

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

**CLEAN RIVERS WORKING GROUP
HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS**

10 SEPTEMBER

PRESENT

Councillors Rosemary Dartnall (Chair) & Kate Halliday

Alison Biddulph, Simon Blackburn (Shrewsbury Masters Swimming Club), Warren Hastings (Up Sewage Creek), Andy Jones (Shrewsbury Town Fisheries), Dilwyn Jones (Sabrina Boat), Luke Neal (Shropshire Wildlife Trust – Head of Landscape Recovery) and Gareth Mead (Severn Trent)

IN ATTENDANCE

Helen Ball (Town Clerk)

01/24 APOLOGIES

No apologies received.

02/24 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.

03/24 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was agreed that the minutes of the last meeting held on 24 April 2024 were a true and accurate record.

04/24 MATTERS ARISING

It was noted with sadness that Christian Kent (Angling Trust) had recently died, and all agreed that he left a large void in terms of knowledge and expertise within the Angling Trust.

Councillor Dartnall wanted to take the opportunity to reiterate what this Group's primary role was. Whilst the Town Council had no statutory function with regards to the river and its management beyond being a riparian owner, it had a role to keep other stakeholders who did to account.

05/24 BATHING WATER STATUS

The Town Clerk reported that since being granted Bathing Water Status, she had monthly meetings with Tom Coekin from the West Midlands Integrated Environmental Planning Team at the Environment Agency to initially discuss the formal extent of the Bathing Water Status Designation and where testing would be carried out from and subsequently details of the results. There had been no testing results that had been a cause for concern to the Environment Agency. The Environment Agency had commented on how co-operative and supportive Severn Trent Water had been regarding this designation. Tom had asked to be kept updated on this group and would when availability allowed attend.

As part of the Designation the Environment Agency was required to develop an action plan for the area and were keen to learn about any activities locally that could be added to that action plan. The Town Clerk would send details of the Safer Rivers Action Plan that was being developed between Shropshire Council and Shrewsbury Town Council.

Gareth Mead reported on Severn Trent's commitment to only one CSO spill during the bathing season and they were working with Offwat on the CSO Reduction Plan.

The content of the Bathing Water Status board had been agreed by DEFRA and the board had been ordered and was due to be delivered and installed shortly.

The Town Council had claimed the allowance from DEFRA to manage the designation; this had been put towards the cost of the board.

Councillor Halliday thanked Alison Biddulph for her persistence in submitting the application in the first place; she believed that this designation would improve water quality.

Simon Blackburn reported on the 7-mile swim in the river on 18th August involving 100 swimmers; none had become ill as a result of the river.

06/24 SEVERN TRENT UPDATE

Gareth Mead reported on Severn Trent Activity. They had held a Roadshow in the summer which had been well received.

Severn Trent was also carrying out sampling in the same location as the Environment Agency on a weekly basis. This involved sampling at Frankwell; 1km, 2km and 3km upstream and 1km downstream by Hercules in the Quarry. There had been a couple of spikes but this had been down to weather conditions. EA & STW Results were mirroring each other.

It was noted that there were cattle upstream that did come down to the river and it was noted there were farming rules about livestock accessing the river [Applying the farming rules for water - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/applying-the-farming-rules-for-water). This was designed to protect riverbanks from excessive erosion. It was reported that any such incidents need to be reported to the EA Hotline 0800 807060.

AMP 8 (5-year Asset Management Period) had been submitted to Offwat and determination was due December 2024 to commence April 2025.

It was noted that Alison Biddulph had been invited to join the Severn Trent Water Independent Advisory Panel.

07/24 FISHERIES UPDATE

It was reported that Bailiffs were continuing to test fortnightly and data was being fed into the Angling Trust, though following the death of Christian Kent there had been delays in publication of reports.

Bailiffs kept a watching brief over the river and reported any incidents. It was also noted that there were natural foaming events on the river which were no cause for concern. Anglers were providing good photographic evidence of incidents.

Of concern lately has been the health of Barbel. A number had been caught presenting with nasty boils on their skin. This had been reported to the Environment Agency who were investigating. A number of Chub had also been caught that were all head and no body. This also was being investigated by the Environment Agency.

Concern remained about the continued spreading of agricultural chemicals up stream, with farmers often spreading sewage on fields in the dark. Andy had made representations to Natural Resources Wales on this matter.

It was noted that Julia Buckley MP was keen to support river health. She had recently been appointed the Chair of the Rivers All Party Parliamentary Group.

It was also noted that Alison Caffyn had recently lodged a Judicial Review application on poultry issues upstream and it may be useful to invite her to a future meeting.

08/24 NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Monday 21st October at 5.00pm via Microsoft Teams.