

TEWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES

of the

Severn Ham Committee meeting held on 6th June 2019
In the Mayor's Parlour at the Town Hall, High Street, Tewkesbury

Present: Cllrs P Aldridge (Chair), J Raywood, Mr J Lucas, Ms C Corsie, Mr T Perry, Cllr C Cody, Mr A Purkiss

In attendance: J King (Assistant Town Clerk)
1 member of the public

SH 19/001 To receive apologies for absence
Apologies were received from Cllr V Smith & Cllr C Danter.

SH 19/002 To record declarations of interest
Mr T Perry – Hay Making.

SH 19/003 To consider requests for dispensations
None received.

SH 19/004 To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 4th April 2019
It was RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 4th April 2019.
Proposed by Cllr J Raywood, seconded by Mr Perry.

SH 19/005 Matters arising from the minutes – for information only
SH18/031 Wildlife records – **Action:** Set up Severn Ham Facebook page.
SH18/043 Change to cutting schedule – complete
SH18/043 Severn Trent pipeline replacement – copy permissions requested
SH18/045 Reinstatement email – complete
SH18/048 Sheep size request – complete
SH18/051 Tree survey – ongoing, combining with full Town tree survey

Mr Purkiss & Mr Lucas arrived at this point.

SH 19/006 To receive an update from Caroline Corsie, Environmental Advisor

Dock update – the derogation for dock spraying with Grazon Pro was received from Natural England. Unfortunately, the weather conditions have meant that spraying has not been possible within the appropriate time window. The derogation shows that there was intention to control the docks as part of the Weeds Act.

The Higher Level Stewardship expires in just over a year, therefore there is an increased possibility of an inspection from the Rural Payments Agency. Committee members discussed preparing for an inspection and the documents that would be required. **Action:** Assistant Town Clerk & Ms Corsie to meet to run through the documents that would be required during an inspection.

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ST Water – The additional leaks mean that the docks have vastly increased. Severn Trent need to consider an Environmental Assessment report before further work is done. If a decision is made to spray again, Natural England may require this report. The positive news about the leaks is that they have left the northern side of the Ham wetter than normal and there is a breeding pair of curlew.

Ms Corsie is visiting Mythe Water Works in a few weeks to see the plant. There is a likelihood of herbicides in the Severn that are suppressing the plants on the Ham. This run off is likely to be coming from agricultural practices in Shropshire and Worcestershire.

It would be recommended that a report is created by the ecological consultants which demonstrates how the damage caused by the installation of the new pipeline is going to be repaired and monitored for confirmation of successful reinstatement over several years. Natural England may be required to confirm this report.

HLS Claim Form – Single Payment continues to suffer from delays at the RPA.

A question was asked as to whether crow scarers are disturbing the Curlew? At present there does not seem to be any impact.

SH 19/007

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

The compensation payment from Severn Trent arrived in May, for the remedial work carried out last year.

Ms Corsie reported that she had spoken to Mr Cluley regarding talking to Severn Trent to ensure that everyone has the same information regarding the ecological report.

The pipeline replacement work that Severn Trent need to carry out will compromise the HLS and it is imperative that this is understood by all parties. There needs to be recognition that Tewkesbury Town Council has carried out all of the actions they could to mitigate the impact and that the implications of not reinstating the land properly could cause a financial loss to the Council. An agreement is required to ensure that any deviation from the reinstatement plan, resulting in a loss of income to the Town Council will be covered by Severn Trent. This plan needs to be endorsed by Natural England. There need to be detailed plans from Severn Trent on how the Ham will be restored and monitored for at least three years after the work is completed. The Town Council wishes to see the contingency plans for if protected birds species nest in the way of the works.

Severn Trent also need to provide a plan as to how they plan to deal with the docks, as part of the consultation of how to solve the issue moving forward. The change in indicative plants, show that the circumstances have changed and the annual dock

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control has been compromised by the area being too wet – due to leaks from the pipeline.

Action: Assistant Town Clerk, Ms Corsie & Cllr Aldridge to write to Mr Cluley to detail the above to Severn Trent.

SH 19/008 To note receipts and payments for April 2019

The receipts and payments were noted.

SH 19/009 To receive the committee budget report

The budget report was noted.

The HLS ends in September 2020 and the exact options available at this time are not known and need to be clarified with Natural England.

Action: Assistant Town Clerk to liaise with Natural England and Mr Cluley regarding options from September 2020.

SH 19/010 To discuss the recent unauthorised vehicular access to the Severn Ham and to agree any further actions

Western Power recently accessed the Severn Ham without permission from Tewkesbury Town Council. When questioned, Town council advised that permission had been granted by the grazier.

Action: Assistant Town Clerk to write to Mr Pearman confirming that he has no authority to grant access to the Severn Ham or to release the gate codes to any parties.

Action: Sign to be placed on Healings Mill access gate, that all access to the Severn Ham must be authorised in advance by Tewkesbury Town Council.

The Cadets have also been using the Severn Ham, but have now been advised to wait until the end of July, when the curlew have fledged.

Action: Cllr Aldridge to confirm in writing to the cadets

SH 19/011 To discuss the grazing on the Severn Ham and the response from the National Sheep Association regarding increased sheep sizes and to agree any next steps

The Committee discussed the response from the National Sheep Association that sheep in 1809 would have been significantly smaller than today and that on an area of 60 hectares today, the recommended average number of sheep would be around 400.

Mr Purkiss advised that the Act specifies that up to 1000 sheep can be on the Severn Ham (not 800 as specified in the April minutes. Mr Purkiss also questioned the logic that if sheep were now twice the size, then half the number would be required). The key issue is the length of the sward. If it falls below 7cm it then continued grazing is an issue. Another issue is the usable sward, as a large part of the site is damaged and has either very thin grass, or reed grass that is not suitable for grazing.

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Discussions were had as to whether cattle would be a better option, as this is the preferred option with Natural England. Mr Purkiss stated the will of the Commoners to be flexible and comply with requests from the Town Council. The Trustees have the right to reduce the numbers of animals on the Ham within the terms of the trust.

Action: Ms Corsie & Mr Purkiss to discuss the options for grazing, taking into consideration what should be done to retain the length of the sward and make a recommendation to Tewkesbury Town Council, for referral to the Commoners if required.

Questions were raised about the welfare of the animals and Councillors wish to see the flock health plan. **Action:** Assistant to Town Clerk to ask Mr Cluley for a copy of the flock health plan from the grazier.

- SH 19/012 To discuss magnet fishing on the Severn Ham and agree any actions**
It was RESOLVED that no magnet fishing should take place from the banks of the Severn Ham.
Proposed by Cllr Aldridge, seconded by Cllr Raywood.
- SH 19/013 To resolve that drone flying be prohibited on the Severn Ham, unless prior permission has been obtained from Tewkesbury Town Council**
It was RESOLVED that drone flying be prohibited on the Severn Ham, unless prior permission has been obtained from Tewkesbury Town Council.
Proposed by Cllr Aldridge, seconded by Cllr J Raywood.
- SH 19/014 To obtain retrospective approval for maintenance works carried out on the Severn Ham by Ben Perry & Robert Jackson**
Retrospective approval for the maintenance works carried out on the Severn Ham was given for the following payments was given:
B Perry - Donner Hay & flail topping - £1400
B Perry – Repairs due to Environment Agency works at Abbey Mill - £1930
B Perry – Repairs due to Severn Trent burst water main - £3470
R Jackson – Removal of hay bales - £550
Proposed by Cllr Raywood, seconded by Cllr Aldridge.
- SH 19/015 To resolve to add Ben Perry & Robert Jackson to the approved retained contractor list**
It was RESOLVED to add Ben Perry & Robert Jackson to the approved retained contractor list. Proposed by Cllr Raywood, seconded by Cllr Aldridge.

It was suggested that Public Liability and Public Indemnity Insurance and site risk assessments should be provided by all contractors before work is carried out.
- SH 19/016 To agree to Caroline Corsie being Environmental Adviser to Tewkesbury Town Council for the forthcoming year**
It was RESOLVED to appoint Caroline Corsie as the Environmental Adviser to Tewkesbury Town Council for the forthcoming year.

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Proposed by Cllr Aldridge, seconded by Cllr Raywood.

SH 19/017 To agree to Carver Knowles representing Tewkesbury Town Council for the forthcoming year

It was RESOLVED that Carver Knowles will represent Tewkesbury Town Council for the forthcoming year.

Proposed by Cllr Raywood, seconded by Cllr Aldridge.

Mr Purkiss asked for clarification on the matters he may vote on.

Action: Assistant Town Clerk to investigate and reply.

SH 19/018 To approve the payments list

No payments list

SH 19/019 Correspondence

None received.

The meeting closed at 10.33am.

Signature of Chairman upon approval of the minutes18th July 2019

The next Futureproofing meeting will take place on Thursday 27th June at 9am.

