

TEWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES

of the

Severn Ham Committee meeting

Remotely via Zoom on 10th September 2020 at 9.00am

Present: Cllrs P Aldridge (Chair), J Raywood, C Cody, S Raywood, C Danter, Ms C Corsie, Mr J Lucas, Mr A Purkiss, Mr M McKenna, Mr S Kerr

In attendance: J King (Assistant Town Clerk)

SH 20/016 To receive apologies for absence
Apologies were received from Mr Cluley

SH 20/017 To record declarations of interest
Mr Purkiss – Clerk to the Commoners

SH 20/018 To consider requests for dispensations
None received.

SH 20/019 To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 25th June 2020
It was RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 25th June 2020.
Proposed by Cllr J Raywood, seconded by Cllr Cody.

SH 20/020 Matters arising from the minutes – for information only
SH19/051 Additional Trough – ST investigating – ongoing.
SH19/056 Land ownership issue – has been submitted – ongoing.
SH19/082 Environmental Watching Brief – with Severn Trent – ongoing.
SH19/084 Boost for Diversity funding – ongoing.
SH20/008 Drone operator – ongoing
SH20/015 Bikes & BBQs – Facebook posts – complete
SH20/015 Riparian clearance - ongoing

SH 20/021 Public Participation
There was no public participation.

SH 20/022 To receive an update from the Chair
The Chair reported that any items he wished to raise were covered in the rest of the agenda.

SH 20/023 To receive an update from Severn Trent Water
The November 2019 failure has been repaired together with a further leak on the Ham. Permanent acoustic monitors have been installed across the whole of the pipeline. Committee members were advised that any evidence of leaks can be reported directly to Matt McKenna.
Five trial holes were dug in August in order to confirm all of the connections required and assist with the design work. It is hoped that the design work will be finished in

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early October with work commencing in April (weather permitting) completion by early October 2021.

Severn Trent will use the Severn Ham Facebook page to share information about the works with the people of Tewkesbury and they have a Customer Engagement Team who will be in touch soon.

A Committee member asked about the concrete and metal above ground at Lower Avon and asked if this would be expanded. They were advised that they will attempt to minimise it, but it is likely that the concrete contains valves. Any changes that will be made will be for the better and improve the site.

SH 20/024

To receive an update from Caroline Corsie, Environmental Advisor

Species diversity restoration work has been completed for this year on plots 1, 2 & 3. Aim is that this area will provide donor hay within four to five years.

A report was received of giant hogweed and Japanese knotweed on the Ham, but neither have been found. There is Himalayan balsam on site, but the nettles are doing a good job of holding it at bay. Balsam is good for bees, but it may be possible to hold a working party to remove it next May / June. Cllr Cody was happy to help co-ordinate the working party.

With the HLS rolling over annually, there is no capital works money and it may be necessary to look at how the scrub is managed, largely the docks at the Southern end of the Ham.

Ms Corsie has approached Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust to consider the Severn Ham as part of their ELMS pilots. It may be possible to take the model and trial it on the Severn Ham even if not included.

Action: Ms Corsie & Assistant Town Clerk to trial the model on the Severn Ham and report back.

Ms Corsie has received training on producing simple nature videos, which the Town Council can then share on the Severn Ham Facebook page.

Action: Ms Corsie & Assistant Town Clerk to liaise regarding this.

A Committee Member asked about the oilseed rape that grows on the Ham. Ms Corsie advised that it is a relative of oilseed rape, it is not a cause for concern and provides a fantastic seed source for sparrows.

Ken Colbourne has been appointed to provide a diversity report to Severn Trent. Ms Corsie will liaise with Severn Trent to find out the latest information.

SH 20/025

To receive an update from Mike Cluley, Carver Knowles

Mr Cluley provided a written report outlining the proposed restoration work to the area where the leak has just been fixed. It is proposed that Mr B Perry is contracted by Severn Trent to carry out the remedial work and that appropriate seed from Emorsgate (type to be advised by Ms Corsie) is used. Given the positive growing

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conditions, it is not considered a requirement to fence of the restoration area and Severn Trent's ecologist has suggested that the animals may help bury the seed.

The Committee agreed to this approach and instructed the Assistant Town Clerk to inform Mr Cluley that the work could go ahead on this basis.

It is also hoped that this area may also become a donor area in the future.

SH 20/026 To receive the committee budget report

The committee budget report was received.

SH 20/027 To examine the delinking of BPS and the future financial impact for Tewkesbury Town Council and to agree the first steps in preparing for the introduction of ELMS

The Committee discussed the financial impact of the Basic Payment Scheme, which will lead to a loss in income of approximately £10,000 over the next five years.

Discussions were had regarding the possible first steps for ELMS. It was suggested that one acre of plot 17 be left to go 'wild' and then monitor it and feed this back into the system. It was noted that people do use the path at the Southern end of the Ham more than previously has been the case, this need to be considered if we are looking to encourage the curlew to nest down this end of the Ham

It was RESOLVED to leave one acre 'wild' at the Southern end of the Ham.
Proposed by Mr Lucas, seconded by Cllr Cody.

Action: Assistant to the Town Clerk to write to the Commoners regarding the acre trial site.

SH 20/028 To approve the refurbishment of the bench at the southern end of the Ham

It was RESOLVED to refurbish the bench at the southern end of the Ham at a cost of £295.00

Proposed by Cllr J Raywood, seconded by Mr Purkiss.

SH 20/029 To discuss and agree any actions regarding improving the floristic diversity along the bund

The bund naturally lends itself to being much more floristically diverse, and also provides an important corridor connecting features throughout the site. It would require cutting what is on site, scarifying and planting. Seed would only be that which is already native to the site, with no new introductions. Yellow rattle would be an appropriate seed.

It was felt that improving the flowering plants on the bund would be something positive that residents and visitors would see, set against the works that are going to happen across the Ham next year. It was noted that Natural England would need to approve any work. Committee members discussed the impact of flooding on this, but the bund is not as wet as the field, so will be impacted less.

It was RESOLVED to investigate improving the floristic diversity and acquiring appropriate approval from Natural England for the work.

Proposed by Cllr Aldridge, seconded by Cllr Danter.

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It was agreed to extend the meeting by up to thirty minutes.

- SH 20/030 To discuss the current arrangements regarding hay cutting and grazing and agree any future changes**
Committee members discussed and acknowledged that Climate Change is having an impact on the cutting dates, especially since they were defined in the 1806 Act.
- However, it was felt at present that no official changes were required and that the Commoners would continue to deal informally with required extensions to the cutting period. Mr Purkiss confirmed that the animals would be removed at the point that Ms Corsie advise that the sward is too low.
- SH 20/031 To consider the draft budget for 2021-2022 for the Severn Ham**
The budget was considered – it was requested that the Maintenance (under budget code 4450) be increased to £1500 and the Commoners Grazing costs (under budget code 4850) be decreased to £4500. The budget amount remains unchanged overall.
- SH 20/032 To consider and agree the virement of £4,000 from Ancillary Management to Salaries**
It was RESOLVED to agree the virement of £4,000 from Ancillary Management to Salaries. Proposed by Cllr Danter, seconded by Cllr J Raywood.
- SH 20/033 To approve the payments list**
The payment list totalling £9484.86 was approved.
Proposed by Cllr J Raywood, seconded by Cllr Danter.
- SH 20/034 Correspondence**
The fishing club are cutting grass back around the pegs and volunteered to cut back the grass along the bund. The fishing club was thanked for the offer, but advise that GAB Services have been instructed to do this on a monthly basis. The grass will be cut back six inches on both sides of the path.
Facebook post – path is as wide as it is allowed to be – step aside
- The Assistant Town Clerk advised that over the summer months there have been issues reported regarding people taking drugs under the cover of the willow trees by Healings Mill. The police were informed and the bottom of the willow trees was pruned to make it less attractive.
It was noted that the graffiti on Healings Mill does not look attractive.
Action: Cllr Cody to provide Assistant Town Clerk with contact details for the new mill owners.

The meeting closed at 10.57am.

Signature of Chairman upon approval of the minutes12th November 2020