



TEWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES

of the

Severn Ham Committee meeting held on 6th December 2018
In the Mayor's Parlour at the Town Hall, High Street, Tewkesbury

Present: Cllrs P Aldridge (Chair), J Raywood, C Danter (Mayor), Mr A Purkiss, Mr J Lucas, Ms C Corsie

In attendance: J King (Assistant to the Town Clerk)

SH 18/001 To receive apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Ms A Swanson, Mr T Perry & Mr M Cluley

SH 18/002 To record declarations of interest

Mr A Purkiss – Clerk to the Commoners

SH 18/003 To consider requests for dispensations

None received.

SH 18/004 To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 1st October 2018

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 1st October 2018.
Proposed by Cllr Aldridge, seconded by Cllr J Raywood.

SH 18/005 Matters arising from the minutes – for information only

Mr Purkiss requested the removal of one sentence from the Chair's report. This was agreed.

Cllr Danter arrived at 9.13am.

SH 18/006 To receive the Chair's report

Leaks to the pipes have been repaired. The northern end leak was due to corrosion of the pipes. The one that feeds the trough has been relined.

The leak at the southern end has been tested. There is no chlorine present and it is therefore just rainwater on low lying ground where the water is not draining away. It is providing a nice habitat for birds, so no action will be taken.

Discussions were had regarding the length of the sward, the unusual growing environment this year and how the long term effects of the changing environment are dealt with. There has been a tough grass that has spread across the Ham this year, which is quick growing, which it could be claimed meant the grass was 2-4" over 50% of the land and the grazing agreement had been met. Going forward it



TEWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

would be wise to recognise that this measurement should be for productive grazing rather than the tough grass. **Action:** The Committee should track this concern going forward.

Ongoing maintenance work is required to the trees on the circumference of the Severn Ham. **Action:** Cllr Aldridge to arrange for Council's appointed tree surgeon to walk the area and provide advice on next steps.

There is an issue regarding ash dieback. The usual advice is that it is cut and burnt on site, but this is not possible on an SSSI. The dieback is going to create an unknown environment for unknown species. **Action:** Further advice will be required from Ms Corsie regarding how to deal with ash dieback on the Severn Ham

SH 18/007

To receive an update from Caroline Corsie, Environmental Advisor

The northern water leak was an issue as it contained chlorine. The impact that this will have on the flora and fauna on site is unknown. Peter has reported that southern leak is potable.

Ms Corsie advised that the ash tree by the big weir should be the first one for the tree surgeon to look at and that there are creative uses for the logs coming off these trees. They can be left onsite but need to be above the flood plain.

The trough is broken. **Action:** Assistant to the Town Clerk to arrange repair.

It was a very unusual grazing season and the sheep remained on the Ham. The sheep mortality rate was investigated and was within normal expectations. It is recommended that a flock or herd health plan was included within the Commons contract. **Action:** Ms Corsie to provide suggestions for the next meeting. Mr Purkiss stated that the Commons Committee would co-operate with any suggestions made by Ms Corsie.

It was suggested that hay from the Ham should be kept in case of the need for supplementary feeding, especially if the Ham is grazed by cattle instead of sheep next year, as the hay used must be certified.

The seed to restore the sward has been sown. This is part of the ongoing restoration project. **Action:** Press release when the seed has germinated regarding the restoration.

Docks continue to be an issue on the Ham. It was **RESOLVED** that Ms Corsie is given authority to approach Natural England for a derogation to spray docks in the southern one third of the site in the Spring on behalf of the Severn Ham Committee. Proposed by Cllr Aldridge, seconded by Mr Purkiss.



TEWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Thanks were given to the volunteers who continue to litter pick on the Ham.

Sites for nest boxes need to be agreed, so that they are not installed on trees that are being removed.

Zara Turtle, Environmental Adviser at Severn Trent has announced a new initiative called 'Productive Partnerships'. Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust recently secured a significant grant. **Action:** Cllr Aldridge to contact Mr McKenna regarding requirements for grants.

Ms Corsie asked if a decision had been made on the EA track? Mr Purkis advised that the decision was to make an eel pass on the Ham, as this was the option with the minimum amount of intrusion. Cllr Aldridge advised that he had not been contacted regarding the decision.

SH 18/008

To receive an update on the Water Environment Grant application

The grant application was unsuccessful and there is no feedback yet. In order to be successful a higher score will be required and there needs to be a stronger vision, with tangible items and milestones. A separate meeting is required to discuss future proofing and future plans, which is likely to contain a number of projects.

SH 18/009

To receive a report from Alan Purkiss on the grazing contract

All requested changes have been made to the Grazier Arrangement and the compensation has been paid to the Commons due to the agreed reduction to the grazing period; in order to preserve the sward.

The sheep were removed on 30th November as per the agreement. There was positive feedback regarding the keeping of dogs on leads around the sheep during the grazing season.

It has been suggested that cattle are used on the Ham next year and the Commons are investigating the possibility of sourcing them from some rare breeds owned by Gloucester City Council. It was agreed that information regarding how to act around cattle and information about the rare breeds would be displayed if cattle are used.

The Commons also raised concerns about the futureproofing of the Ham, not just the sward, particularly in terms of its benefit to the community and how it will be used and protected in the future.

SH 18/010

To receive an update from Mike Cluley on claims to Severn Trent Water and the Environment Agency



TEWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

A written report was received from Mr Cluley. The major burst area is still full of water and this is being investigated. A new leak has appeared towards the valves at the northern end of the Ham. It looks like it might be on the pipeline serving Healings Mill. It is understood that STWL have been made aware of it.

A compensation sum of £14,924.50 has been agreed with Dalcour Maclaren as compensation for the reinstatement carried out on the Ham by Mr Perry, the seed purchased from Emorsgate and the additional time spent by Ms Corsie in dealing with the issues raised.

The EA are currently disputing whether they should pay any compensation for the reinstatement of the track carried out by Mr Perry. An update will be provided at the next meeting.

Western Power's contractors (Amey) replaced some poles on the Ham in October. They made a very tidy job and barely left a mark.

SH 18/011 To note receipts and payments for September, October & November 2018

The receipts and payments were noted.

SH 18/012 To receive the committee budget report

The committee budget report was received and discussed.

A question was raised regarding the timing of the Single Payment.

Action: Assistant to the Town Clerk to check with Mr Cluley regarding when it is expected.

The payment from Natural England, is received in a 75% / 25% split.

Action: Ms Corsie to confirm the expected date of the second payment.

The compensation coming from Severn Trent will cover the overspend in the Hay Sowing Project.

SH 18/013 To consider and agree the virement of £2,350 from Ancillary Management and Salaries to IT, under the Finance Committee

It was **RESOLVED** to vire £2,350 from Ancillary Management and Salaries to IT, under the Finance Committee. Proposed by Cllr Aldridge, seconded by Cllr Raywood.

SH 18/014 To consider and agree the payment of Graziers on the Severn Ham

To be deferred to the future proofing meeting.

SH 18/015 To consider and agree the auctioning of the hay from the Severn Ham

To be deferred to the next meeting.



TEWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

SH 18/016 To consider and agree any future actions regarding the application for a memorial bench on the Severn Ham from Helen Davis

The meeting reminded itself that any applications for benches should conform with the Tewkesbury Town Council policy on memorial benches.

It is thought that there are currently two sites on the Severn Ham where there are plinths, but no benches. The closest to the Mill has been allocated to Graham Shepherd to provide a memorial bench for his wife Peggy. The second site is thought to be further south on the Ham, but the location needs to be checked.

Action: Cllr Aldridge to check the location of the south site on the Ham.

Further to confirmation that the site on the south side of the Ham complies with the current memorial bench policy, it was **RESOLVED** to agree the application for a memorial bench on the Severn Ham from Helen Davis. Proposed by Mr Purkiss, seconded by Cllr Danter.

SH 18/017 To agree wording for notices regarding the riding of bikes, lighting of fires, dogs on leads, accessibility etc

Deferred to the next meeting.

Action: Assistant to the Town Clerk to provide draft words for notices.

SH 18/018 To consider and agree future actions regarding futureproofing the Severn Ham

It was agreed that a separate meeting was required to discuss the futureproofing of the Severn Ham. It was proposed that a working group meet on either Thursday 17th January or Thursday 24th January.

SH 18/019 To approve the payments list

There were no payments for approval

SH 18/020 Correspondence

Correspondence was received from the Rural Payments Agency regarding the transfer of responsibility for Countryside Stewardship and Environmental Stewardship schemes from Natural England to the Secretary of State for Environment, food and Rural Affairs, with effect from 1st October 2018.

No action is required by Tewkesbury Town Council.

The meeting closed at 10.30am.

Signature of Chairman upon approval of the minutes7th February 2019