant how many community grants had been Climate Emergency related. No climate related grants had been received.

**Re Min 06/24** Visioning Exercise – The Town Clerk has looked at the data to establish whether any of it would be useful to the group; there was not. Alex Grant felt that the positivity in the consultation exercise was showing general support for climate related initiatives, and this would feed into the Local Nature Recovery Strategy which was currently being drafted by the Head of Policy & Evidence at the Wildlife Trust.

Not in the Minutes but Councillor Bentick enquired about river testing on the Reabrook; he had a number of volunteers who wished to undertake testing and he felt it was important this Committee considered their request for funding. The Town Clerk reiterated her comments at the previous day's Recreation & Leisure Committee when Councillor Bentick raised the same request, that water testing would be best considered by the Clean Rivers Working Group at which all agencies that water tested would be in attendance.

Not in the Minutes but Councillor Bentick reported on the illegal felling of an Oak tree in Meole. He asked whether Shrewsbury Town Council was cognisant to the changes in legislation which required consultation on any proposals to fell street trees. The Town Clerk reported that staff were aware of the legislation but since street trees were in the highways and the Town Council was not the Highways Authority it was unlikely that staff would be required to consult. In relation to this tree, the Town Council was instructed to remove the tree as a contractor despite making representations.

## **18/24 CLIMATE FRESK PRESENTATION**

Kevin Oubridge gave a presentation about climate related training that was available to community groups and individuals. The aim of these training courses was to get people to talk about Climate Change.

Carbon Literacy Training allowed for personal certification and organisational accreditation, but it was a significant commitment in terms of course hours. Climate Fresk was a more informal course with no certification or accreditation. It was based upon forty-two cards which cover causes and consequences on climate change. This could be done with Community Groups.

Biodiversity Collage ([www.ipbes.net](http://www.ipbes.net)) was a more interactive and accessible way to learn about climate change.

Councillor Dean then asked if there were any questions regarding the Climate Fresk, the Carbon Literacy and the Biodiversity Collage.

Councillor Wilson enquired if there were any chance the youth would be interested in trying the Climate Fresk at a Youth Council Meeting. The Youth and Community Manager mentioned that there was an option for a reduced session of 2hrs in March for the Youth Council. Both Youth Council Members confirmed that this was something that they would be interested in and that they believed the other members of the Youth Council would be interested in as well.

The Town Clerk asked if there were any funding to facilitate Train the Trainer Courses. Chloe King explained that there was some funding for the Climate Fresk but that she would investigate if there could be training for the course.

Councillor Dartnall enquired if there were courses for much younger children. Kevin Oubridge confirmed that there was one set of cards for the Biodiversity Collage.

Councillor Mosley reported that he had undertaken both the Carbon Literacy Training and Climate Frisk course and had found both beneficial.

## **19/24 FULL COUNCIL QUESTION**

The Town Clerk reported to Committee that the following public question was submitted to Full Council on 30 September 2024, and it was proposed that the question was raised at this meeting and a response agreed:

*“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.”*

Councillor Dartnall mentioned that there was pyrolysis that was used to recycle waste, and wondered if some aspects of Shrewsbury Town Councils waste could be put into Shropshire Council’s pyrolysis waste.

Alex Grant felt that householders could do their own green waste and compost and not leave it to the council. Councillor Bentick mentioned how not everyone would be able to afford this as an option as materials to do so were costly.

Councillor Dean mentioned that Shropshire Council’s new Green Waste Charging System had not been set up well as there were a number of allotment groups and community gardens who had always had green waste collection and whilst they were willing to pay for a bin, it had to be attributable to a domestic dwelling and not a community space.

The Operations Manager mentioned how allotments recycled compost, but some did have a number of green bins but since the new system they required a postcode for the payment of the green bins, and therefore this did not work for the allotments as they did not have postcodes.

The Town Clerk detailed the response that she had prepared for Full Council. The Town Council did not have the resources or capacity to run a green waste collection scheme. They did not have the vehicles nor space to undertake any green waste collection. Town Council staff engaged with Shropshire Council staff responsible for the pyrolysis system but its location in Ludlow would mean that there would be carbon costs in transporting significant green waste. Shrewsbury Town Council always benefitted from collaborating with Shropshire Council to manage green waste; this reduced costs but also increased landfill credits for Shropshire Council.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Town Clerk:**

- (i) Contact Shropshire Council about green waste arrangements for allotment sites and community gardens;**
- (ii) Contact Dan Wrench about the potential of moveable Biochar equipment;**
- (iii) Respond to the original public question to Full Council.**

**20/24 CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN 2024 – 2030**

The Town Clerk asked Committee to consider how they wished to develop an Action Plan that would meet the Council's obligations to meet carbon neutrality by 2030. It had been suggested that the Town Council's Corporate Plan would fulfil the role of a plan, but it would not be in enough detail to support the Town Council's 2019 commitment.

Councillor Dean felt that Shrewsbury Town Council should focus more on influencing the public than carbon neutrality, but the Town Clerk stressed that the Town Council's commitment was first and foremost to meet its own carbon neutrality.

The Committee discussed separating the carbon neutrality action plan from advocacy and that there should be two separate work streams. Councillor Mosley suggested that the working groups needed to have clear purposes and a clear term of reference and objectives.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Town Clerk, in conjunction with the Chairman & Vice-Chairman look to drafting Terms of Reference for the two separate workstreams of Carbon Neutrality & Advocacy and contact each committee member to determine preferences.**

**21/24 GREAT BIG GREEN WEEK 2025**

The Town Clerk reported that Great Big Green Week 2025 runs from 7-15 June 2025.

Last year the Deputy Town Clerk organised all the sessions and whilst all of the sessions were well attended, there was a question whether the officer time in developing the week

compared with the wider impact of the activities. She sought the Committee's help in organising activities if the Committee were keen to proceed, particularly since operational staff would also be busy preparing for the Town's entry in Britain in Bloom.

Councillor Dean wondered whether Great Big Green Week could combine with the Shrewsbury Moves Festival, but Councillor Wilson highlighted that this was in March and not June.

Councillor Mosely suggested an assessment into the impact it had made about the attitudes and behaviours of the town. He also asked the Town Clerk to investigate what other Town Councils have done to promote the week.

Council Dartnall expressed the concern around Committee involvement given Councillors would be focussing on their election campaigns at the time when this would need to be organised.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Town Clerk make enquiries around the appetite of last year's organisers of events to take part with a view to finding other organisations who make be able to take a greater lead.**

**22/24 CLIMATE AUDIT**

The Town Clerk reported that due to other work commitments and restricted staff capacity she had not managed to amend the audit following discussions from the last meeting. She would review it in readiness for the next meeting.

**23/24 ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING**

The Town Clerk reported that she had received an update from Shropshire Council regarding the EVC rollout in the county and in particular in Shrewsbury. She would forward the report to members of the Committee for information.

Councillor Wilson wanted to see charging stations put on road space and not pavements. Councillor Mosley reported that there had been a number of proposals in high populous areas but all proposals with the exception of the one in Castlefields had been withdrawn due to resident and member objection around the loss of parking spaces. There needed to be solutions to finding charging stations for those who did not have driveways or parking space outside of their property. Councillor Mosley was also concerned that people weren't incentivised enough to buy Electric Vehicles as it was more expensive to run than a traditional fuel vehicle due to the charging rates in places.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Town Clerk circulate the ECV Report to members of the Committee**

## **24/24 OPERATIONAL UPDATE ON PESTICIDE USE BY THE TOWN COUNCIL**

The Operations Manager submitted a report to Committee highlighting the reduction in usage of Herbicides and Pesticides by the Town Council.

The use of chemicals in Agriculture and Horticultural had been widespread and extensive over several decades. This not only had a negative impact on the environment but also the operatives who applied it. The environmental impact was now well documented, and their use was reducing. New alternative control methods were being developed and implemented across the industry.

The use of these control methods had reduced with the development and production of plants and grasses which were less susceptible to pest and disease. Research into the conditions in which these two problems thrived, had identified ways in which they could be dealt with to reduce the need of chemical spraying. This had then markedly reduced the number of products that were available to use and the cost to procure them had increased to a level that they had become the final solution in the control of diseases.

The Town Council had introduced maintenance procedures which reduced the conditions for pest and disease to develop and in cases where they had to use chemicals then they looked at the range of products available and choose the one which cured the problem but had as little impact on the environment as possible.

Herbicides could be broken down into several subgroups. These were based on how they work, contact, translocated, residual.

The Town Council used all these types across facilities and open spaces; use was kept to a minimum and other operations were carried out where practical.

The public mainly think of weedkilling as the use of glyphosate-based weedkillers e.g. Roundup but this was not the case. They used several selective weedkillers which only killed certain types of weeds but did not damage plants or grasses.

In all cases the type of chemical to be used and its location were considered before it was applied.

Glyphosate based weedkiller use had been reduced by Town Council over the last two years, during this time they had not purchased any glyphosate-based products.

The use of translocated weedkillers (glyphosate) was requested by some external contracts, as this was a once-a-year operation that reduced the overall cost of the contract. Cheaper to spray once around an obstacle than strim around it on every visit.

The Council also used glyphosate products to control Japanese Knotweed through stem injection.

At this present time most commercial total weedkillers on the market were glyphosate based.

Contact weedkillers only killed the green growth, they did not spread through the whole plant. At the present time, they did not have any of these products in stock.

Residual weedkillers were sprayed over clean soil once any weed growth had been removed. They put a coating on bare soil or porous surfaces which stopped weeds growing for a period

of 6 months. They were best used through the summer months, and they broke down and disappeared after this period. The Town Council had a number of these in stock, which were used on established shrub beds and around street furniture.

The new residuals were far less toxic and lasted for a shorter period on the soil surface. The previous residuals which were no longer on the market built up in the soil structure.

Selective weedkillers were used on sports turf and only kill out broad leaved weeds in turf.

There were now several alternative weed control products or methods of weed control that could be used:

- Pelargonic acid (fatty Acid)
- Acetic acid (strong Vinegar)
- Citric acid
- Clove oil
- Also boiling hot water, heat guns and hot foam.

These products and control methods were on the market and the Town Council had trialled them or have had them demonstrated.

Boiling Water and Hot foam were sprayed on to individual weeds to kill the green leaf growth, but the plant root system could still be alive, and the plant regrows. This was an expensive operation to purchase, boiling hot water and foam was being used in the public realm had a danger to the public and the operator applying it. There was also the cost of keeping the foam and water at boiling point.

Heat guns, these again only killed the top growth, and the weed regrew in a matter of weeks. There was also the added danger of setting fire to surrounding plants and grass land. During dry conditions this could become a serious problem. During a trial they carried out, the weeds regrew in about 14 days and the grass that was near started to smoulder and was scorched.

Pelargonic Acid and Acetic Acid, when trialled this killed light weed growth and new weeds. Older more established weeds, the products had little effect on. Also, the regrowth was within a 6-week period, and they had to go out and spray again, this resulted in a greater use of products and an increase in man hours to carry out the work.

Citric Acid was used to prevent worms casting on sports Turf. The Town Council had used this product with success.

Clove Oil, they were still to trial this product as a weed killer. At the present time it seemed to be a product that was used in the USA.

The use of Pesticides and Herbicides at the Town Council had reduced over the last 25 years. More cultural methods of weed and pest control now took place. All the staff who applied chemicals were trained in their safe application and the best practise of using the smallest amount and least toxic product available. They would keep trialling new products and when they found products that worked well and lasted, then they would become their preferred method of weed control.

At this point in time the use of chemicals to control pests, diseases and weeds was still a valuable tool in their maintenance programmes. To stop the use of chemicals would reduce

the quality of service they provided and increase their costs to external contracts. As a counter to their use, they would endeavour to further reduce their usage on Town Council sites.

The Operations Manager commented how the alternatives for pesticides were not as efficient and effective as they had hoped.

Council Wilson noted that some other councils tried to use zero pesticides and that had backfired as the alternative methods did not have the longevity needed and therefore more staff would be needed to allow for the alternative methods to be more effective.

Councillor Mosley mentioned how they should still minimise the use but accept that there were some instances where you cannot get away from using pesticides and that the National Federation should draw up a policy that could be shared.

Frank Oldacre wanted to make sure the Shrewsbury Town Council would commit to continued research into alternatives and adopt any new ideas.

Councillor Mosley enquired about allotments. The Operations Manager commented how there were quarterly allotment meetings as the allotments were self-governing but there were some ideas regarding the use of pesticides within the allotment committees.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Chairman look to developing a policy and guidance to the public using the Town Council's example.**

**25/24 NATURE RECOVERY CONFERENCE**

The Chairman suggested that since the Local Nature Recovery Strategy Co-ordinator had agreed to attend the next meeting, the report on the recent Nature Recovery Conference could be deferred to that meeting. All were in agreement.

**26/24 NEXT MEETING**

The next Committee meeting would be held on 10 April 2025 at 2.30pm.