



**TEWKESBURY  
TOWN COUNCIL**

MINUTES

*of the*

Severn Ham Committee meeting

Held at Town Hall, Tewkesbury on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2024 at 10.00am

**Present:** Cllrs P Brookes (Chair), E Ash, C Cody, C Danter, J Raywood, Ms C Corsie, Mr Perry, Mr Baggs (Clerk to the Commoners), Ms Andrews (Environment Agency), Mr P Jones, Ms A Martyn-Smith (Dalcour McLaren), Mr M Jones (ST), Mr A Pagel (GEDA)

**In attendance:** Ms J King (Deputy Town Clerk)

**SH 24/013 To receive apologies for absence**  
There were no apologies for absence.

**SH 24/014 To record declarations of interest**  
Mr Baggs – Clerk to the Commoners.

**SH 24/015 To consider requests for dispensations**  
None received.

**SH 24/016 To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2024**  
It was RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2024.  
Proposed by Cllr J Raywood, seconded by Cllr Danter.

**SH 24/017 Public Participation**  
There was no public participation.

**SH 24/018 Correspondence**  
No correspondence.

**SH 24/019 Matters arising from the previous minutes – for information only**  
SH20/024 ELMS Model for the Severn Ham – ongoing  
SH22/058 Eel Pass monitoring details – ongoing  
SH22/070 Legacy proposal – circulated – now with Severn Trent (ST)  
SH23/026 Bird boxes – being installed - ongoing  
SH25/039 Pennywort – with Environment Agency – ongoing  
SH23/058 Apply to Natural England to harrow an area – ongoing  
SH23/058 Engagement with local schools – with Cllr Cody – closed  
SH24/010 Clearing river at same time as pipeline repair – raised with ST  
SH24/011 Swan support options - ongoing



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**SH 24/020**

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

The following update was provided by Severn Trent:

Following the catastrophic burst on the Severn Ham, it was noted that the pipe bridge had moved on the northern bank but the new pipe had not moved, however with the nature of the burst it has been difficult to ascertain the exact cause. There are pressure spikes out of the treatment works and that may have contributed to it. The joints that were installed between the new pipeline and the bridge were fit for purpose but were put under load and the works are now addressing the symptoms. The pipe bridge is being continually monitored and it has not moved since the monitoring has been installed and is stable. The pipe bridge has been extensively surveyed and it is in good condition, reports indicate a further lifespan of 60-70 years. Structural models have been built of the bridge and even with the spikes, the tolerances are good.

Initial repairs were done to the collars (where the new pipeline and the pipe bridge meet) to stop the leak and subsequent strength calculations have shown additional weld is required. This should mitigate any future failures in this area.

The pipe bridge is held in place by the pipe and the ground around it, the concrete that can be seen does not support the bridge at all, rather the fence that was installed around it. Current plan to stabilise the whole area, is to inject a 'state of the art' resin together with pea gravel around the underneath of the new pipe and around the base of the pipe bridge. This resin has been approved by Natural England and the Environment Agency for use near watercourses. The anticipated start date for these works is 7<sup>th</sup> October, followed by backfilling the site from 28<sup>th</sup> October.

The reinstatement works and riverbank stabilisation works will then take place in 2025. Where possible these will be soft engineering, potentially including willow root balls. Hard engineering in the form of large boulders may also be required to stop the erosion of the bank. Potential models are being investigated and will be shared as soon as available. All works will require approval by Natural England and the Environment Agency. A Flood Risk Activity Permit (FRAP) will be required for these works, and it has a lead time of two months.

**SH 24/021**

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

Ms Corsie provided the following update:

Hay spreading has taken place this year. Ben Perry has asked if we could provide details about the site regarding the hay he has purchased (e.g. from a SSSI)

**Action:** Ms Corsie & Deputy Town Clerk to agree suitable words.

Emma Rothero (leader of Floodplain Meadows Partnership) visited the site and is going to provide some suggestions for the ongoing management.



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Looking ahead to the spring, it may be worth considering a botanical survey. Deputy Town Clerk suggested that the results of the Eelscapes surveys are seen first and then a decision can be made on where the gaps potentially might be.

The new higher tier details for the Countryside Stewardship will be available shortly and in conjunction with the options from Eelscapes, decisions can then be made on which route to take.

Wild birds have been fed over the winter. The swans have had a really tough season and it looks like they lost their last cygnets.

**Action:** Birdboxes will need numbering and results recorded.

Ms Corsie also provided details of a number of other projects in the area. Eelscapes, Treescapes – 60 mile corridor from Chepstow to the Wyre, FWAG and CaBa (Catchment Basin Partnerships). Rainforest Corridor – multi agency corridor up to the west coast of Scotland.

**SH 24/022**

**To receive an update from the Deputy Town Clerk and agree any actions**

### **Docks working group**

The Severn Ham working group met in July to discuss the dock issues, the following are the findings:

- It was felt that weedkillers should not be used on the site
- Scrapes – could be placed where the docks are. Need advice on location. Natural England have agreed in principle but would need formal assent.
- Dip wells are the first step to check hydrology for appropriate locations for the scrapes – Deputy Town Clerk has subsequently spoken with Eelscape project and GWT are coming out to survey and then install to map hydrology across the winter.
- Laser zapping of weeds – post meeting note, the small robot company has gone into administration.
- Could the docks be topped and what would the frequency look like?
- Would spring grazing with a regenerative farmer be a possibility, with electric collars for the cattle?
- What is the proposal from Severn Trent to treat the docks that are coming through on the reinstatement strip?

### **Pennywort**

Karen Andrews provided an update on the floating pennywort. The Environment Agency (EA) are currently surveying 45km by boat and land along the Avon and producing a map of the location of the pennywort. There is a lot down by the Abbey Mill. The EA Operations team are working with ANT about how to clear it, as it needs to be tackled on a catchment wide basis. The draft strategy will be presented to an internal EA meeting in a couple of weeks, and they will discuss how they can involve external parties. Resource is an issue, but conversations are taking place.



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**Eelscape Project**

The Deputy Town Clerk and Ms Corsie attended a briefing for the Eelscape Project. The Ham is uniquely placed in the project in that it does not provide a livelihood for a farmer, so potentially could be more flexible about options moving forward.

**Legacy issues**

Severn Trent have not responded to the Rootwave proposal or provided an alternative approach. Deputy Town Clerk asked Ms Martyn-Smith if she could raise this with Severn Trent.

**EDF project to support migratory fish**

EDF have proved difficult to engage with and a new contact name has been given for the project. Ms Andrews advised that the business case is still going through assurance, if EDF agree to it, it will take about a year to be approved. If EDF do not wish to take it forward, the Environment Agency will bring the project back in house.

**Tree Works**

To note the emergency tree works that were carried out on the southern Ham at a cost of £3200. The works were carried out for health and safety reasons due to dead trees and proximity to the watercourse.

**Swans**

Concerns were raised over the future of the swans in Tewkesbury.

**Action:** Deputy Town Clerk to speak to ANT about signage about boat speed to protect the swans.

Biomatrix have a solution for floating swan platforms, which would be suitable for the location. Further investigations are required regarding funding and logistics.

**SH 24/023 To receive the committee budget report and earmarked reserve report**

The reports were received.

The meeting closed at 10.55am

Next meeting: Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> December at 10am.

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