

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

**CLEAN RIVERS WORKING GROUP
HELD AT LIVESEY HOUSE**

25 NOVEMBER 2024

PRESENT

Councillors Rosemary Dartnall (Chair) Bernie Bentick & Kate Halliday

Alison Biddulph, Suzie Roy (Up Sewage Creek), Andy Jones (Shrewsbury Town Fisheries), Luke Neal (Shropshire Wildlife Trust – Head of Landscape Recovery)

IN ATTENDANCE

Helen Ball (Town Clerk)

09/24 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Gareth Mead (Severn Trent Water)

10/24 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

All twin-hatted members declared a personal interest in Shropshire Council should any matters relating to the Town Council's relationship with Shropshire Council arise.

11/24 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was agreed that the minutes of the last meeting held on 10 September 2024 were a true and accurate record.

12/24 MATTERS ARISING

No matters arising were raised.

13/24 CLARIFICATION ON TOWN COUNCIL'S RESPONSIBILITY REGARDING THE RIVER

Councillor Dartnall set out what the Town Council's responsibilities were in relation to matters around water quality. The Town Council had no statutory responsibility to manage water quality and whilst the Council takes an interest in flooding as many Town Council assets are affected by flooding, they have no responsibility for preventing wider flooding.

The Town Council an advocacy role in working with other partners to find a collective solution. The Town Council has also facilitated obtaining Bathing Water Status and agreed to take on the on-going responsibilities in managing the waters.

Alison Biddulph had been invited to be on the Severn Trent Water's Get Rivers Positive Panel Shropshire Council maintained the environmental protection function, whilst the Environmental Agency had a more hands on management of the river. Councillor Halliday chaired the Water Quality Task & Finish Group. There was a wider River Severn Partnership and funding had been received to work on longer term solutions to addressing the flood risk and severity along the whole of the River Severn.

14/24 BATHING WATER STATUS

The Town Clerk reported that in line with regulations relating to Bathing Water Status, all necessary signage had been installed on site. This provided links to the website publishing the results of sampling. The sign also allowed bathers to be warned of potential pollution.

The Town Clerk had a regular update with the Environment Agency to go through sampling results. This was in its infancy and the amount of data in the first season wasn't enough to gain an accurate classification. All Bathing Water Sites would be classified on 26th November. The Town Clerk did warn the Group that the Shrewsbury Bathing Water was likely to be poor, more out of minimal data to make a classification rather than the water quality itself.

The group was concerned as they did not want the site to be portrayed as problematic for users as no spikes in testing had ascertained and cause for concern.

15/24 SEVERN TRENT UPDATE

There was no-one available to provide any update on testing. The Town Clerk however reported that they too were testing and results were in line with EA results.

It was also known that 2 CSOs had been withdrawn from usage and that others were having non-return valves fitted.

16/24 ENVIRONMENT AGENCY UPDATE

There was no-one available to log onto the meeting, but were now being sent papers and invitations to the meeting.

17/24 SHREWSBURY TOWN FISHERIES UPDATE

Andy reported that Bailiffs continued to test the river and submit data to the Angling Trust. Tests were showing slightly higher phosphate and nitrate levels than over the last two years. This was being put down to agricultural run-off upstream. The Fisheries were looking to sample test further upstream between Welshpool and Shrewsbury.

Also of concern were the number of fish being caught with sores. Severn Trent was keen to learn any concerns from anglers.

They were awaiting a replacement for the Angling Water Co-ordinator on the River Severn Project following the tragic death of Christian Kent

18/24 SHROPSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST UPDATE

Luke reported on the Catchment Partnership Group co-hosted by the Wildlife Trust and the Rivers Trust. This was an excellent forum for healthy conversations with partners. He was happy to share a link to the meetings should any member of the working group wish to attend. Alison expressed an interest in attending.

19/24 SURFERS AGAINST SEWAGE CONFERENCE

Alison gave an update on the Reform of Bathing Water Status Regulations Consultation. Whilst the window for making further applications for Bathing Water Status was closed the conference was looking at how groups should prepare for new sites. Surfers Against Sewage was also leading on a campaign to get rights of the river and how the river becomes a legal entity in its own right and Alison was investigating further. Rosemary & Kate were happy to develop a cross-party motion at Shropshire Council. The Conference also discussed intensive poultry farming and impact on the river. Kate would raise this issue with the Economy & Environment Scrutiny Committee.

20/24 UP SEWAGE CREEK

The group was currently crowd funding to purchase monitoring kits. The Group agreed that testing data needed to be shared with the wider groups to strengthen the datasets. It was reported that an Up Sewage Creek member had been testing in Stoke. It was stressed that there was a need to have a consistent approach to testing the river in the same locations at the same time. Andy & Suzy would discuss testing outside of the meeting to establish a consistent approach that would benefit all.

20/24 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 30th January at 5.00pm.