



**TEWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES**

*of the*

**Severn Ham Committee meeting**

Held at Town Hall, Tewkesbury on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2023 at 10.00am

**Present:** Cllrs P Brookes (Chair), E Ash, J Baddams, C Danter, P Jones, J Raywood, Ms C Corsie, Mr M Cornwall-Kelly

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

**SH 23/029 To receive apologies for absence**  
Apologies were received from Mrs Andrews, Mr Perry & Cllr Cody.

**SH 23/030 To record declarations of interest**  
Mr M Cornwall-Kelly – Clerk to the Commoners

**SH 23/031 To consider requests for dispensations**  
None received.

**SH 23/032 To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023**  
It was RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023. Proposed by Cllr Danter, seconded by Cllr Baddams.

**SH 23/033 Public Participation**  
One member of the public asked the following questions:

- i. In the area where the initial pipe burst took place, there is now a semi-permanent wet area and the rutting from the vehicles remains. Does the committee plan to do anything with it, as the individual believes it would be best to leave it. [The Committee agrees that the area should be left at present and closely monitored.](#)
- ii. Pollution – how are we holding the Environment Agency and Severn Trent to account. This is a particular issue with the slow moving Avon. [Agreed, this is an ongoing issue and one we are discussing within the meeting.](#)
- iii. Left over rubble at the edge of the bund from the resurfacing. [Check with the fishermen that they have used all that they need for maintenance of the pegs.](#)

**SH 23/034 Correspondence**  
There was no correspondence received.

**SH 23/035 Matters arising from the previous minutes – for information only**  
SH20/024 ELMS Model for the Severn Ham – ongoing.  
SH21/042 Mythe Nature Reserve adoption – complete – GWT no longer selling.  
SH22/058 Eel Pass monitoring details – ongoing.



## TEWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

SH22/070 Legacy proposal – circulated – now with Severn Trent.

SH23/025 Plug plant project – assent given – ongoing.

SH23/025 Trough leak – leak fixed – complete.

SH23/026 Grazier's details – circulated – complete.

SH23/026 Bird boxes – on order – ongoing.

### **SH 23/036**

#### **To receive a presentation on the Citizen Science project focussing on water quality in the River Avon and agree any actions**

The committee received a talk from Mr Sallis who represents the Safe Avon group.

Safe Avon was started in 2020 as a project carrying out weekly tests for phosphates and nitrates along the Avon. The project involves numerous environmental groups, and these tests are carried out with the same methodology as Cardiff University uses on the Wye. Currently Stratford and Tewkesbury (three sites) are covered. Training is underway in Pershore and Coventry and by March 2024 the majority of the river will be covered.

Environment Agency (EA), Ofwat and the Government know that the river is polluted. There have been 75% cuts to EA since 2010. There is a focus on flooding rather than river pollution as people can't see it. The group believe that although farming is an issue, it's not the biggest issue, this is the issue of combined flooding and sewage overflow, even treated sewage can be highly polluted.

Rivers normally have a low nitrate basis, with sewage overflow the rivers are flooded with nutrients and therefore the original species are dying off and the more invasive species are taking over, as they can adapt to the new nutrient levels.

Tewkesbury testing takes place at on the Carrant Brook, at the Abbey Mill and the Swilgate and the group would like to expand it to below the outlets at the Lower Lode and the A38. Once the tests are established, it should be possible to see whether there are rising pollution levels at these spots.

There are 27 weirs between Tewkesbury and Stratford. The pollution levels are higher on the Avon than the Wye, but the issues with the Wye are more well known, due to the higher profile. To raise the profile of the Avon there first needs to be testing and results, and then the second part is campaigning and raising awareness.

The committee discussed what action plan should be put in place as a Town Council.

**Actions:** Severn Ham noticeboards to be used to share information about the pollution issues. Mr Sallis to provide information about what other Councils have done in terms of signage. See what other councils have done in terms of signage. Use the Severn Ham Facebook page to educate.

Additional kits would enable further monitoring on the Lower Lode and the A38 from the bridge, cost is £180 per kit, plus a further £60 for consumables.



## TEWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

It was RESOLVED to provide two kits and consumables at a total cost of £480.

Proposed by Cllr Danter, seconded by Cllr Baddam.

**Action:** Deputy Town Clerk to contact Mr Sallis regarding the information and how to create poster. Consider QR code for the poster to find out more information.

**SH 23/037 To receive an update from Severn Trent and to agree any actions**

No update received from Severn Trent.

**SH 23/038 To receive an update from the Environment Agency and to agree any actions**

A report was received from Mrs Andrews. This advised that the monitoring of the restorations strip continues and that the planned minor works to the eel pass are still being scoped.

The report also provided feedback to the report provided by the citizen science group in terms of how to work more closely with the Environment Agency and also with the Warwickshire Avon CaBA (catchment-based approach).

**Action:** Deputy Town Clerk to circulate the botanical report.

**SH 23/039 To receive an update from Caroline Corsie, Environmental Advisor and to agree any actions**

Ms Corsie provided the following update:

This year the functional link was established for the Ham, in respect of the curlew, and this links to the Higher Level Stewardship.

Assent has been given for the planting of 128 Greater Burnett plug plants on the Ham in the spring. This is good news as it is the emblem of the floristic community that sits in part of the Ham.

Birds are being fed on the Ham and people call it the singing bench.

Nest boxes are coming in January.

It is great that the sheep made it on to the Ham as even for just a short time improves the ecosystem.

There is free farm resilience advice from the Government, Caroline has had a positive experience with them. **Action:** Details to be shared with the Town Council & the Commoners.

**Action:** Caroline to ask Avon Navigation Trust what the status of the new machine for the pennywort is.



## TEWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

**SH 23/040**

**To receive an update from the Assistant Town Clerk and agree any actions including:**

- i. Grazing – Autumn 2023. The Autumn grazing was initially delayed by a month due to the late hay cut. This was due to wet conditions throughout July and August. The Town Council compensated the grazier for the loss of one month's grazing (at a pro-rata cost of £100).

Due to flooding in October and an inconclusive TB test, it was not possible to get cattle on to the Ham this year. Natural England were contacted and advised that in these circumstances the Difficult Site Supplement would remain payable. This will be paid to the Tewkesbury Commoners as all efforts were made to secure cattle and sheep for the Ham.

Six weeks grazing in total this year. Farmer will continue next year.

Commoners have offered a discount for next year and willing to repeat 300 sheep and 30 cattle.

- ii. Eelscape Project – soil sampling and baseline flora and fauna surveys took place over the summer. Update meeting due in the early new year.
- iii. Rootwave / Legacy Issues – proposal submitted to Severn Trent, awaiting response. Also awaiting responses on repairs to the bund and water monitoring feedback.
- iv. Tree and scrub work – assent submitted.

The Committee also noted the work programme.

**SH 23/041**

**To receive the committee budget report and earmarked reserve report**

The reports were received.

**SH 23/042**

**To release £7,485 earmarked reserves (EMR 346 Footpath Repairs) to 500/4905 Footpath Repairs**

It was RESOLVED to release £7,485 earmarked reserves (EMR 346 Footpath Repairs) to 500/4905 Footpath Repairs. Proposed by Cllr J Raywood, seconded by Cllr Danter.

**SH 23/043**

**To release £5,000 earmarked reserves (EMR 358 SH Mythe Nature Reserve) to General Reserves**

It was RESOLVED to release £5,000 earmarked reserves (EMR 358 SH Mythe Nature Reserve) to General Reserves. Proposed by Cllr J Raywood, seconded by Cllr Danter.

**SH 23/044**

**To consider and agree the virement of £4,000 from Ancillary Management (500/4880) to Staffing Professional (110/4100)**

It was RESOLVED to agree the virement of £4,000 from Ancillary Management to Staffing Professional. Proposed by Cllr Baddams, seconded by Cllr Danter.



**TEWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL**

- SH 23/045      To consider and agree the committee budget for 2024/25**  
It was RESOLVED to agree the committee budget for 2024/25.  
Proposed by Cllr J Raywood, seconded by Cllr Ash.
- SH 23/046      To approve the payments list**  
It was RESOLVED to approve the payments list totalling £4188.15.  
Proposed by Cllr J Raywood, seconded by Cllr Danter.

The meeting closed at 11.33 am.

Next meeting: Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023 at 10am in Mayor’s Parlour.

Signature of Chairman upon approval of the minutes .....