

TEWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES

of the

Severn Ham Committee meeting held on 7th February 2019
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 18/021 To receive apologies for absence

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

SH 18/022 To record declarations of interest

Mr A Purkiss – Clerk to the Commoners

SH 18/023 To consider requests for dispensations

None received.

SH 18/024 To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 6th December 2018

It was RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 6th December 2018. Proposed by Cllr J Raywood, seconded by Cllr Aldridge.

SH 18/025 Matters arising from the minutes – for information only

SH18/006 – Sward length – monitor on ongoing basis. Reed grasses are harder grass. Need to have fixed points and monitor what is the impact of climate change and new seeds.

SH18/006 – Maintenance of trees – ongoing

SH18/006 – Ash dieback – A map with the locations of the ash trees on the site would be a useful addition. It is predicted that it will kill all ash in the country, the issue is that once a tree is infected, the roots let go and it becomes vulnerable to falling.

SH18/007 – The trough has been fixed.

SH 18/026 To receive the Chair's report

There has been no work on the Ham since the last meeting.

The water lying on the ground has an absence of chlorine and is therefore not coming from the Mythe. It could be a spring, which would be a great asset and may even create a wetland.

Action: Continue to watch the area, as the ST works to the soil in the area may change the behaviour of the suspected spring. Assistant to the Town Clerk to request chemical analysis of water taken from the area from ST.

SH 18/027 To receive an update from Caroline Corsie, Environmental Advisor

The Chair thanked Ms Corsie for a very useful report, bringing the committee up to date on the changes that are expected in the next few years.

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Cllr Danter joined the meeting.

The nesting bird signs, requiring dogs to be kept on leads, need to be erected by the end of March.

Action: Assistant to the Town Council to speak to Ms Corsie regarding the locations.

Would it be possible for volunteers to give out doggy bags and engage in conversation with walkers at the beginning of the season? Dog fouling can cause issues for grazing animals.

Ms Corsie has been feeding the birds down the bund. Could ask for a count, perhaps the young friends would like to get involved?

SH 18/028 **To receive a report from Alan Purkiss on the grazing contract**
No changes from the last meeting.

SH 18/029 **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.

SH 18/030 **To note receipts and payments for December 2018 & January 2019**
The receipts and payments were noted.

SH 18/031 **To receive the committee budget report**
The committee budget report was received and discussed.

The Committee discussed the nesting project and how it can be used to educate people about the wildlife on the Severn Ham. It is necessary to know which trees are staying, before boxes can be put up for owls, harvest mice & bats.

Tewkesbury Nature Reserve reports its findings and it is always useful to do so. Gloucestershire Environmental Records Centre (GERC) is affiliated with the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust.

Action: Assistant to Town Council to ask for records book to start recording what is seen on the Ham and reporting it to GERC.

The variances on the budget were discussed. **Action:** Assistant to the Town Council to ask Mr Cluley for a copy of the protocol re: repairs and money from Severn Trent.

SH 18/032 **To review the questions raised from the Working Group of the Severn Ham, held on 24th January 2019 and to agree the next steps**

Should the Severn Ham be a nature reserve?

Should the Severn Ham move from an agricultural basis?

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The committee discussed the need to know more about the Ham itself and to investigate productive partnerships with CaBA, Tewkesbury Nature Reserve, Floodplains Meadow Partnership, EA etc.

Discussions for future proofing to be discussed further at another working group meeting. Including considering:

Should we lease the Ham to Glos Wildlife Trust or someone more consistent, rather than new Councillors every 4 years?

The Town Council is the custodian, what are the criteria for future funding?

Influences on other areas of the Severn and who else should we be talking to?

Potential for community involvement and being engaged with the Severn Ham.

Is it possible to start seed collection from the site ourselves?

To what extent should nature be left to have her say? How much interference should there be from man?

It was felt that a full hydrological, botanical and opportunity report is required in order to make informed decisions about the Ham. Whatever decisions are made should be supported by data, rather than a gut feeling. An average report costs £30,000 and independent narrower report could cost £5,000.

Action: Cllr Aldridge to talk to Severn Trent about the possibility of funding a hydrological & botanical study.

Proposed by Cllr J Raywood, seconded by Mr Purkiss.

Action: Assistant to the Town Clerk to set a date for a further working group meeting.

SH 18/033 To discuss and approve a request from Tewkesbury Angling Club for an additional key to the bridges leading over to the Severn Ham

The committee believes that both gates are combination locks.

Action: Chairman to liaise with Tewkesbury Angling Club

SH 18/034 To agree wording for notices regarding the riding of bikes, lighting of fires, dogs on leads, accessibility etc

The Committee discussed the current noticeboards. It was agreed to update the notices to include a map of the Ham, information regarding curlews and the requirement for dogs to be on leads between March and July, together with emergency numbers and location.

It was RESOLVED to delegate authority for the wording of notices and updating of the noticeboard to the Assistant to the Town Clerk.

Proposed by Cllr Aldridge, seconded by Cllr J Raywood.

SH 18/035 To approve the payments list

The payments list was approved.

Proposed by Cllr Aldridge, seconded by Cllr Danter.

SH 18/036 Correspondence

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None received.

The meeting closed at 10.26am .

Signature of Chairman upon approval of the minutes4th April 2019