



**TEWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES**

*of the*

**Severn Ham Committee meeting**

Held at George Watson Memorial Hall on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022 at 9.30am

**Present:** Cllrs P Aldridge (Chair), C Cody, J Raywood, S Raywood, Ms C Corsie, Mr Cluley (Carver Knowles), Mr A Purkiss, Mr T Perry, Mr S Kerr (Severn Trent), Ms Martyn-Smith (Dalcour Maclaren), Mr N McGovern (Geda Construction), Mr T Callaghan (Turner & Townsend), Mr R Garside (Fisher German), Mr P Herickx (Environment Agency), Mr J Wallace (Jackson Engineering)

**In attendance:** J King (Assistant Town Clerk), Mr M Smart (WWT), one member of the public

**SH 21/031 To receive apologies for absence**  
Apologies were received from Mr J Lucas.

**SH 21/032 To record declarations of interest**  
Mr Purkiss – Clerk to the Commoners.

**SH 21/033 To consider requests for dispensations**  
None received.

**SH 21/034 To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2021**  
It was RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2021. Proposed by Cllr J Raywood, seconded by Cllr Mr Purkiss.

**SH 21/035 Matters arising from the previous minutes – for information only**  
SH19/056 Land ownership issue – has been submitted – ongoing  
SH20/024 ELMS Model for the Severn Ham – ongoing  
SH21/008 Futureproofing project – Karen Colbourne – ongoing  
SH21/008 Baseline monitoring for Ham – Futureproofing work will cover - complete  
SH21/011 Hay spreading on bund – date to be circulated when conditions are favourable for spreading hay - ongoing  
SH21/012 SUP Access – referred to Buildings & Moorings Committee and Victoria Gardens access referred to Tewkesbury Borough Council - complete  
SH21/025 – EA to investigate possibility of using barges rather than haul road – not possible - complete  
SH21/026 – Sheep removal was requested - complete

**SH 21/036 Public Participation**  
There was no public participation.



## TEWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

**SH 21/037**

**To receive a briefing from Mike Smart from WWT, re: Severn Curlew Project**

Mr Smart has been monitoring curlew throughout the Severn Vale for many years. Since 2019 WWT have started a formal project, which is extending and developing. The aim is to look at the remaining breeding population between Gloucester and Upton on Severn, and Pershore on the Avon.

Curlews are the biggest bird conservation issue in the UK. The UK holds 25% of the world's population in the breeding season and another 25% come in from North West Europe to over winter. There is a small but steady population in the Severn Vale of approximately 35 nesting pairs. This population is holding solid, but overall curlew are experiencing a decline due to the loss of habitat, heavy predation and conflicts with agriculture. Curlews can live for 20-30 years, but are not very efficient at raising their young.

As part of the mains replacement, Severn Trent appointed an ornithologist who monitored the Ham. This monitoring showed that two pairs bred successfully last year, one on the Ham and one on Breakingstone Meadow (which was closed to the public).

In certain locations the project is more interventionist (drones, tagging, electric fences, egg incubation), as the WWT believe you could just be monitoring extinction, but on the Severn Ham it will be a watching brief. Curlews will tolerate public use as long as they don't get too close, signs are important for keeping dogs on leads.

**Action:** Assistant Town Clerk to update Facebook and arrange for signs to be put up as soon as water subsides.

**Action:** Assistant Town Clerk to contact Upton Ham to create a link between Hams.

**SH 21/038**

**To receive an update from Severn Trent and agree any actions**

A written report had been provided by Severn Trent. Mr Kerr & Mr McGovern provided the following additional information:

Geda continue to provide regular monitoring. Flooding confirms decision to leave haul road in place and success of the design will be see as the flooding subsides. Bird dissuasion measures have commenced and will take place in the working area only.

Current plan is to return to site towards the end of March. A 10-12 week programme will follow to remove the haul road and complete the reinstatement. Later in the year the stock proof fence wire will be removed, but the posts will stay in place until after the hay cutting. Monitoring will be required to avoid overgrazing.



## TEWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

### **SH 21/039 To receive an update from the Environment Agency and to agree any actions**

A written report had been provided by the Environment Agency. Mr Herickx provided the following update:

The start date has been pushed back to the 7<sup>th</sup> March and will depend on the amount of water on the Ham. Works are ready to start as soon as conditions will allow. The EA will mirror the action Severn Trent are taking in terms of bird dissuasion and proposed reinstatement. Access road will be post and wire and heras fencing will be used at the satellite compound. The whole project should take 120 days from the start and the timetable is set out in Appendix 1 of the agenda pack.

Following questions raised by the Town Council, the EA advised that otter will not be attracted to the pass. It is not possible to stop them getting in, but there is also nothing that will stop them getting out. The EA have discussed this issue at length.

The number of heavy vehicles on site will be limited. Compaction testing has taken place and a more appropriate plastic tracking will be used, rather than the metal tracking used historically. In addition, the works are taking place at a better time of year.

The finished eel pass was discussed to ensure there would be no open ditches left. Mr Herickx confirmed that a 38mm grid will be used to seal the unit and it would be checked that this was stockproof.

It was RESOLVED to approve the construction programme as proposed by Environment Agency in Appendix 1 of their report.  
Proposed by Cllr J Raywood, seconded by Cllr Cody.

### **SH 21/040 To receive an update from Caroline Corsie, Environmental Advisor**

Ms Corsie provided an update. She has been involved in a lot of dialogue with the EA, Severn Trent and Karen Colbourne the Town Council's behalf.

With regard to the future proofing, Ms Corsie is keen to see some of the discrepancies within the Higher Level Stewardship resolved, for example it currently does not take account of the curlew.

With regard to moving to ELMS, new schemes are being released and these are being actively monitored, but at present the relevant options for the Ham are not open. The timing also has to be right to move to the new scheme. The HLS application for a rollover to the end of 2023 has been submitted, but this does not preclude moving to a new scheme within that timeframe. Soil samples will be taken shortly, and the new schemes have an emphasis on soil health.



## TEWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Issues raised include the seedling docks along the working strip and what action will be required prior to the reinstatement with the green hay.

**Action:** Severn Trent and Environment Agency to provide information for Facebook and noticeboards regarding bird dissuasion details.

Cllr Cody advised that Gloucestershire County Council have appointed a biodiversity officer to work with partners.

**Action:** Mr Cluley, Ms Corsie and Assistant Town Clerk to liaise with Cllr Cody regarding this opportunity.

**SH 21/041**

**To receive an update from Mike Cluley, Carver Knowles**

Mr Cluley advised that all items had been covered in previous items.

**SH 21/042**

**To consider a proposal from Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust that the Town Council purchases back the Mythe Nature Reserve and to agree any next steps**

The Committee received the written report on the proposal. Small though the site is, it is an important connector between Worcestershire and Gloucestershire. The site will require management (as set out in the report) but it is a valuable asset.

It was RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council that the Town Council purchases back the Mythe Nature Reserve from Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust.  
Proposed by Cllr Cody, seconded by Cllr J Raywood.

**SH 21/043**

**To consider a request from Environment Agency regarding byelaw signs around the Ham and next steps**

Deferred to next meeting.

**SH 21/044**

**To consider a request from Tewkesbury Rejuvenation Initiative to use the Ham during the River Festival (25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022) for a fun run**

Request was declined. Vineyards to be suggested as an alternative venue.

**SH 21/045**

**To receive the committee budget report**

The budget report was received.

**SH 21/046**

**To agree the earmarked reserves at the end of the financial year 2021/22**

It was RESOLVED to approve the following earmarked reserves:

500/4860 Volunteers - £2000

500/4870 Weeding - £2500

Proposed Cllr J Raywood, seconded Cllr S Raywood.

**SH 21/047**

**To approve payments list**

It was RESOLVED to approve the payments list totalling £4,514.35.

Proposed by Cllr J Raywood, seconded by Cllr S Raywood.



**TEWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL**

**SH 21/048 Correspondence**

The response to questions previously responded to under SH 21/030 was read out.

The meeting closed at 10.54

Next meeting: 12<sup>th</sup> May 2022

Signature of Chairman upon approval of the minutes ..... 12<sup>th</sup> May 2022