

Shrewsbury Friends of the Earth

Business Meeting

Monday 5 February 2018 7.30pm The Alb, Smithfield Road (by the bus station)

Notes

Present	Philip Pool, Beth Holgate, Barbara Phillips, Sue Fisher, Sheila Jones, Frank Oldaker, Judy Coleridge, Emma Charles, Katy Chandler, Tony Green, Simon Nightingale, Clive Parsons, Catherine Parsons	
Apologies	Mike Richardson	
Agenda Item	Notes	Action
Notes	Notes of business meeting 8 January 2018. Agreed	
	<p>Overall Review</p> <p>It was decided to spend about 15mins maximum/subject covering the background and current position on each of our main campaigns and areas of activity. Purpose was to refresh our knowledge and in particular to assist those who have recently joined.</p> <p>North West Reliel Road</p> <p>Background. – The road was first proposed when a bypass for the A5 was being considered because it would have completed a ring road around Shrewsbury. Since the bypass was constructed the missing link in the ring has seemingly been obvious so when opportunities for funding have appeared the Council(s) have attempted to revive the scheme. However, the benefits claimed do not stand up – traffic in the town centre would not be removed, rat running through villages to the NW of the town is not a major issue and the environmental damage the road would cause is massive. So SFoE have been opposing the project throughout along with CPRE, SWLT, The Berwick Estate and residents.</p> <p>The latest development was the allocation of £1million funding to prepare the outline business case (OBC) required as part of the application process for funding from a particular pot of money. “The Large Local Major Transport Schemes Fund” is being administered directly by The Department for Transport (DfT). The OBC was submitted by Shropshire Council on 22nd Dec 2017 and it was put on the Council Website about 3 weeks later. We have examined it – in particular Dave Green who has been campaigning against the road since the 1980’s – and the DfT have agreed to consider our comments when they are vetting the proposal. We expect SWLT and CPRE to make submissions too and also Sustainable Transport Shropshire (STS) - a relatively new group campaigning more widely on sustainable transport issues. A decision is expected from the DfT in early summer.</p> <p>Rea Brook</p> <p>Although SFoE had seen litter along the lower reaches of The Rea Brook as a problem it was only when Sheila joined 2 years ago, determined to get action, that the issue was tackled. She has done almost all of the work supported by SFoE and SWLT so it has been done under the title of “The Rea Brook Clean Up”. Businesses had to be made aware of their responsibilities and most responded quickly. Asda were a bit slow and a lot of chasing was needed. Now a direct link with the contractor appointed by Asda makes it easier to get work done. They and Network Rail had the largest tasks - Network Rail had 4men working for 10days to clear the Brook and their land and improve security. Asda have the longest length and the biggest ongoing problem. Sheila persuaded Asda to fence the Brook to prevent litter blowing from the car park and garage areas.</p> <p>It is clear that it will be necessary to monitor and request action into the future because litter continues to accumulate. Eg – a bench on the footpath beyond Asda is not used by the general public but is for drug use with the accompanying litter. It is agreed it should be removed but SC are reluctant because of an expenditure freeze so a seemingly simple issue is made difficult. In general it will be necessary to monitor and chase as necessary.</p> <p>It was suggested litter bins along the footpath would help and SC were asked if they would provide but refused.</p>	

With the recent publicity about plastic waste we understand there is an initiative by the SWLT and Sabrina Boat to clean up The Severn. To be investigated and discussed at the next meeting.

SJ

Green Guide

Shrewsbury Green Guide has been produced for a long time having been initiated by Judy.. Starting life as a little booklet it grew into a comprehensive production and funding was obtained from time to time to issue revised versions. It eventually covered all aspects of our lives focussing on local interests as much as possible but including national organisations as appropriate. Printing became too expensive and also entries need to be kept up to date so 5 years ago it was decided to go to a web based version only. www.shrewsburygreenguide.org.uk

A sub group manage the Guide and meet as required. Everyone is encouraged to point out where updating is needed. They are now looking at the plastics issue and will be producing a piece for inclusion as well as for publicity purposes.

At Concord College Emma has managed to make a significant change regarding plastic cups. All 600 students have each bought, at cost, a reusable plastic cup and the College will no longer buy disposable cups so saving 3tons of waste/year. She runs an Ecoclub at the College.

JC SF MR
SJ EC

Shrewsbury air quality and town centre traffic/plans

Mike has been researching the air quality issue for some time and liaising extensively with SC about the data they collect and the issues that exist. The gyratory by the railway station is the significant problem area – at The Station Hotel the annual NOx level is 50% above that permitted which is amongst the worst in the country outside London. A report by SC is due to be prepared by April and we await that before deciding on future action. One “strange” thing that happened last November was that data on the SC website suddenly disappeared. When challenged they claimed it was a technical problem but it hasn’t yet been reinstated.

We have been keen for SC to take positive steps to reduce traffic in the town centre. Two years ago we produced a proposal to stop traffic going through High Street and Shoplatch between 10am and 3pm. It was strongly opposed by Town Walls residents and a reluctance by SC to engage on the issue meant it wasn’t implemented. There is lots of evidence that reducing through traffic would be good for business as well as for the wellbeing of everyone.

In 2017 the Business Improvement District (BID) with SC produced The Big Town Plan for Shrewsbury. We were encouraged that it was forward thinking and addressed most of the points we had made in the consultations they held during preparation. So traffic reduction and air quality improvement are included. There will be workshops to develop proposals and we will be attending these. £45k has been allocated by SC to allow this work to proceed.

Bee Campaign

We have been involved in this National FoE campaign since it started. Recently we have only done the occasional event – the last being a stall at the Bishops Castle Michaelmas Fair last year. At the moment everyone awaits a decision by the EU on whether to ban neonicotinoid pesticides. How this goes will affect the future course of the campaign radically.

Areas of ongoing interest

It was also decided that we would briefly cover more general matters. So:-

National and regional FoE

We pay an annual affiliation fee to National FoE which allows us to use the FoE trade mark. It also means we get public liability cover under a policy taken out by National FoE. The National Conference changed to “Base Camp” 3 years ago and is held in Derbyshire. Any member of a Local Group may attend.

	<p>There is a FoE Regional Office in Birmingham and Chris Crean is there. He is a very experienced campaigner and we have had advice and help from him from time to time.. There is a Regional Conference of West Midland Local Groups once a year and we have attended these. Again any member of a Local Group is welcome.</p> <p>Planning</p> <p>Philip monitors planning applications to pick out those of significance. Housing developments and transport are key areas of interest. We also respond comprehensively to consultations on planning policy and have pushed constantly for better standards to be adopted for developments, both regarding energy conservation and production and quality of the environment created. Have recently thought that as pushing SC on this has had little impact approaching developers and architects might be more effective and bring some progress.</p> <p>GSX</p> <p>This is an umbrella organisation for all environmental organisations in Shropshire to exchange information and ideas. Apart from ongoing activity a conference is held every year. Tony is Chair. www.greenshropshireexchange.org.uk</p> <p>Members' email</p> <p>We used to produce a newsletter about twice a year in hard copy but then decided to move to a much more frequent email version. Now considering whether we need a hard copy newsletter/leaflet as well that can be placed in locations around town to raise awareness of our existence. Emma and Katy keen on this whole issue of promoting the group so agreed they plus Barbara, Tony and Frank should meet separately to discuss.</p> <p>Web page and Facebook</p> <p>Mike and Tony have been putting info on the website and Tony created our Facebook page. There is "out of date" material on the website and Emma and Katy who found us via a web search both said their first impression was that the group was defunct. So we need to tackle this as well as the newsletter issue. Agreed the meeting re newsletters be expanded to cover all publicity, information giving methods.</p>	<p>BP EC KC AG FO</p>
<p>Matters arising From 8 Jan</p>	<p>From items not on agenda</p> <p>BID consultation on Big Town Plan.</p> <p>Barbara has emailed BID to confirm our interest in taking part in the workshops to develop the plan</p> <p>Partnering Global Justice. David Caton</p> <p>Has contacted Barbara and asked if he can come to our next meeting and talk over cooperation between the groups. This was agreed.</p>	<p>BP</p>

<p>Local Campaigns/ Projects/ Issues</p>	<p>Treasurer's role and responsibilities.</p> <p>Tony and Jane working together until complete handover to Jane is appropriate. Sue has looked at the Triodos Current Acct with them and it is suitable but we would incur charges of about £10/annum if transaction numbers are similar to recent years. They may have a paying in arrangement with Nat West. We have halted changing signatories for our present account with the Coop and will apply to Triodos to open an account.</p> <p>Plastics in Shrewsbury.</p> <p>Already covered above</p> <p>Air quality.</p> <p>We will discuss our campaign at the March meeting</p> <p>Planning Issues</p> <p>Barbara referred to excellent guidelines produced by Cambridge Council which require high environmental standards – what we need in Shropshire. They will apply to housing constructed by the Council. There are Government revisions to advice on “Green” issues.</p> <p>GSX:</p> <p>Working on future actions.</p>	<p>JM AG SF BP</p>
<p>NationalFoE</p>		
<p>Communication</p>	<p>To be completely reviewed at meeting of sub group – see above.</p>	
<p>AOB</p>		
<p>Upcoming dates</p> <p>Next SFoE meeting</p>	<p>Monday 5 March 2018 at The Alb, Smithfield Road (by the bus station) 7.30pm</p>	