

TEWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

SEVERN HAM COMMITTEE

MINUTES

of the meeting held on the 10th May 2018

Present: Councillors P Aldridge (Chair), C Danter, J Raywood,

Mr A Purkiss, Mr T Perry, Ms C Corsie

Representing Severn Trent Water: Mr R Thomas, Mr M McKenna, Mr R Cunningham

Mrs D Hill, Town Clerk was present for the second half of the meeting.

Action

1. Apologies:

Mr J Lucas, Ms A Swanson

2. Declarations of interest:

Mr A Purkiss, Clerk to the Commons

3. Dispensations:

None

4. To approve the minutes of the Severn Ham committee meetings held on 9th January and 29th March 2018:

January 9th: Proposed by CD, seconded by AP **Approved**

March 29th : Proposed by CD, seconded by AP **Approved**

5. Matters arising from the minutes:

Severn Trent Water

Representatives from Severn Trent Water presented their written report (previously distributed by email to committee members), as requested in the meeting of 9th January and elaborated on it further:

- Investigations have been carried out to identify the sources of water leaks and these have all, to the best of STW's knowledge, been dealt with. These were a leak on a contractor repair, a split in one of the pipes, and two leaking valves. STW pulled out of the site yesterday.

- Next, an additional process of leak detection will be carried out, using a hydrophone, which uses sound to detect and pin-point accurately the location of leaks and can be guided through the main without becoming stuck or being lost.
- STW have entered plans to ensure the long-term integrity of the main under the Severn Ham into their five-year trunk main maintenance programme. A variety of strategies for this work have been explored and some rejected already. The two older mains pipes under the Ham will be either relined or replaced. Projected costs for the more expensive of these two alternatives have already been budgeted-for but more work needs to be done before the best of these is identified. STW expects to make a definitive decision within the next six months, if not sooner. The relining or replacing of the pipes could take up to two years, depending on the weather. A further two years will allow the grass and flora to become re-established on areas of the sward damaged by the works and by the burst of last December.

Action:

RT agreed that STW has learned a great deal, as a result of the December pipe burst and said that they are building up their own specialised team, which will follow procedures that have been specially created to help them to work on sensitive sites, such as the Severn Ham.

STW

STW has agreed to provide regular feedback with regard to their plans for the site to committee meetings. CC suggested that it would be beneficial to hold part of July's meeting on site.

PA thanked STW for their report and their attendance at the meeting.

Army Cadets

PA has met with the cadets and it has been agreed that they may use the Ham for their orienteering exercise. All relevant paperwork has been signed.

6. Chair's report

Report attached. All issues mentioned therein were all covered in STW's report.

7. Report from Caroline Corsie, Environmental advisor

CC has communicated with A Swanson (NE) over the haymaking procedure for this year. Last years, some of the plots remained unsold, because of their high dock content. We do not have permission from NE to spray the docks, but the flooding caused by December's pipe burst had led to increased dock growth. In the long term, the docks will aerate the ground and the remedial works to the water pipes should mean that the ground will become drier and thus the problem will eventually correct itself. In the meantime, fodder is in short supply, so it is expected that farmers will be prepared to buy the poorer quality hay this year.

Between July and September we need to look at reducing the impact of wheel ruts in the sward. Harrowing might provide the answer. Use of a brush harvester in the area near the Abbey Mill, where the dock are at their most dense would improve the Ham's appearance.

It would also help if we can achieve more balanced grazing, by having more cattle on the Ham.

Action:

The dock problem is bigger than it was. We need to focus on the conditions that cause dock to flourish.

With regard to cutting the hay, Mike Smart has a watching brief on the birds. We currently have two pairs of curlew, plus a lone male, skylarks, reed bunting and corn bunting. It would be in breach of the Countryside Act, to cut in areas where they are still nesting. Mike will tell the hay cutters which areas to avoid.

If we cannot sell the plots with a high dock content we will have to decide how to dispose of them, as the dock's gas content means it cannot be incinerated.

8. Report from Alan Purkiss, Secretary of Tewkesbury Commoners

The report, attached, was received and noted.

9. To discuss the removal of fencing erected by the Environment Agency

The fencing running south from the Mill crossing was not authorised and must be removed.

The fencing that was erected during works on the sluice should also be removed. EA has asked for permission to bring vehicles onto site, and also soil to fill in the holes left by fence posts. Permission denied. The contractor is Boyd Henderson, who also built the bund. PA will contact him and ask him to use the remaining spoil from the bund works, combined with either sand or gravel, to fill the holes.

PA

PA will write to EA about the removal of the fences.

PA

10. To agree to submit a Water Environment Grant application

CC, who prepared the grant application, explained that she has liaised with Jenny Parson (Catchment Basins Partnership Secretariat) and also Alisa Swanson (NE), both of whom support our application. Our request is for £23,500 to cover the costs of obtaining a feasibility study and hydrology survey, to aid us in future-proofing the Severn Ham against negative impacts. The report could be used to help us to obtain bigger grants to carry out strategies identified within it. No matched funding is needed. The money would have to be spent by the end of March 2019. CC asked the committee to approve the application.

CC

Proposed by PA, seconded by JR **Approved**

We should know by September whether or not the application has been successful.

11. To authorise Councillor Aldridge to arrange for the contractor to return to repair faults at the bund footpath.

PA has already contacted Boyd Henderson. The work will be done during the next two weeks.

PA

12. To discuss communication procedures for committee members

Action:

AP requested that email communications are acknowledged as a matter of course. PA accepted the point but said that he had experienced problems with emails recently.

AP observed that the report from STW was not on our agenda. PA explained that STW representatives themselves didn't know they could come until after the deadline by which our agenda had had to be issued.

TP left the meeting at this time (11.05 am)

13. To discuss the information audit (Scope of GDPR) in relation to this committee

Consent must be sought from lay members of this committee if the Town Council is to continue to contact them by email without using BCC. AP and CC gave their permission there and then. JL and TP are to be contacted with regard to this.

Clerk

14. To note receipts and payments for 2017/18

Noted

15. To receive a budget report for 2017/18

Received

16. To approve cheques for payment

2 cheques for the Severn Ham Committee approved and signed
8 further cheques related to other committees also approved and signed

17. Correspondence

None

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 11.30 am.

Signature of chairman

Date