



TEWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES

of the

Severn Ham Committee meeting

Held at Town Hall, Tewkesbury on 26th June 2023 at 9.30am

Present: Cllrs P Brookes (Chair), E Ash, J Baddams, C Cody, C Danter, P Jones, Ms C Corsie, Mr Perry.

In attendance: J King (Assistant Town Clerk) & four members of the public.

SH 23/001 To receive apologies for absence
Apologies were received from Cllr J Raywood & Mrs K Andrews.

SH 23/002 To record declarations of interest
None received.

SH 23/003 To consider requests for dispensations
None received.

SH 23/004 To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 16th March 2023
It was RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 16th March 2023.
Proposed by Cllr Cody, seconded by Cllr Danter.

SH 23/005 Matters arising from the previous minutes – for information only
SH20/024 ELMS Model for the Severn Ham – ongoing.
SH21/042 Mythe Nature Reserve adoption – ongoing, with GWT legal team.
SH22/008 ST Legacy damage proposal – closed as replaced with SH22/070.
SH22/011 Dock management strategy – closed as replaced with SH22/070.
SH22/058 Eel Pass – ongoing.
SH22/070 Legacy proposal – ongoing – issues regarding logistics & storage

SH 23/006 Public Participation
Mr Clements from English Holiday Cruises (EHC) presented. Since 1999 the company has been bringing their river cruise hotel boat to Tewkesbury. It carries 22 passengers. They have been unable to moor this season on the Ham and had been unable to do so whilst the Severn Trent works were taking place. Mr Clements stated that there were no late-night parties, they would use existing paths and the boat is silent overnight as it uses battery power. EHC are happy to engage with any restrictions and are waiting to post their 2024 itineraries based on the outcome of this meeting.

SH 23/007 To consider a request for the reinstatement of a mooring on the Severn Ham
Cllrs asked the following questions to Mr Clements:



TEWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Q – Are there restrictions on dogs?

A – No dogs are allowed on the cruises.

Q – Does allowing one boat to moor not set a precedent for others?

A – The mooring was put in by EHC and is only suitable for a boat of our size. EHC could prevent other people from using it.

Q – What precautions are taken against fuel spills?

A – Vessel is registered with Marine Coastguard agency. Inspections for boats over 12 passengers and 24m include two dry dock inspections every five years and a yearly visit for in water inspections. There is also a personal liability of individuals on board.

Q – Have you spoken to Natural England?

A – No EHC have not spoken to Natural England.

Q – What benefit is there to the Ham?

A – There is a benefit to Tewkesbury in terms of tourism. Passengers took part in species monitoring in 2015 for kingfishers. They could do this for other species.

Q – Have you done an environmental impact survey, so that there is a positive impact to your visits to the Ham? A – No.

It was noted that the Severn Trent works blocked the path that meant this mooring could not be used. EHC were using an alternative mooring in Tewkesbury, but the new owner wants money up front for a whole season (£4000) without any binding legal agreement.

As the Ham is a SSSI there is a legal obligation to gain permission from Natural England before using the mooring. Not obtaining this risks the Higher Level Stewardship and opens the Town Council up to a fine for non-compliance. Any application to Natural England has to be made by the land owner (the Town Council) and can take up to 56 days to be approved.

Concerns were raised about the decline in swans in Tewkesbury and the Avon in general. Much of this is due to disturbance and loss of nesting sites. There is a nesting site 20ft from the proposed mooring site. Tewkesbury in danger of losing the swans and bird flu is also having an enormous impact. Concern was also raised about the floating pennywort and potentially moving it up and down the Avon.

Mr Clements stated that an alternative site previously suggested by the committee near Healings Mill would require dredging and that permissions would be required from the Environment Agency. There are also restrictions on the times within which dredging may be done and EHC agree that there are better solutions.

Q - How much bank clearing would need to be done either side of the moorings?

A – It is a 28m long boat. The platform is designed so that no bank clearing is required.



TEWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

A Cllr noted that it would be difficult to get the vessel close into the mooring without some pruning taking place.

The committee discussed the bank erosion in Upton. EHC stated that this is most likely the result of high river flow in winter, rather than the boat mooring there.

Committee members were asked if they wished to reconsider the rejection of the mooring request. Committee members indicated by a show of hands that they did not wish to reconsider the request. The original resolution stands.

SH 23/008

Correspondence

Several items of correspondence were received regarding the middle of the Ham being wet and whether it could have a bridge or different surface.

SH 23/009

To receive an update from Severn Trent (ST) and agree any actions

None received.

SH 23/010

To receive an update from the Environment Agency and to agree any actions

Paul Herickx from the Environment Agency provided the update.

There have been two botanical surveys on the reinstatement strip, at the beginning of May and early June. It took the form of a quadrat survey and comparison to the strip next to the reinstatement strip.

Initial reports are positive at such an early stage in the reinstatement. Narrow leaf water dropwort is present along the site, as is yellow rattle. Aftermath grazing will help with the reinstatement. Greater Burnett was not reported as being present and an identified action is that seed or green hay should be considered.

Regeneration can take decades, but using targeted seeds can speed this up. The sward will be reassessed in late summer and the merits for oversowing considered. Green hay would also be beneficial and this should be applied after the annual hay cut.

Ms Corsie advised that Severn Trent are planning to apply green hay at the end of July. It is an early ripening year, so the intention is to bring forward the green hay to July 17th in order to get the later flowering species.

Action: Full botanical report to be circulated to committee members.

Eel pass – ad hoc monitoring is happening through the fisheries team and the EA are looking at a system that will do it automatically. There was an issue with high tides and also with protecting the inlet from larger debris. This work will take place towards the end of the summer when the water levels are low. No heavy machinery will be required, at most it will be a 4x4 with a trailer.



TEWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

SH 23/011 To receive an update from Caroline Corsie, Environmental Advisor and to agree any actions

Ms Corsie provided the following update:

Initial examination of both reinstatement strips is that they are doing well for the first year of growth, but there is a lot of grass within it. If seed is being used, the question is whether grass needs to be included in the mix. The annuals have had a short-term benefit in terms of feed for the birds. The Severn Trent reinstatement strip is particularly thick with grass and would benefit from yellow rattle.

The weather is a concern for aftermath grazing and the weather will also determine whether the site is able to carry the weight of vehicles and not cause additional compaction.

The Town Council will carry out green hay spreading this year. The hay is coming from Marshlands and the work will be carried out by Mr B Perry.

The Sustainable Farming Incentive schemes were launched last week. They don't immediately offer any opportunities for the Severn Ham. **Action:** Ms Corsie to circulate the details of what is on offer to the farming community.

Curlew – have been very quiet and there are few signs that they are still on the Ham. **Action:** What is the action plan for the curlew?

SH 23/012 To receive an update from the Assistant Town Clerk and agree any actions including

- i. Monitoring on the Severn Ham / Friends of the Severn Ham.
Thanks were given to the Friends of the Severn Ham for their help in monitoring the curlew. Next steps to ask for assistance monitoring livestock.
- ii. Path repairs – have been completed, they will take a little time to bed in, due to the nature of the self-bonding gravel.
- iii. Rootwave / Legacy Issues – meeting with Tewkesbury Borough Council in July.
- iv. Anglers involvement in the committee – **Action:** Agenda item to include feedback and discussions with the anglers to be added twice a year (September 2023 and March 2024)
- v. Next meeting dates – Monday 18th Sept, Wednesday 20th December, Wednesday 13th March.
- vi. Healings Mill – issues regarding access being blocked with a cherry picker, and owners rescinding storage issues on site for the Town Council, due to conflict with Tewkesbury Borough Council.



TEWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

The Committee also noted the work programme and the completion of the bund repairs.

SH 23/013 To receive the committee budget report and earmarked reserve report
The reports were received. The Assistant Town Clerk advised that the compensation from Severn Trent for the pipeline replacement had been received and after payment of the land agent fees, totals £24,553.

SH 23/014 To approve the payments list
It was RESOLVED to approve the payments list totalling £90,870.27.
Proposed by Cllr Danter, seconded by Cllr Baddams.

The meeting closed at 10.52am.

Next meeting: Monday 18th September 2023.

Signature of Chairman upon approval of the minutes