

**SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL**  
**ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**  
**(incorporating the SHREWSBURY-WIDE LOCAL JOINT COMMITTEE)**  
**Meeting held at the Guildhall, Frankwell Quay, Shrewsbury**  
**At 7.00pm on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2016**

**PRESENT** – Councillors I Jones (Mayor), J Mackenzie (Deputy Mayor), P Adams, Mrs B Baker, A Bannerman, Mrs A Chebsey, T Clarke, Mrs H Fraser, M Kenny, N Laurens, Ms A Liebich, Mrs P Moseley, A Moseley, P Nutting, K Pardy, M Price, K Roberts & A Townsend

**IN ATTENDANCE** – Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Adam Purnell (Youth & Community Development Officer), Tim Smith (Area Commissioner – Shropshire Council), Steve Cunningham (Community Enablement Officer – Shropshire Council), Sargent Richard Coles (Shrewsbury Town Centre Neighbourhood Team – West Mercia Police), Kirsten Henly (Manager – Shrewsbury Business Improvement District); 48 members of the public.

**1/16 MAYOR'S WELCOME**

The Mayor welcomed those present to the Annual Town Meeting of the Parish of Shrewsbury. He advised that this meeting was an opportunity for the residents and electors of Shrewsbury to raise any issues of interest or concern regarding the town. Were any attendees residents of the neighbouring parishes of Bayston Hill & Bickton, they too were holding similar meetings.

**2/16 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2015 together with the notes of the Shrewsbury-wide Local Joint Committee meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2015 were circulated as read.

It was proposed and seconded and:

**RESOLVED:**

**That the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2015 and the Shrewsbury-wide LJC Meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2015 be approved and signed as a correct record.**

**3/16 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TOWN COUNCIL**

The Town Clerk gave an overview of the work of the Town Council since the previous year's Annual Town Meeting, focusing on the responsibilities of the Town Council, the work of the Town Councillors, the work of the Mayor, major projects and activities, its partnership working with other bodies including Team Shrewsbury and the Business Improvement District, its relationship with Shropshire Council and its plans for the future.

The Town Clerk reported on the need to enter into discussions with Shropshire Council regarding the future management of local services as a number were unlikely to be funded in years to come. Not only was it important to understand the future management arrangement of these assets but also new assets that were being established as part of new development plans. The Town Council was happy to take on any new open space and was happy to discuss the matter with developers.

The Town Clerk commended the formal Annual Report to the Meeting.

Residents made the following comments:

- That the Town Council valued flowers above anything else and criticised the Council in making little progress in establishing a Public Right of Way through the Castle Grounds – It was reported to the meeting that the Town Clerk and senior members had had a number of discussions with the Shropshire Horticultural Society and given the right of way would encroach on land that they continue to own at the Castle, progress had been minimal.
- That the Town Council needed to look to taking over the Coleham Pumping Station – It was reported that this was an asset that was currently being discussed with Shropshire Council and senior officers of the Town Council had already made contact with the Shropshire Steam Trust.
- That Councillors should not be allowed to serve of two councils – It was reported that this would require primary legislation to enact and it was a matter for the electorate to decide who they wished to represent them.
- Further clarification was sought regarding land transferred to the Town Council by developers – The Town Clerk explained the process and the various legal agreements required.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Annual Report for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 be received.**

**4/16 YOUTH SERVICES**

Adam Purnell, the Town Council's Youth & Community Development Officer gave an overview in establishing a Youth Service for the Town Council. At a time when most County Councils were withdrawing from funding youth, he found it refreshing working for a Town Council that saw the value in having a youth service.

The primary focus of a Youth Service was to engage with young people who are not engaging with other stakeholders and this was done through targeted work, detached work or open access sessions at youth centres, by providing young people with information and guidance and signposting them to other services available.

The #YoungShrewsbury service held regular sessions at Flaxivity, Grange Youth Centre, Monkmoor Youth Centre and Sundorne Youth Centre and was looking to develop sessions in the town centre with The Hive.

He was working closely with schools on developing social education workshops and was working with other Team Shrewsbury Partners in targeting areas of need. Changes to funding streams now meant that every school was responsible for developing their own alternative curriculum and a number of schools had looked towards the Town Councils Youth Service for assistance.

Residents made the following comments:

- That it was good that the Town Council was focussing on young people
- That the detached team needed to be more flexible working weekends and nights

## **5/16 BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT**

Kirsten Henly (BID Manager) gave an overview of the work of the Business Improvement District. Established in 2014 the key areas of the Business Plan focus of (i) Marketing, Profile & Promotion of the town, (ii) Access and carparking matters, (iii) Backing Business & (iv) Direction & Drive. The majority of the budget is spent on Marketing the Town as a visitor destination at different times of the year and a significant sum has been set aside to work alongside Shropshire Council and Shrewsbury Town Council to develop a better approach to wayfinding in the town centre.

The BID too has taken an interest in protecting services in the town and has backed the Save our Pool Campaign.

Residents made the following comments:

- The cultural image of the town is important in attracting business. What has the BID done to promote that cultural image – The BID has taken a lead in the promotion of the One-Off Brand for Shrewsbury.
- The town has lost the Street Theatre and the Diversity Day is struggling for funding. What is the BID doing to supporting events – The BID helps co-ordinate activities between the various event organisers.
- Is the BID doing anything to address the negative comments on Trip Advisor about people's stay being disturbed by noise.
- In updating wayfinding will out-of-date finger posts be addressed – This was part of the wayfinding project.

## **6/16 POLICE**

Sargent Coles from the Town Centre Safe Neighbourhood Team gave an overview of policing across the town. He detailed the work of Team Shrewsbury and in particular the input of the Town Council who are seen as the most co-operative partner providing additional eyes and ears to police activity. The partnership had initiated the Alternative Giving Scheme with the aim of addressing the level of begging on the streets. The partnership had also worked collaboratively in achieving Purple Flag status for the town.

The Police had a campaign to be more engaging with the community and the Shrewsbury Safe Neighbourhoods Teams were active on all social media platforms. There had also been a concerted effort to recruit more Special Constables.

A new Police & Crime Commissioner had been elected and local policing teams were looking forward to working with him and identifying with him local priorities.

Residents made the following comments:

- How might residents take advantage of the Ride Along Scheme – town centre staff were happy to take residents and community groups on patrol so that they could understand and appreciate the policing issues in the town
- Have the Alternative Giving Boxes been redesigned – all the boxes have been re-engineered to reduce the possibility of theft.

## **7/16 COMMUNITY ENABLEMENT**

Steve Cunningham (Community Enablement Officer) detailed the work of the Team at Shropshire Council and how they worked with community groups and stakeholders in the area.

Residents made the following comments:

- What is BLT? – Bronze Level Tasking is a multi-agency approach to tackling anti-social behaviour. Much of Team Shrewsbury's work deals with this.
- Why was this meeting not on the Shropshire Council Meeting Calendar – Technically it is not a Shropshire Council meeting, but enquiries will be made as to whether it could be included in future years.
- How does the Safe Place Scheme work? – a scheme designed to develop a number of places across the county whereby people who are vulnerable can seek help.

## **8/16 FUTURE OF LOCAL SERVICES**

Councillor Mosley detailed the financial difficulties Shropshire Council faces in meeting the needs and expectations of a changing demographic but a reduced level of funding from central government. Under current projections there was likely to be a £48m deficit for 2017/18 escalating to a £61m deficit for 2018/19. As a result service delivery was being prioritised and museum, library, sport and recreation and Youth services were likely not to be funded from 2017/18.

The Town Council had begun talks with Shropshire Council about the future management of such assets as Shrewsbury Library, Shrewsbury Museum, Shrewsbury Castle, Coleham Pumping Station, Quarry Swimming Centre, Meole Golf course and the Sports Village.

Part of the Town Council's work this year would be about understanding how residents feel about maintaining these services and if the Town Council were to take over these services the Council Tax would inevitably have to rise. Shrewsbury Town Council enjoys one of the lowest Precept charges of any Parish Council in the County.

With that the Mayor sought a straw poll of whether those present would happily see their Town Council element of their Council Tax increase to ensure those services were secured. All agreed.

Residents made the following comments:

- Why is the Town Council only looking at local services when Shropshire Council is taking £4.2m out of the budget that funds Age UK, CAB and Benefits Advice?
- Should the Town Council only be taking on these services in the short term and if things change should they revert back to Shropshire Council.
- Is there any legal restrictions on the Town Council taking on more services and do Referendum Principles force on principal councils apply?
- What about those who live outside of Shrewsbury and use Shrewsbury facilities; will they be allowed to use them?

- There was much rhetoric in the paper about the Local Government Minister coming to the Shirehall; was that not productive?
- The country has lived through austerity before and has survived.
- What about Shropshire Council's legal responsibilities for running some of these services.
- Has the Council thought about the impact on the town centre if such assets as the pool were to close?
- Has the Town Council the management capacity to deal with all of these services?
- Does the Town Council have a strategy to take these services forward?
- Can the Banding of the Council Tax be revisited

Councillor Mosley advised that discussions will continue with Shropshire Council with a view to presenting them with an indication of interest by the end of September. The Shrewsbury-wide LJC meeting has already been set for Monday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2016 at which a better understanding of options can be presented.

#### **9/16 FUTURE MEETING DATES**

It was reported that the following dates have been set in the Council diary:

Shrewsbury-wide Local Joint Committee	Monday 21 <sup>st</sup> November 2016
Shrewsbury Annual Town Meeting	Monday 22 <sup>nd</sup> May 2017