



**TEWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES**

*of the*

**Severn Ham Committee meeting**

Held at Town Hall, Tewkesbury on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2022 at 9.30am

**Present:** Cllrs C Danter (Chair), C Cody, Ms C Corsie, Mr T Perry, Mr M Cornwell-Kelly, Mr S Kerr (Severn Trent), Ms M Gaden, (Fisher German), Mr P Herickx (Environment Agency), Mr P Chamley (Jackson Civil Engineering), Cllr J Raywood, Cllr P Brookes, Cllr Aldridge.

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

**SH 22/034 To receive apologies for absence**  
Apologies were received from Mr Cluley & Cllr S Raywood.

**SH 22/035 To record declarations of interest**  
Mr Cornwell-Kelly – Clerk to the Commoners  
Mr Perry – Restoration project

**SH 22/036 To consider requests for dispensations**  
None received.

**SH 22/037 To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2022**  
It was RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2022.  
Proposed by Cllr Cody, seconded by Cllr Brookes.

**SH 22/038 Matters arising from the previous minutes – for information only**  
SH20/024 ELMS Model for the Severn Ham – ongoing  
SH21/011 Hay spreading on bund –ongoing  
SH21/040 GCC Biodiversity Officer – interviews have taken place - ongoing  
SH21/042 Mythe Nature Reserve adoption – ongoing  
SH22/008 ST Legacy damage proposal – ongoing – Severn Trent and Mr Cluley to bring back proposal  
SH22/011 Dock management strategy – on next agenda following Rootwave demonstration  
SH22/024 Management plan for the reinstatement – with Severn Trent  
SH22/026 Severn Ham Committee to meeting Tewkesbury Nature Reserve – complete  
SH22/026 Flourishing floodplains – Caroline working with Steve Pullen - complete  
SH22/026 Restoring our rivers report – circulated – complete  
SH22/026 Hay Making – delay after 14<sup>th</sup> July – complete



## TEWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

### **SH 22/039 Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

### **SH 22/040 Correspondence**

An issue has been raised regarding the top surface of the bund and it has worn away which now makes it difficult for wheelchair users.

**Action:** Assistant Town Clerk to obtain quotes for repair.

### **SH 22/041 To receive an update from Severn Trent and agree any actions**

Mr Kerr provided an update. GEDA have removed the working strip fence and the palisade fencing is being reinstated at the compound.

There has been an accident with a cyclist on an e-bike cycling into a strip of wire at an old crossing point. GEDA are contacting the individual directly. The Assistant Town Clerk advised that the incident had been initially reported to them and the individual had been advised that bikes were prohibited on the Severn Ham.

Legacy issues – Dalcour McClaren and Mr Cluley are working together on details of what is required and the costs for the work. Currently with Mr Cluley to action.

Restoration plan – meeting to be arranged between Mr Pullen, Ms Corsie and Natural England to discuss how the restoration is going and what is required for next year.

Cathodic protection post on the top edge of the Ham requires a taller post by it to ensure it is not hit by vehicles on the Ham. New post will be 5-6ft, white with a yellow top.

### **SH 22/042 To receive an update from the Environment Agency and to agree any actions**

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

The project has gone well and the main works are now complete. The access mats have been removed and the pass will be operational within the next month. Work continues on the reinstatement of the track where the mats have been removed.

There was a lot of historical material on the Ham which was disturbed by the subsoiling and the opportunity was taken to carry out a stone pick. The inside of the bund will be cut now that the fencing has been removed.

The stones that protect the eel pass are sufficient that they will stop any vehicles driving over it. A Cllr asked whether the holes on the eel pass were small enough for animals to get their feet stuck in them. The EA confirmed they would monitor any issues.



## TEWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

**SH 22/043**

**To receive an update from Anna Tarbet regarding the Landscape Recovery Bid and to agree any actions**

Anna Tarbet is the Landscape Recovery Manager for Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust (GWT) and she oversees the restoration projects for the trust. The Landscape Recovery Bids are a tier of ELMS, based around transformative land change for areas between 500 and 5000ha. A bid was submitted between GWT, Wildlife & Wetlands Trust, Environment Agency and eleven landowners, of which Tewkesbury Town Council is one. The area totals 1150ha. The partnership project is based on restoring resilient floodplains and the focus on species recovery is the eel. DEFRA received 50 applications and are funding 22 projects. The project is currently in the enrolment phase, which ends on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022 and the project will then hopefully go through to the development phase, which can last up to 24 months. Next step is a meeting of all landowners and those involved in the project by the end of the enrolment phase.

**Action:** Assistant Town Clerk to advise who should attend from TTC. TTC have offered to host the meeting if required.

It was noted that there is land along the Severn / Avon that is owned by Tewkesbury Borough Council and a question was asked as to how involved they are.

**Action:** Cllr Cody to follow up.

**SH 22/044**

**To receive and agree the Vision and Implementation Plan for the Severn Ham and to agree next steps**

Karen Colbourne attended the meeting to present the Vision and Implementation Plan. She outlined the proposed main changes:

The curlew are protected by the Habitat Regulations and come out as a high priority. It is proposed that the Ham is managed differently in different areas, so that there is somewhere to protect the curlew and other ground nesting birds. Focussing on restoration not conservation and getting the species back to where they were when the SSI was agreed, as it was noted that there has been a decline in species over the past ten years.

It was suggested that the southern Ham should not be cut and should be managed by extensive grazing by cattle. Cattle graze differently to sheep and the outcome is far more beneficial for ground nesting birds.

It is suggested that public access is restricted to the southern Ham between Feb – August to protect the curlew. There are currently no official footpaths in the south part of the Ham, but the right of access would require the committee to apply for special restrictions during the nesting period under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW).



## TEWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Another priority is the restoration of the SSSI vegetation. One suggestion is to try to stop the weeds from seeding in the vegetation zone. This could be done by an early top to take out the seed heads from the thistles and docks and this is commonly done on farms. This could be followed by cattle coming on to site earlier than at present and in time this would reduce the weed cover. This would not be a permanent change, but an intervention to try and restore the meadow to less than 5% weed cover. At this point it could be reviewed to see if restoring the hay cut is desirable at this point.

Monitoring and review is key to all of the work. Surveys should be standardised so that they can be repeated over the years and easily compared. This has not been the case historically.

Committee members discussed some of the issues remaining with the proposals:

- 1808 Commons Act
- Terms of reference for Friends of the Severn Ham
- A top cut being too late for hay to then be of suitable quality
- Dogs on the Ham
- Has the pipeline repair taken away water from the south – is a scrape required?

It was RESOLVED to accept the Severn Ham Vision and Implementation Plan as a working document and move forward within a working group.  
Proposed by Cllr Aldridge, seconded by Cllr J Raywood.

**Action:** Assistant Town Clerk to organise working group meeting.

The Committee thanked Karen Colbourne for all of her work on producing the report on what is a very complex issue.

**SH 22/045**

**To receive an update from Caroline Corsie, Environmental Advisor and to agree any actions**

Hay restoration project has been completed for this year. The hay sourced from Kyn Jackson has been applied to the north west corner of the Ham and there is a box of seed that has been collected, which will be used for the pollinator corridor on the bund, once it has been cut.

As part of the Heart of England in Bloom, Tewkesbury in Bloom were awarded a gold award and the Severn Ham, together with Tewkesbury Nature Reserve received an environmental award.

There have been lots of positive comments about the work that has taken place on the Ham. Germination of the green hay can be seen along the restoration plot,



**TEWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL**

although it is too earlier to identify the species. There is a volunteer team of litter pickers that have been working on the Ham where the bund area has been cut back.

**SH 22/046 To receive the committee budget report and earmarked reserve report**  
The budget report and earmarked reserve report was received.

**SH 22/047 To consider and agree the draft budget for 2023/24**  
It was RESOLVED to accept the draft budget for 2023/24 as outlined in the agenda pack. Proposed by Cllr J Raywood, seconded by Cllr Danter.

**SH 22/048 To approve payments list**  
There was no payments list.

The meeting closed at 10.47am

Next meeting: 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023

Signature of Chairman upon approval of the minutes ..... 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023