

**TEWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL
SEVERN HAM COMMITTEE
THURSDAY 27th JULY 2017
Meeting started 9:30 am**

MINUTES

Present: Cllr P Aldridge (Chair), Cllr C Danter, Mr A Purkiss, Mr T Perry, Ms C Corsie

1. Apologies – Cllr P Clatworthy, Mr J Lucas, Ms C Beeching, Ms A Swanson

2. To receive declarations of interest

Cllr Danter declared an interest in Tewkesbury Popular Angling Association. Alan Purkiss an interest in Tewkesbury Commoners.

3. To receive dispensations

None

4. To agree the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 15th June 2017

The Town Clerk left details that Mr T Perry has voting rights which can be used for the meeting held on 15th June 2017 and therefore the last meeting was quorate. The minutes were agreed.

5. To discuss possible future costs incurred by Carver Knowles in dealing with the Environment Agency. Mike Cluley from Carver Knowles will attend the meeting to clarify the Council's contract details.

Mr Cluley said that at the moment there was no Contract.

He outlined what he can offer:

- The fees would normally be £250 minimum, but he will charge us £200 plus VAT.
- Hay auction fees of £500 + vat.
- £100 per hour for dealing with compensation claims by the Council concerning the Ham. Mr Cluley needs an agreement to act on behalf of Tewkesbury Town Council. He would send his terms of business to the Town Clerk.

Current problems involving compensation and restitution:

- A leak that was repaired by Severn Trent has left the valve projecting and it needs to be lowered. The ground is rutted and needs to be reinstated. Mr Perry said that the area affected by the leak is quite big and on Patch 5 the covers are raised. A compensation claim has been made to Severn Trent. Mr Cluley is pursuing them.
- Western Power have asked permission to do repair work on pylons and cables across the Ham. It was proposed by Cllr Aldridge and seconded by Cllr Danter that they should be asked to replace with underground cables instead. The motion was carried. Mr Cluley will pursue with Western Power. It was noted that whatever the outcome, any work schedule was very dependent on floods and soil conditions.
- Environment Agency – claim for reinstatement of sward beneath temporary roadway. It was agreed that it was of utmost importance that the right contractor be employed to

reinstate and this was anticipated to be Mr Perry working closely with Mrs Corsie and Ms Beeching for seed quality, supply etc. Mr Cluley to be the negotiating interface with EA, his fees paid by EA.

6. To discuss clearing undergrowth and raising the crown of the trees to reduce anti-social behaviour on the Ham near the Healings Mill

Cllr Aldridge explained about the copse along the side of the Ham where drug users had been hiding. There was an incidence report made to the Police. Lesa West of TBC had asked Ubico drug taking facility to clear it up. The crown of the trees need to be raised, remove the undergrowth shrubbery so that people can be seen, the Police would also be then able to see into the area. This would reduce the incidence of drug usage. The costs would not be excessive. Approval needs to be given from Natural England. Cllr Aldridge said a proper arboriculture Tree Surgeon would do the work on a yearly cycle.

7. To discuss access to the Ham requested by Sean Kelly at the Environment Agency

Mr Kelly has sought access for vehicles (to transport confiscated equipment) at night to the Ham to prevent illegal fishing of Salmon and Eels. It was decided to invite Mr Kelly to the next meeting to explain the problem and hear the concerns the committee had concerning damage to sward. It was decided to invite Mr Danter, local Angling Club representative, who is very knowledgeable concerning such illegal fishing activities.

Cllr Danter left at 10:20 am

8. To receive a Budget Report

Mr Purkiss confirmed that the Commons would, as in past years when complying with NE requests, put in invoices for reduced grazing period compensation and cattle grazing incentive. Mr Pearman (grazier) would do the same for cattle grazing. These were covered by the "difficult site" supplement within the Stewardship.

9. To receive an update on the commencement of the Bund works

Boyd Henderson of Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust would need to be chased about commencing works in September.

10. To receive an update from the Chairman on Environment Agency and Severn Trent works

Cllr Aldridge said that the Environment Agency has finished the work. The road had been taken up. The sheep proofing fencing needed to put on the existing fencing. This would take place in the next week ready for the sheep. At the Abbey Mill the kissing gate the radar padlock was missing. This needed to be replaced and ordered from Haywards. The invoice should be sent to the Environment Agency who lost the padlock. With regards to signs concerning byways affecting the Ham, Mr Purkiss said that some, possibly all, the information required was included on the new signs placed by TBC at each pedestrian entrance to the Ham. It was agreed that he would check with TBC (Mr Andy Noble) and recommend any further signs that may be necessary. If there were costs involved, the EZ have committed to cover. Mr Purkiss additionally will check the positioning of small way-

marking signs also placed on the Ham by TBC (Mr Perry reported that one was placed inconveniently for hay cutting). TBC are retrospectively seeking NE approval for the signs placed on the Ham.

11. To receive an update from Caroline Corsie, Conservation Advisor and item 13 To discuss the long-term legacy of the Severn Ham
i. Curlew/Nature Reserve

Cllr Aldridge said to do items 11 and 13 together. Plots 1 & 3 the hay has been cut. There is still 1 hectare left of hay to be cut. Curlew had gone, either fledged or predated. Mrs Corsie would work with Mr Perry re Ham mapping including identifying where new marker posts are needed. There was a letter from Mr Pearman re spraying. He said there was a need for greater weed control. There was an acceptance of this and Mrs Corsie will explore with NE a more aggressive weed spraying regime.

“Long Term Legacy of the Ham” meeting – It was agreed that this should be scheduled in September. It would involve this committee along with the Environment Agency – Cathy Beeching and Alicia Swanson. Cllr Aldridge to propose several dates.

12. To consider applying for the title deeds to a contested area of the Ham

Cllr Aldridge asked for £14 to get the title deeds to a small strip of land on the Ham that the Environment Agency said they owned. The spend was agreed by committee.

14. To address the concerns of Alan Purkiss and the Ham Commoners about the Hay cutting dates.

Alan Purkiss asked that if the Hay cutting dates are to be exceeded to tell the Commoners. Cllr Aldridge said the protocol should be tightened up.

The meeting ended at 11:15 am