



**TEWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL**

MINUTES

*of the*

Severn Ham Committee meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2019  
*In the Mayor's Parlour at the Town Hall, High Street, Tewkesbury*

**Present:** Cllrs P Aldridge (Chair), J Raywood, C Danter (Mayor), Mr J Lucas, Ms C Corsie, Mr T Perry,

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

**SH 18/037 To receive apologies for absence**  
Apologies were received from Mr A Purkiss, Mr M Cluley & Mr M McKenna

**SH 18/038 To record declarations of interest**  
Mr Perry – Hay making

**SH 18/039 To consider requests for dispensations**  
None received.

**SH 18/040 To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2019**  
It was RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2019, subject to the removal of the word 'temporary' in SH 18/032. Proposed by Cllr J Raywood, seconded by Cllr Danter.

**SH 18/041 Matters arising from the minutes – for information only**  
SH18/026 – Water analysis – details of how the water analysis was carried out were provided by Mr McKenna.  
SH18/027 – Nesting signage – action complete. The Town Council would like to thank Mike Smart for his assistance in erecting the signs.  
SH18/031 Wildlife records – recording sheet received from GERC  
**Action:** Assistant to the Town Clerk to publicise the ability to record wildlife seen on the Severn Ham at the Town Hall.  
SH18/032 Working group meeting – next meeting date is 25<sup>th</sup> April 2019  
SH18/033 – Angling Club – complete  
SH18/034 – Signs on the Severn Ham - complete

**SH 18/042 To receive the Chair's report**  
Included within report from Caroline Corsie.



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**SH 18/043**

**To receive an update from Caroline Corsie, Environmental Advisor**

Natural England require derogations in order to give ascent for activities of ST Water and for during the bird nesting season. There are currently three pairs of curlew checking out the site.

Three derogations have been sent, regarding the Severn Trent pathway and an early cut and two regarding the spraying of docks. All derogations should be used in conjunction with confirmation from Mike Smart and Link Ecology that there are no curlews in the planned areas. It is important to document all actions taken and who permission was granted by. Permission may be required from the Commoners under the Commons Act, to facilitate a change to the cutting schedule.

**Action:** Assistant to Town Clerk to check with Mr Purkiss regarding Commoners requirements.

Severn Trent are finalising their planning for the work on site. Rob Cunningham is the Environmental Lead and main contact for the project. Soil analysis and water analysis will be done as part of the process. The first stage is a series of bore holes along the line of where they are going to dig. Severn Trent are still waiting on approval from various regulatory bodies, including what to do with any additional soil left over after the pipe has been replaced, as the Environment Agency will consider it waste. Tewkesbury Town Council's role will be to inform and educate people as to the actions taking place with both the replacement of the pipe and the spraying of the docks.

**Dock Spraying**

Options for dock spraying were discussed. Drones have been used, but skylarks have been known to attack drones. Burning the docks is not an option and electrocution cannot cover an area this large. Spraying needs to take place from a small quad and on foot, by an ecological expert who can identify and avoid any nesting birds in the area. All spraying will be marked with a blue dye and ideally completed by the end of April. The spray used will only affect the docks and the grasses will be unaffected. It is likely that the previous leaks on the Ham have created strong conditions for docks to flourish, as they were not there before. It is important for this work to take place in order for the hay to still have a value, as otherwise the Town Council would have to cut and dispose of the hay, which would be significantly more expensive. The Weeds Act 1959 also remains in force, which states that it is necessary to attempt to control the docks and this is part of the Higher Level Stewardship requirements.

It was RESOLVED to appoint Midland Arboricultural and Woodland Services Ltd to carry out the specialist dock spraying on the Severn Ham and to propose to Full Council that they be added to the list of Preferred Contractors.  
Proposed by Cllr Danter, seconded by Cllr Raywood.



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Severn Trent have appointed Middlemarch as their consultants who will do the soil sampling. They are also having a day of consultancy from the Floodplain Meadow Partnership which will answer the question as to whether there is any point in exploring enhanced species diversity in the southern half of the site.

Higher Level Stewardship form for 2019 has been submitted.

**Action:** Obtain copies of permissions Severn Trent have received from the Environment Agency for the planned work.

**Action:** Obtain reports from Mike Smart, via Rob Cunningham and also cc Mike Cluley so all informed as to actions being taken and up to date information.

**SH 18/044**      **To receive a report from Alan Purkiss on the grazing contract**  
No changes from the last meeting.

**SH 18/045**      **To receive an update from Mike Cluley on claims to Severn Trent Water and the Environment Agency**  
A written report was received from Mr Cluley.  
Compensation report from Severn Trent has now been received by Carver Knowles. Preferred date for 2019 hay auction is Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> May in the Corn Exchange. The donner hay project will continue this year from plots one and three.  
**Action:** Assistant to Town Clerk to write to Mr Cluley to confirm that the Severn Ham Committee believe that the reinstatement completed by the Environment Agency was inadequate and they wish to continue to pursue appropriate compensation.

**SH 18/046**      **To note receipts and payments for February & March 2019**  
The receipts and payments were noted.

**SH 18/047**      **To receive the committee budget report and to agree the year end actions**  
The budget report was noted.  
It was RESOLVED to carry forward two items as earmarked reserves:  
Weeding                      £2,000 – to cover dock works  
Tree Conservation        £5,000 – to cover tree survey and actions  
Proposed by Cllr Raywood, seconded by Cllr Danter.

**SH 18/048**      **To discuss and agree a programme of sward monitoring and cutting for the Severn Ham for 2019**  
The 1809 Act originally stated the number of animals that could graze on the Severn Ham (up to 800 sheep). The issue is that the size of animal has increased over the last 200 years. It is thought that animals are now 50% bigger than they were in 1809 and therefore logic suggests that there should be 50% fewer animals on the Severn Ham.



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There are standard formula for calculating the number of animals on an area of land, but they vary depending on the land, animal and the animal's age. For example: 60 hectares (including resting scrub), with 1.4 livestock units per hectare and 6 ewes per livestock unit would be 504 sheep.

The committee felt it is necessary to obtain advice on the size of sheep and breed in 1809 and how many sheep would be the equivalent now, when grazed on land after a hay crop.

**Action:** Assistant to the Town Clerk to write to Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester and the National Sheep Association, Malvern for advice.

**SH 18/049**      **To discuss and agree next steps regarding the sighting of otters / mink on the Severn Ham**

There are definitely otters around the Severn Ham. They are depleting the fish, but the fish stocks are ok. It is possible that there are minks around and this needs to be monitored. Mink are very shy and it is unusual to get mink and otter in the same area. Mink are often misidentified as a young otter. Mink are not a desirable species.

**Action:** To continue to monitor sightings of mink / otter.  
To add to futureproofing agenda on 25<sup>th</sup> April.

**SH 18/050**      **To discuss and agree the mapping of the docks and dock spraying on the Severn Ham**

Further to the discussions detailed in Ms Corsie's report:

It was RESOLVED to carry out the digital mapping of the docks as detailed in the quotation from Midland Arboricultural and Woodland Services Ltd; dated 7<sup>th</sup> March 2019, at a cost of £870 + VAT.

Proposed by Cllr Raywood, seconded by Cllr Danter.

It was RESOLVED to carry out the spraying of the docks as detailed in the quotation from Midland Arboricultural and Woodland Services Ltd; dated 7<sup>th</sup> March 2019, at a cost of £4180 + VAT per annum, for the first year, with the option to extend for an additional two years, subject to an annual review on the management of docks.

Proposed by Cllr Raywood, seconded by Cllr Danter.

**SH 18/051**      **To discuss and agree next steps for tree maintenance and monitoring ash dieback on the Severn Ham**

The ash trees by the weir and the willows need work. The committee agreed that a full tree survey would be beneficial to plan future works.

**Action:** Assistant to Town Clerk to liaise with Cllr Aldridge regarding quotes and timings for a full tree survey.



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**SH 18/052 To approve the payments list**  
The payments list was approved.  
Proposed by Cllr Raywood, seconded by Cllr Danter.

**SH 18/053 Correspondence**  
None received.

The meeting closed at 10.45am.

Signature of Chairman upon approval of the minutes .....6<sup>th</sup> June 2019

DRAFT