

**SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL  
NEURODIVERSITY WORKING GROUP  
LIVESEY HOUSE  
20 MARCH 2024**

**Present** – Councillors Julian Dean (Chair), Chris Lemon, Kevin Pardy and Becky Wall

**In attendance** – Helen Ball (Town Clerk) and Amanda Spencer (Deputy Town Clerk)

**01/23 APOLOGIES**

None were received in advance of the meeting.

**02/23 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

Those twin-hatted Councillors declared an interest as Shropshire Council in the event matters relating to the Town Council's relationship with the unitary council were discussed.

**03/23 ELECTION OF A CHAIR**

Councillor Julian Dean was proposed as the Chair. This was unanimously supported by all present.

**04/23 TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Chair explained that the idea for the group came out of the threatened close of the NERDY Café a couple of years earlier. Although the café had been saved from closure, the overwhelming support for its function as a place to gather particularly by the neurodiverse community in the town, had demonstrated that more could be done to support the community locally.

Ireland had in place a Neurodiverse Friendly Town scheme but unfortunately no such similar scheme existed for the UK. Julian reported that he had contacted the facilitators of the scheme in Ireland for further information and was awaiting a reply.

**RESOLVED:**

It was therefore resolved that the Terms of Reference for the Working Group should be:

- To establish a group to increase support for the neurodiverse community within the town, to include membership external to the Town Council.
- To develop a neurodiverse friendly town scheme for Shrewsbury in order to promote awareness.

**05/23 EXTERNAL ATTENDEES**

The group discussed which members of the local community could be invited to join the working group and representatives from the local organisations were suggested:

- A representative from Public Health
- A representative from NERDY Café
- A SENCO representative from a local school

- A representative from the Darwin Shopping Centre

All members of the Working Group were asked to confirm to Amanda who else they would like to be invited to join after the meeting. Amanda would then draft a letter from the Chair to go to all representatives inviting them to the next meeting.

### **06/23 FURTHER ACTIONS**

The following list of actions was agreed:

- External representatives for the Working Group to be put forward – All
- On behalf of the Chair, to write to all suggested external representatives asking them to join the group – AS
- Investigate the use of NERDY Café as a venue for future meetings – JD
- Speak to other town councils about what work they might be doing – HB
- Investigate what resources might be available from the Local Government Association – AS
- Investigate the Cooperative Councils Innovation Network and how it might support the Town Council's agenda – HB
- To contact Special Education Needs Coordinators – AH
- To contact Rachel Robinson at Public Health – HB
- To draw up the Terms of Reference – AS
- To investigate the use of a quiet room at the Darwin Shopping Centre – AS
- To investigate the use of Safe Spaces in any plans – AS
- To contact Men's Shed – HB
- To contact We Are Veterans – BW

### **07/23 NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that the next meeting be scheduled for May 2024 once all of the proposed external representatives had been contacted and invited to join the working group.