



Shrewsbury
in Bloom 

2021 Portfolio

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The Shrewsbury in Bloom Group takes its environmental responsibilities seriously, and we have therefore printed this Bloom portfolio on 100% recycled paper using eco-friendly ink.

The Shrewsbury in Bloom Group asked members of the public to submit their favourite photos of the town as part of their annual photo competition, with the winning entries featured on the front and back covers of the Portfolio.

Front cover image: The Library taken by Robert Gwilliam, a self-taught photographer who regularly contributes photos of the town on Shrewsbury Facebook pages. Born and brought up in the town, he has always had a love for taking pictures of Shrewsbury. He likes to take pictures of the Library throughout the seasons and for this particular image, he felt that the spring blossom stood out against the different textures of the Grade I Listed building.

Back cover image: Taken by Nigel Thorne, who has been a keen amateur photographer for several years. He feels that Shrewsbury is full of wonderful scenes to frame and is therefore a photographer's paradise, especially for the spontaneous image taken on his camera phone. His photo was taken in January 2021 when the River Severn was in full flood, and he felt that the lighting of Porthill Bridge against the clear starry sky would make an ideal image.



Mayor of Shrewsbury Councillor Julian Dean

As Mayor of Shrewsbury, it is my very great pleasure to promote our beautiful, historic and enchanting town to the Heart of England in Bloom judges.

It has been an exceptionally challenging year, and one where I have seen so many people come together to help their neighbours. I believe that it has brought out the best in people and that we have seen a wonderful community spirit arise from the difficulties many have faced during the Coronavirus pandemic.

In Bloom terms, it is a real privilege to be able to promote our town's horticultural excellence as we once again enter into the competition season.

I'd especially like to take this opportunity to thank the volunteers, business sponsors, community groups and other organisations who work together so well on these occasions, and I'd like to pay tribute to the Shrewsbury in Bloom Group for the way in which they encourage everyone to join together to uphold our traditions of horticultural distinction.

We hope that you enjoy this Portfolio-based tour of the town for this year and we look forward to welcoming you back, in person, to tour our wonderful town next year.

Chairman, Shrewsbury in Bloom Keith Roberts

As chairman of Shrewsbury in Bloom, I am delighted to be able to highlight the Bloom ethos via our Portfolio as we enter the regional Heart of England in Bloom competition in the Small City category.

After the cancellation of the Bloom competition last year, we are delighted to showcase our town and the work that has continued in Shrewsbury, despite the Coronavirus pandemic and social distancing restrictions. It has been a challenge, and one that I firmly believe has brought about more community activity, as people find ways of helping others in their time of need.

The Bloom Group works alongside the two extremely supportive Town and Unitary Councils in Shrewsbury and utilising the Bloom philosophy across everything the town does, helps to ensure that so many areas and the people who live, work and visit the town see the benefits of their work.

We take the view that entering Bloom is not just about winning a competition – it encompasses what we do all year round. With many different challenges over the last twelve months, there has been a real effort to ensure that the floral displays have been planted and maintained to help make the town look attractive and welcoming to those visitors who come to Shrewsbury for both the floral aspects and its history.



We are extremely lucky to have so many community groups, organisations and individuals who actively work together to uphold our highly-regarded prized floral reputation – these are the fantastic people that make Bloom happen every year. They include: Team Shrewsbury, West Mercia Police, Shropshire Fire & Rescue Service, Severn Hospice, The Hive, Shropshire Council, Veolia, Shrewsbury Town Centre Residents Association, Shropshire Horticultural Society, the Environment Agency and the Allotment Associations.

With everyone working together, we want to make sure that Shrewsbury maintains its reputation as THE Town of Flowers, no matter the difficulties we encounter along the way.

The Shrewsbury in Bloom Group

- The Shrewsbury in Bloom Group meets on a regular basis throughout the year, but more frequently during the summer months, to help plan the floral displays for the following year. Income is generated from actively marketing, promoting and selling hanging baskets to local businesses in the town centre. The Town Council works in partnership with Shrewsbury BID to market the hanging baskets with a view to ensuring that the town is filled with colour throughout the summer. The Bloom Group also seeks floral sponsorship for roundabouts, planters and other floral features from companies wishing to promote their businesses to a wider audience.
- The Group is principally made up of volunteers from the local community and businesses. There are currently 6 volunteer members, 3 council officers and 5 councillors who work closely with all its partners to ensure the town always looks its best.
- The group's main objective is to act as a stakeholder for new ideas and projects to enhance the town.
- The Bloom Group takes great pride in the fact that there is continuity in our collaboration with companies, which is testament to the pride and commitment of local businesses in Shrewsbury. This enables us to provide the visual impact of the floral displays around the town. Shrewsbury currently has 28 business sponsors, and in view of the Coronavirus pandemic, the decision was taken to help companies out by not invoicing them as part of our sponsorship programme for the 2019 / 2020 year. This was well received by local companies and helps to facilitate partnership working within the town.
- The Town Council did not provide a hanging basket service to businesses within the town for 2020 due to financial issues for companies and also social distancing restrictions to protect both Town Council staff and members of the public. Hanging baskets were installed on Council-owned properties to help enhance the floral offer within the town centre.
- Shrewsbury in Bloom is fortunate to have a wide range of sponsors, both national and local companies, which includes: Morris Properties; Veolia Environmental Services; Crowmoor Primary School; James Holyoak & Parker Limited; Marches Care Ltd; Ray Parry Playground Services; Greenthumb; Copthorne Road Vets; Sign & Poster; MiPower Limited; Bluebird Care; Dyke Yaxley Solicitors; Inocencia; GreenTek; Gild of Freeman of Shrewsbury; Kingsland Polymers; Whitecroft Fish & Chip Shop; First Car; Lunts The Chemist; Oxon Touring Park; The Parade Shopping Centre; Abbey Removals Limited, My Man Cave Barbers, Chimera RPO, Radfield Home Care, DecoStitch, Star Cars Travel Limited, Salop Leisure, Approved Care and Support, Shrewsbury Self Store, Edmondson Electrical, Shropshire House Clearance and Bellway Homes Ltd (West Midlands).
- Schools have had their own specific issues to deal with during the Coronavirus pandemic and the Town Council's Youth and Community Manager continues to work closely with them to support young people. We have Bloom Working Group members who are actively engaged with school gardening clubs, providing hands-on help and advice to young gardeners. Competitions for both Heart of England in Bloom and Shrewsbury Town Council have been temporarily suspended during the pandemic.
- Shrewsbury in Bloom has its own section on the Town Council's website to promote projects, events and activities, display schools' work and announce winners of competitions. The Town Council actively promotes the work of Shrewsbury in Bloom via its social media platforms of Facebook and Twitter (@ShrewsburyTC and @ShrewsBloom) and promotes the various Bloom events, competitions and winners throughout the year.



Review of the Year

July 2020

- Shrewsbury Town Council re-opens the Dingle and its play areas, whilst asking people to follow social distancing rules
- The 'Shrewsbury's Open' campaign is launched by the Shrewsbury Recovery Taskforce, which includes Shrewsbury BID, Shropshire Council and Shrewsbury Town Council, as the town continues to open up following the easing of lockdown restrictions



August 2020

- Town Crier, Martin Wood, takes part in the 'Cry for Peace' to mark VJ Day
- Flash flooding hits the town after some of the hottest days of the summer, with flood warnings issued for the River Severn
- Storms Ellen and Francis sweep over the county bringing several branches and trees down across the town. The Town Council's tree gang are busy clearing up and making the roads and footpaths safe
- Additional facilities are provided by the Shrewsbury Recovery Taskforce for people to enjoy the grounds of Shrewsbury Castle as part of efforts to open up green spaces within the town centre
- Shrewsbury Cup reaches the milestone of saving 30,000 single use cups from being thrown away within the first ten months of its operation
- Due to the cancellation of the 133rd Shrewsbury Flower Show, the event embraced technology and holds a Virtual Flower Show instead



September 2020

- Servicemen and women parade through Shrewsbury to commemorate the 79th anniversary of the Battle of Britain followed by a memorial service in St Chad's Church and wreath-laying in Quarry park
- An archaeological dig takes place at Shrewsbury Castle for the second summer running
- The first two of three annual Mayor of Shrewsbury Awards are held virtually for the first time in its history, acknowledging those unsung heroes in the community
- Mayor of Shrewsbury, Councillor Phil Gillam, undertakes a skydive helping to raise funds for his chosen charity, Samaritans of Shrewsbury
- The Mayor of Shrewsbury hosts the Shrewsbury Beatles Weekend as part of his annual fundraising events in aid of Samaritans of Shrewsbury



October 2020

- Spring bedding planting programme starts from the beginning of the month
- Christmas lights are erected around the town



November 2020

- Shrewsbury pays tribute to all the men and women who died serving their country in the annual Remembrance Sunday, held this year at the War Memorial in the Quarry, in a socially distanced ceremony
- The third and final annual Mayor of Shrewsbury Awards is held virtually for the first time in its history, acknowledging those unsung heroes in the community
- Shrewsbury is ranked as the 14th happiest place to live from a survey by property website, Rightmove
- Councillor Gwen Burgess is officially sworn in as Mayor of Shrewsbury as the Covid-19 pandemic sees the annual event moved from May to November
- With a ban on social gatherings, Mayor of Shrewsbury, Councillor Gwen Burgess, cuts a solitary figure in the Square to officially switch on the town's festive lights although the event was watched by over 50,000 people on social media
- The fifth Shrewsbury Literature Festival takes place online and at locations around the town, attracting a line-up of international authors, award winning poets and leading writers
- The Rotary Tree of Life is installed in St Mary's Church



December 2020

- With Shrewsbury Town Council's Carols in the Square cancelled this year, My Shrewsbury magazine and Shropshire Festivals created the 'Doorstep Carols' event to bring a much-needed burst of Christmas cheer this season. The event was broadcast on BBC Radio Shropshire and gains national attention, being replicated in other areas of the country
- Shrewsbury Town Council launches its first e-newsletter



January 2021

- Flooding hits Shrewsbury from Storm Christoph, reaching the peak seen the previous year followed by heavy snow, which hampers clean-up operations



February 2021

- Virtual events take place online as the Darwin Festival helps to celebrate the birthplace of Charles Darwin and encourage people to promote the town's most famous son
- Shrewsbury Town Council introduces a new electric buggy for staff in the Quarry as part of its process to reduce its carbon footprint by 2030
- Big Town Plan Festival held online as part of a public consultation on the future plans for Shrewsbury



March 2021

- The Mayor of Shrewsbury encourages people to take part in the National Day of Reflection to support those bereaved by the Covid-19 pandemic to mark the anniversary of the first National Lockdown
- National Census takes place in the UK

April 2021

- Death of HRH, Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, flags fly at half mast
- National Covid-19 Lockdown starts to ease with non-essential shops allowed to open

May 2021

- Local Council elections take place for both the Town Council and the Unitary authority, Shropshire Council
- A Covid-19 safe Annual Town Council and Mayor Making ceremony is held at the Theatre Severn, and sees Councillor Julian Dean sworn in as Mayor of Shrewsbury and Councillor Elisabeth Roberts as Deputy Mayor
- In the absence of the annual greenhouse tour, the Town Council helps to keep residents updated on the progress made with planting via weekly Facebook Live events
- Summer planting programme undertaken around the town

June 2021

- Annual Town Meeting is held virtually for the first time
- Hanging baskets are installed around the town
- The Shrewsbury Art Trail takes place at various locations around the town
- With a fortnight of non-stop arts and entertainment, the Belle Vue Arts Festival takes place for its 17th annual event.



Horticultural Excellence

A1 Overall Impression



- With a high-impact floral planting scheme, the award-winning Dingle garden is often described as the 'Jewel in the Crown' of Shrewsbury. Offering seasonal planting throughout the year, the sunken garden is planted with a wide variety of trees, shrubs and seasonal flowers for the 'wow' factor when visitors first enter through the gates. With around 30,000 plants, the horticultural displays are concentrated within the Dingle and provide a strong contrast to the open grass areas and lime tree avenues which dominate the remaining landscape of the Quarry park.

The Dingle started out life as a wet quarry providing a poor quality red sandstone which was the main source of the town's building stone. The current gardenesque design was created by the Shropshire Horticultural Society between 1875 and 1879. The design combines irregular forms, winding paths and an intimate scale.

East of the lake, there are richly planted beds cut into manicured grass and a floral clock.

- The Castle Carpet Bed at the entrance to Shrewsbury Castle provides an annual focal point for visitors and has a new planting scheme twice a year. In the summer of 2020, the theme for the floral bed recognised the work that the staff of the NHS and other key workers throughout

the country had played to keep the country safe and running during the Covid-19 pandemic. Planted with Echeveria — Silver (lobed leaves) Polyanthus, Pansies, Bellis, Daffodils & Tulips.

The design for summer 2021 celebrates the 100th anniversary of the founding of the British Legion. A key mission for the Legion branches was to feed their communities during the Great Depression. Emergency aid in these circumstances helped establish the Poppy Appeal, which still provides a service today.

Shrewsbury Town Council staff used Alternanthera leh E Green, Alternanthera leh H Bright Red and Echeveria for the display.

- The floral displays around the town are planted in 6 darleks with built-in reservoirs, 150 pole planters, 100 railing inserts, 50 troughs, 6 large tiers, hanging baskets for both commercial and council buildings. The highly visual floral displays help to enhance the historic town centre for the benefit of residents and visitors alike.
- In the light of social distancing measures introduced in the summer of 2020, Shrewsbury Town Council and Shropshire Council utilised floral planters between road barriers to help brighten the street scene.



A2 Maintenance of Planted Areas

- With the introduction of planters with internal water reservoirs, Town Council staff only have to water the plants twice a week, whilst staff feed the floral displays using a natural seaweed based liquid feed.
- With the need to provide a greater degree of bio-diversity, Shrewsbury Town Council staff have been trained to leave areas of roadside verges and parkland to provide habitat for insects and pollinators. The Town Council has been proactive in this initiative, with more residents recognising the need to leave verges to protect wildlife.
- Once the Castle Carpet Bed has been planted and established, Town Council staff maintain the detailed floral display throughout the season by meticulously trimming the display.



A3 Plant Selection

- The Castlefields Action Team, working with Severnside Housing and supported by Shrewsbury Town Council, planted new trees at the car park off New Park Road in the Castlefields area of the town to help improve the local environment. The trees have been specially selected to suit the local environment with Hawthorn and Field Maple to provide Autumn leaf colour along New Park Road, whilst a pair of 'Strawberry' trees in tubs will produce flowers and fruit in a few years' time.
- Shrewsbury Town Council staff have installed a sedum roof on one of its bus shelters on Radbrook Road as part of a trial to assess their effectiveness at reducing carbon in an urban setting in the town, along a main road where levels of pollution are higher. One sedum roof will sequester 5kg of carbon each year.

The sedum roof is a low-growing feature with a shallow root system, which won't become overgrown once it is established. The long-term

maintenance of this green roof means that the Town Council staff won't have to water, deadhead or mow the plants on a regular basis – all they have to do is a yearly feed, some weeding and a check to see if the roof is draining well.

A living roof, planted over a waterproof membrane, will help to provide a habitat for wildlife as part of an urban wilderness, which will attract beneficial insects, birds, bees and butterflies.

More locations will form part of the scheme over the coming months and allows the Town Council to refurbish old bus shelters, which will sequester 5kg of carbon in the town each year.

The Town Council wants to promote to residents the benefits of using sedum on surfaces at home as a sustainable way of repurposing roofs and surfaces to help reduce the carbon footprint throughout the town.



- The Town Council's Countryside Unit has converted eighteen dedicated sites around Shrewsbury to plant annual wildflower meadows covering a total of 3,500m². The areas have been converted from short mown grass to nectar-rich wildflowers. Shropshire Council gave their consent for the Town Council to seed the verge on one of the principal roads in the town at Robertson Way. They provide a wonderful food source for wildlife and fewer emissions compared to frequent mowing.

Some areas require a traditional mix of UK wildflowers, including poppy, cornflower and corn marigold, which provide a high-impact display through the summer months.

Although many people think that wildflower seeds can just be thrown onto grass and left to grow, these areas require specialist management at key times of the year to become established. This year staff purposefully left one area that was planted with wildflower seeds last year to see what second year growth would look like and to dispel public belief that wildflower planting is easy and has minimal maintenance.

The wildflowers have been extremely well received by the public and there are plans to include more areas in the future.

A number of other areas have changed to a once-per year cut, and whilst these areas do not provide the colourful displays as the sown flowers, they are even more valuable to wildlife than the wildflowers.

Shrewsbury Town Council staff undertake a review of its planting programmes each year with a view to including as wide a variety of plant species as possible. There is a move towards incorporating more pollinator-friendly plants in the floral schemes throughout the town, which is a long-term project to improve the bio-diversity and sustainability of the floral displays.



Locations for the wildflowers have been:

- Battlefield car park
- Meole Village
- Robertson Way
- Hubert Way
- Mousefield (off Underdale Road)
- Stanley Lane
- Church Road Recreation Ground in Meole Village
- Shorncliffe Drive Recreation Ground
- Silks Meadow



Horticultural Excellence

A4 Plant Quality



- Shrewsbury Town Council's greenhouse is 3,900m² and the facilities provide space for the 300,000 plants that will be used in the town's floral displays. The greenhouse is deep cleaned twice a year once each seasonal planting programme has been completed, which enables staff to produce the following season's plants in a pest-free environment.
- This year the Town Council has taken a number of videos from the Greenhouse and broadcast them on Facebook showing the work of staff in producing plants of quality. The videos have shown how to take cuttings from parent plants and create new plants, the types of plants that make a good hanging basket and the choice of compost mix to maximise growth.
- Ash dieback, also known as chalara, is a fungal disease originating from Asia that is killing our native European ash trees in large numbers. The disease has been present in the U.K since the early 2000's, from imported tree stock but also by wind-blown spores from the continent. Shrewsbury Town Council's Countryside Unit staff have noticed that ash trees in Shrewsbury are increasingly becoming infected. There is no cure, and containment trials have been largely unsuccessful.

There are an estimated 2 billion ash trees in the U.K and it is one of the most abundant trees in Shropshire and Shrewsbury. The benefits of Ash are numerous; it helps to reduce pollution and flooding, regulates ground temperature, stores carbon, as well as supporting many native species of wildlife. The loss of these trees will have a huge impact on the landscape of Shropshire. Current evidence suggests at least 50% mortality of Shrewsbury's park and street ash, with higher 85% mortality expected in woodlands.

The Town Council's Countryside Team have developed a strategy for dealing with the impact of the disease, and also for replanting trees of other species after the loss of the trees. This has been done with the help of information from the Forestry Commission and DEFRA among others. They have also surveyed the tree stock to establish the number and condition of their ash trees and identify those that need to be removed. Where diseased trees can be allowed to do so safely, they will be left to decline naturally. However, many dying trees are next to houses, roads, footpaths and play areas, and will need to be felled before they collapse.



The survey found:

- Over 10,000 ash trees have been recorded on the Town Council's Countryside Sites.
- Nearly half of all small trees (under 30cm girth) were found to be affected by dieback.
- 300 of these trees had less than 25% of their expected leaf cover remaining.
- Trees within woodlands were more likely to be showing effects of dieback than more isolated trees.
- Larger trees are faring better with only 25% of them showing signs of dieback, but this is likely to increase in the next few years.

Environmental Responsibility

B1 Local Identity



- Over 700 people took part in a virtual festival to discuss plans for the town's future with an emphasis on how Shrewsbury will develop over the next two decades, and how people will move in and around the town centre and how the town's heritage can be celebrated.
 - Members of the Shrewsbury Railway Heritage Trust ensured that the town's floral displays in Abbey Foregate looked their best last summer. With assistance from Shrewsbury Town Council providing some plants and re-vamping the planters, the Heritage Trust wanted to bring some floral colour to one of the main entrances to the town centre and to make this area of the town a better place for residents and visitors.
 - Proposals have been unveiled to transform Castle Street in the town centre which could see the castle grounds opened up to events and roads pedestrianised. Working in partnership with the Big Town Plan and Marches Local Enterprise Partnership, "The Castle Quarter" could see the area in front of the library and castle opened up and with traffic diverted away from Castle Street, the area would become more welcoming to pedestrians.
 - Historic England is currently regenerating the Flaxmill Maltings as a centre for the community. The Grade I Listed main mill and Grade II Listed kiln are currently being restored with a grant of £20.7m from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, combined with additional funding from the Marches Local Partnership, Historic England, Shropshire Council and the Friends of the Flaxmill Maltings. The upper floors of the main mill will be transformed into office spaces and the ground floor will become a visitor experience and café.
- Built in 1797, the building was one of the first in the world to have an iron frame and its British design was the blueprint for the modern skyscraper.

Once the largest employer in Shrewsbury during the Industrial Revolution with more than 800 men, women and children working there manufacturing linen thread from flax, the history of the buildings and its different uses over the centuries is being brought back to life.

- Shrewsbury Town Council's Countryside and Green Space Team has installed five new information panels along the Rea Brook Valley circular walk. The Nature Reserve runs east and south from the centre of town and can be accessed from many places along its route. The new panels will help to guide visitors around the site, and will put the site into context with the various uses that the area has seen over the centuries. The panels will also highlight interesting wildlife to look out for at each location.



Environmental Responsibility

B2 Natural Environment



- Shrewsbury Town Council's Countryside and Greenspace Team planted over 3,000 trees at Monkmoor River Ground to help create a diverse habitat for wildlife. The tree-planting project has been funded by the Town Council, the Environment Agency and the European Regional Development Fund. A mix of hedges, park trees and woodland groups have been planted to create a diverse riverside habitat. Even after a year, there are signs of wildlife moving in, including oak galls created on the new saplings and a stonechat has been seen regularly around the new trees.

Pre-pandemic, volunteers from the local schools and community groups have been invited to help the team, but with Covid-19 restrictions in place, that hasn't been possible. Once restrictions have been lifted and it is safe to do so, volunteers will be invited to the tree planting projects that the Town Council will be completing over the course of the next year.

- Shropshire Council announced its ambition to plant a tree for every resident in the county, and reintroduced its Community Tree Scheme, working with a Shropshire-based tree company to provide young trees to successful applicants. The scheme was overwhelmed with applications, giving out 12,500 trees in one day.

Part of the project saw the launch of a survey to find out from residents where more trees can be planted across Shropshire.

- Shrewsbury Town Council has committed funds in its 2021 / 22 budget to produce a feasibility study to look again at the viability of the hydro-electricity scheme on the River Severn. With both Shropshire

Council and the Town Council committed to producing climate change plans, the scheme, if implemented, would likely generate enough electricity to power the equivalent of around 400 homes every year, and would demonstrate both Councils' commitment to tackling climate change.

The scheme would also serve as an educational tool for local school children to learn about hydro power.

- The Town Council is using peat-free compost, and staff have reported positive results with the switch to a more environmentally-friendly potting medium.
- The Environment Agency is carrying out major work on the Rea Brook channel off Romsley Drive to install a fish pass to make the site more suitable for fish migration. Members of Shrewsbury Town Fisheries had noticed that fish were dying whilst trying to swim further upstream. With a cost of around £92,000, the pass will help to improve the fish stocks in the area as well as improving the local habitat.
- Shrewsbury Town Fisheries are responsible for managing the town's fishing rights both along the River Severn and in a number of pools. All fishing income has been ploughed back into managing the environment around the river. This has included creating new fishing pegs for both able bodied and disabled anglers; managing the river banks; removal of algal bloom from the ponds and improving footpaths to open up these areas for all.





Environmental Responsibility

B3 Hard Surfaces and Open Grass Areas

- The Town Council's Countryside and Green Space Team, working with RF Gardiners, repaired a number of footpaths over the winter months. Paths were repaired at Mousecroft Community Woodland, Hillside Drive and the Old Canal, whilst the Countryside Team completed work in the Rea Brook Valley Nature Reserve. With more people using the sites whilst exploring their local area during the National Lockdowns, it has been essential to improve the facilities at the sites.
 - The Priory School in Shrewsbury has established an Eco Team and in one of their first activities, more than 120 pupils took part in an organised litter pick before Easter to help clear the area around Meole and Radbrook, helping to do something positive for the local community.
 - Cyclists in Shrewsbury are being encouraged in to the town centre with the provision of additional cycle racks. Plantlocks have been funded by Shropshire Council and planted and installed by Shrewsbury Town Council in locations around the town and are designed to give cyclists the confidence to leave their bikes in a secured location – as well as providing a splash of floral colour. Local companies are keen to get involved in the scheme and help maintain the floral displays throughout the year.
- Theatre Severn has had two planters for a number of years, planted with herbs for local residents to use as and when.
- With warmer weather and social distancing restrictions in place, usage of the town's parks and open spaces has been greatly increased. This has led to an increase in litter. Volunteers, including several from the charity Share Shrewsbury, have given up their Saturday mornings to help to tidy up and undertake a litter pick. Shrewsbury Town Council has provided litter picking equipment and has disposed of the collections.
 - Volunteers have worked with Shrewsbury Town Council's Countryside and Greenspace Team to clear the rubbish in the Rea Brook. In addition to items which had been dumped there, including gas canisters, bikes, tyres, fishing tackle and wheelbarrows, the team also cleared debris from floods earlier in the year.
 - The Reabrook Wanderers, a group of residents in the Rea Brook area of Shrewsbury collected 40kg of rubbish as part of a litter pick at the Nature Reserve.



- Shrewsbury BID has engaged a local artist to create artwork to cover some of the BT exchange boxes around the town as a way to discourage vandalism and graffiti.
- Staff from Shrewsbury Town Council have been able to save over 1,300 plastic trays from deliveries to the Market Hall going to landfill over the course of a two-month period. The plastic trays are delivered to the local allotment associations to help holders with their planting and harvesting. A number of allotments provide Shrewsbury Food Hub with excess produce.
- Shrewsbury Town Council has replaced 375 lamps and gas trays, resulting in an energy saving of 65%. The Council has also managed to retrofit all of the traditional heritage gas lamps with LED lamps and the contractor used specifically designed a new half standard wall lamp (now called the Shrewsbury Lantern) to meet bespoke requirements in the town.
- Shrewsbury Town Council has installed 21 solar lights along the 1km stretch of the River Severn from Kingsland Bridge to Greyfriars Bridge. Previously unlit along the riverside, the heritage lights create

a promenading atmosphere whilst still respectful of the Conservation Area and work both in summer and winter.

Working with a specialist lighting company, Shrewsbury is the first place in the world to have these type of lights, which has generated a lot of positive feedback from residents and the lighting industry nationally.

- As part of their ongoing management of sites around the town, Shrewsbury Town Council's Countryside Unit replaced the boards on a timber footbridge at the Rea Brook Valley Nature Reserve. Having removed the boards, the team found that the runners and frame underneath has also become rotten. A new bridge has been installed, which is wider than the original one and has been well received by the local community.
- Shrewsbury Town Council's team has worked on removing items which have been dumped in to the Old River Bed. As a Site of Special Scientific Interest, the rubbish had been thrown down the bank into the wetland. The site is an important refuge for wildlife as one of the only wetland reed beds in the area.



C1 Year Round Activity and On-Going Planning



- Shrewsbury Town Council's Countryside Unit has a regular volunteer group, which is made up of people who enjoy being outdoors, including retired people, adults with learning disabilities and young people seeking experience. Whilst activities were limited in the initial phases of the Coronavirus pandemic, the group has carried out a huge range of tasks this year, including helping out with the clearance of the Rea Brook.
- The work of the Shrewsbury in Bloom Group, Shrewsbury Town Council and its grounds maintenance team continues all year round with tree and bulb planting in the autumn; Christmas events and assisting Shropshire Council with gritting of roads and pavements in the winter when required; planting flower seeds and preparing hanging baskets in the spring ready for planting out following a full programme of horticultural work in early summer.
- Every autumn, the communities around the town work together to plant bulbs at a number of locations around Shrewsbury. The Town Council has provided local schools and allotment associations

with bulbs to enhance their areas in the spring. Over 30,000 spring bulbs, including daffodils and miniature narcissus, tulips, snowdrops, bluebells, crocus and hyacinths were planted last year, with more than 6,000 bulbs planted by community groups and schools.

- Shrewsbury's long-term vision through the Big Town Plan has been recognised by the High Streets Taskforce as an 'outstanding example' of demonstrating the importance of having an agreed vision for a town. Hailed as a beacon for others to follow with effective development of a collaborative vision for a town centre.
- The Shrewsbury Town Fisheries, which look after the town's fishing rights on the River Severn, have 10 volunteer Bailiffs who not only manage fishing on the river but also carry out annual improvement works to both the river banks and the areas of public space along the river. They have worked closely with the Town Council's Countryside & Greenspace Team to programme works making efficient use of resources whilst maximising impact.

C2 Communication and Awareness

- With current Coronavirus restrictions in place, the Shrewsbury in Bloom Group has been unable to host the annual tour of the Town Council's greenhouse, which has been very well supported in the past.

In the absence of physical tours, the Town Council staff have used social media to promote behind-the-scenes Facebook Live videos to show the scale of the planting, how to take cuttings, the machinery required to maintain parks, recreation grounds and open spaces in the town.



- Shropshire Master Composters offer free advice to local residents on composting. With both regional and national lockdowns, the team have been unable to attend events around the county where they usually offer information and advice on how people can recycle their kitchen and garden waste through the process of composting. Using technology to help people, the team offered a series of webinars to people and groups to answer residents' questions. The Master Composters are volunteers who are trained by horticultural charity Garden Organic to support people in their communities to reduce the waste they produce and turn it into a useful garden resource, feeding the soil and reducing energy used to collect green waste from people's homes.
- Shrewsbury in Bloom and Shrewsbury Town Council have strong links with various local media groups around the region, including BBC Radio Shropshire, Shropshire Live, the Shropshire Star and Shrewsbury Chronicle which enables both the Bloom Group and the Town Council to promote its activities throughout the year. Shrewsbury Town Council's in-house Communications Officer regularly sends out press releases to keep the public informed of events in Shrewsbury, as well as promoting events on social media and encouraging public interaction and feedback from residents.
- Shrewsbury Town Council launched a new website to take advantage of the latest improvements in technology. With a fresh, more visually appealing look, the new site is more user-friendly and is easily accessible for all types of devices. It will also allow for secure online payments and the booking of facilities, whilst people can also sign up to the Town Council's bi-monthly online newsletter, helping to keep residents in touch with the work the Town Council has been undertaking.

- The Shrewsbury in Bloom Group engages with the local community each year with its annual Bloom Portfolio photo competition. Local residents are invited to submit their iconic images of the town. The winning entries will grace the front or back cover of the Portfolio.
- The Shrewsbury in Bloom Town of Flowers competition encourages local residents to participate in the annual event to find the best residential front and back garden, the best commercial premises, and the best floral feature for hanging baskets or containers. Previous years have seen Bloom Group members visit to judge the entries, but due to Coronavirus safety measures, the entries will be judged via photos.



- Bowbrook Community Allotments welcomed horticulturalist and celebrity gardener David Domoney to film a piece on how to build a basic raised bed to be shown on ITV's 'Love Your Garden Specials'.
- Foodbank PLUS in Shrewsbury was awarded the Queens Award for Voluntary Service, the highest award given to a voluntary organisation within the UK. The charity encompasses Shrewsbury Foodbank and Barnabus Money Advice amongst others and has a team of eighty-five volunteers who help to provide a series of initiatives to support and empower people within Shrewsbury. Helping to transform the lives of over 1,500 people, the project is committed to helping build a stronger community. Shrewsbury in Bloom provides support for the project with plants and compost for their allotment gardens.

Celebrating its fifth birthday, Shrewsbury Food Hub has saved more than 140 tonnes of food going to waste over the last twelve months. With twelve food shares a week, people pay what they can afford.

- Shrewsbury Town Council's Countryside Unit completed works at Monkmoor Meadows in 2021 and accompanied service users and staff from Abbots Wood Day Centre when they checked out the new wheelchair accessible path and picnic table there. Now that the site is more accessible, their Walking for Health group will be able to use the path more regularly, which will have a positive impact on the services users' health and emotional wellbeing.



Community Participation

C3 Funding and Support



- Funding of £60,000 was secured from the England European Regional Development Fund via a joint application from Shrewsbury Town Council and Shropshire Wildlife Trust to improve access and facilities at Monkmoor River Ground. Local residents are now able to enjoy the improved facilities, including disabled access, seating, paths, new planting and better access to the river for anglers and canoeists.

Some of the work formed part of the Freshwater First programme, with new fishing pegs and a new canoe ramp installed. New wildlife habitats have been created through the excavation of wetland scrapes on the site.

The scheme has resulted in over 5,000 trees being planted, flood storage scrapes have been dug out which will benefit the local wildlife.

- Shrewsbury Town Council has teamed up with Shropshire Council to create a Community Tree Nursery project to ensure that a ready supply of trees is available for the county.

With £500,000 of funding secured by Shropshire Council from the Department for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs (Defra), the two Councils are working together to provide a community tree project under the Trees Outside Woodlands scheme. The aim of the scheme is to try different approaches to encourage planting trees in locations that would not normally be considered woodland, which can include hedgerow trees, urban trees and small clusters of trees within fields.

Shropshire Council has agreed to provide the necessary improvements to the existing infrastructure to accommodate the increase in tree whip capacity from part of the funding from Defra with the aim of creating a tree nursery to meet future tree planting requirements for both councils.

The Trees Outside Woodlands project will run until March 2023 with the findings helping to develop more effective programmes of funding for tree planting in the future.

- Shrewsbury in Bloom offers companies a chance to help support the Town Council with the sponsorship of floral displays and roundabouts in and around the town. This provides both an enhancement to the area as well promotion opportunities for the companies involved. The scheme has proved popular with both local and national companies with the Shrewsbury in Bloom Group having to provide additional sites to meet demand.

The scheme usually brings in £20,000 per annum, which helps the Town Council to maintain floral displays in other areas of the town.

As a gesture of support during 2020, the Town Council advised all its sponsors that their annual charges would be waived to provide financial assistance to companies which might be finding trading conditions harder during the Coronavirus pandemic.





- The Town Council felt unable to offer its commercial hanging baskets scheme to companies in the summer of 2020 due to the Coronavirus pandemic. However, the scheme has been offered to businesses in the town for the summer, and working with Shrewsbury BID, 226 hanging baskets will be providing additional colour to the town in 2021.
- The Belle Vue Tree Planting Group, along with other volunteers, helped to plant trees and 50 metres of hedgerow on the verge beside the Abbey Car Park. With the aim of improving grass verges and green space in the area and helping to alleviate flooding associated with the Rea Brook, over 40 people helped with the planting earlier this year. The grassroots community project worked with a firm of local landscape architects, which will help to improve air quality, reduce traffic pollution and help wildlife in an urban setting.

Funding for the project was provided by the Environment Agency to help with flood alleviation, whilst Shrewsbury Town Council, Shropshire Council, Future Arbor Limited and West Mercia Police all provided support.

The planting will be maintained by the community group.

- Young Shrewsbury continues to operate its successful scheme with The Priory School to produce designs for two roundabouts in the vicinity of the school. As part of their Design and Art study, pupils are encouraged to take into account a number of factors in their design to ensure that the planting scheme is appropriate for its location and environment.

Other schools in the town have expressed an interest in participating in the scheme to get children interested in all aspects of gardening.

- The Town Council's Countryside Unit benefits from a team of volunteers who help out on a regular basis. Whilst social distancing measures during 2020 meant that the volunteer work parties were unable to provide assistance, a relaxation in the Coronavirus restrictions in 2021 has seen good turnouts to help the Town Council team replace a set of steps on the Rea Brook Valley Local nature reserve off White Hart and helping to clear a wetland ditch, laying woodchip on the paths and raking up the wildflower area ready for re-seeding at Copthorne Park.
- Shrewsbury Town Council has created a £250,000 fund to work towards becoming carbon neutral by 2030. A climate emergency group has been established for all stakeholders to work together to set appropriate



targets which can support the Town Council in achieving the best possible outcomes and establishing best practice.

- St Giles Primary School in Shrewsbury received funding of £1,000 from the Persimmon Homes Community Champion scheme to help cultivate part of its school grounds to create an allotment. With advice from their local Allotment Association, the aim is to have a dedicated space where pupils can learn and explore the value of growing, harvesting and the benefits of gardening and its associated health advantages.
- Residents across Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin are encouraged to recycle their real Christmas trees once the festive season is over. Veolia, the recycling and waste partner for both councils, has donated £5,000 to the Midlands Air Ambulance and £2,500 to Stay, a Telford & Wrekin charity which provides housing and support for vulnerable and homeless people in the borough. As part of its commitment to the environment, the Treecycle project saw thousands of trees turned into compost at Veolia's specialist facility just outside Shifnal.
- Shrewsbury in Bloom provides support to local schools with the delivery of plant, compost and planters. The Bloom Group also provides financial support through a grants scheme.
- Young Shrewsbury is the provider of youth services from Shrewsbury Town Council and plays an important role in the lives of young people in the town. Whilst the service was proving popular, with increases in attendance for the various sessions, Lockdowns over the course of the last year have produced a set of challenges that youth services has adapted to, ensuring that the young people in Shrewsbury still have access to the team.

One well-received activity from Young Shrewsbury is the weekly 'cook-along' hosted by Adam (aka Shropshire Lad). Funding of £42,000 had been secured, enabling deliveries of ingredients to the thirty families taking part. Adam has also uploaded his videos to the Young Shrewsbury YouTube channel.

A list of ingredients is always posted online so that other families can join in and cook from home and provide much-needed experience of producing healthy, home-cooked meals.



There are plans to get local businesses involved once restrictions are lifted, so that the young people of Shrewsbury get used to working in a business environment. This will also help with boosting confidence and provide some of the skills to take them into adulthood and the world of work.

- Shrewsbury Town Council has set aside £100,000 to tackle the Ash Die Back problem facing the county as part of a Recovery Plan with the aim of creating a tree scape that is resilient to any future pests and diseases. The Town Council's focus now centres on the need to work to improve the extent, condition, diversity and connectivity to trees and enhance the level of protection to minimise the risk of new threats occurring.
- The not-for-profit Shrewsbury Street Allotment project has taken over four disused or rough pieces of land in the town and has repurposed them for the benefit of the community with the permission of the landowners.

Casper Macindoe, also known as the 'Street Allotment Guy', is the inspiration behind the project with the aim of providing urban gardens to connect the community with the provision of free vegetables by re-using and re-purposing items which would have ended up in the incinerator.

The whole project is supported by donations and volunteers, with Shropshire Council's Waste Management team making a donation of compost to help the scheme. Volunteers help with the three plots and Shrewsbury Food Hub has offered to help with the distribution of vegetables at harvest time.

- Shrewsbury Town Fisheries have received over £15,000 of funding from the Angling Trust and the Environment Agency to improve the infrastructure and environment for angling on the River Severn.

Key Achievements



- Despite the Coronavirus pandemic, Shrewsbury Town Council staff have maintained the floral features, parks and open spaces throughout the year, which has seen an unprecedented usage as people connect more to the green space around where they live. Whilst many of the Town Council's sites suffered significant wear and tear, Town Council staff were able to maintain the parks and open spaces.
- Work was completed on a major project to improve access and habitat to the River Severn in Monkmoor. Paths, a bridge and a picnic area have been improved and three bankside structures for the public to use have been installed. The improved facilities will benefit local residents, including disabled access and will benefit the local community for many years to come.
- Extending the areas around the town where the Town Council is able to create wildflower meadows.
- The Shrewsbury Recovery Taskforce, made up from Shropshire Council, Shrewsbury Town Council and Shrewsbury BID, working together to ensure that the town centre is compliant with all current restrictions and Covid-19-safe, to enable shops and local businesses to fully open to visitors.
- As part of its support for Active Travel within the town, Shrewsbury Town Council has supported Shropshire Cycle Hub with a grant to enable the not-for-profit organisation to refurbish old bikes and provide them at no cost to those in financial hardship.
- The installation of a sedum roof on one of the bus shelters in the town as the beginning of trial to reduce the carbon impact of pollution in an urban setting.



- The Trees Outside Woodland Project which sees Shropshire Council and Shrewsbury Town Council work together to provide a ready supply of locally grown trees that will meet both Council's ambitious plans to plant more trees both in town and county. This project has funded the development of a Community Tree Nursery at the Town Council's Weeping Cross Depot.
- The creation of a Climate Emergency Group to help Shrewsbury Town Council become carbon neutral by 2030. This has been extended to become a full Standing Committee of the Town Council with a budget of £250,000 to support the ambition of becoming carbon neutral by 2030.
- The introduction of the county's first 'school street' which sees cars banned on Greyfriars Road outside Coleham Primary School between drop-off and pick-up times to help improve safety, cut pollution and promote social distancing. The scheme is also designed to promote active travel in a safer environment for pupils.



- As part of the Local Plan Review, Shrewsbury Town Councillors have been involved with determining land allocations for future development and have been instrumental in shaping new Management Development Policies around the use of open space, the standards of development in Shrewsbury, climate change and the need to ensure sustainable development on new sites.
- The Shrewsbury Big Town Plan published a draft plan as part of the Big Town Plan Partnership's development of Shrewsbury, looking at the future of transport involving the car, walking, cycling and public transport. With over 2,000 comments on the public consultation exercise, the revised plan should be available this summer.
- Shrewsbury Town Council ring-fenced funding of £20,000 to provide grants to support organisations and communities in their efforts to make more resilient communities. A number of local projects were supported from the Coronavirus Grant Fund.
- The Town Council's ambitious programme of converting all its footway lights to LED, which allows the Council to dim the lights by 50% but still leave the brightness. This has led to a considerable reduction in electricity usage and repair costs.
- The installation of solar lights in the Quarry has been hailed a success and Shrewsbury Town Council is looking at ways to use this technology in other places.
- Shrewsbury Town Fisheries membership doubled in 12 months during the pandemic, this despite the fact that the waters were only open to Shrewsbury residents. This showed the desire of local residents to be outdoors safely in such trying times.
- Public usage of the parks and open spaces escalated during the pandemic as residents began to connect more with their local environment. This has brought operational challenges of wear and tear but reflects the value of open spaces for both mental and physical wellbeing.
- The Town Council developed its Alternative Curriculum Programme. This programme is designed to support some of the most vulnerable children in the town who are on the brink of exclusion from school and are most at risk from Criminal and Sexual Exploitation. Young Shrewsbury Youth Workers have worked with 45 children this year to give more opportunities to make better life choices. Activities have included cooking, gardening, fishing, craft making.



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Key Aims and Objectives

- The creation of a new Countryside park near the centre of town if talks with Shrewsbury Colleges group are successful. The plan is to transform the playing fields of the former Wakeman School into a public park with both a woodland park and a green recreational space for residents. The additional open green space will have an impact on climate change plans and will tie in well with the aims and ambitions of the Big Town Plan.
 - To extend the Shrewsbury in Bloom planting outside the town centre with support from local groups to help maintain the floral features.
 - The development of an independent Shrewsbury in Bloom website to engage with the local community, providing more information on competitions, the Bloom ethos, encourage volunteers to get involved and include 'how to guides' from Shrewsbury Town Council staff on various issues, including planting up hanging baskets.
 - To continue work on improvements to footpaths throughout the Town Council's site, which will improve the facilities for residents and visitors.
 - Look at the feasibility of working with Shropshire Council to extend areas along verges for more wildflower meadows, which have been very well received by the public.
 - Creating a dedicated Climate Change Committee to focus on issues and develop further initiatives that not only work towards the Town Council's carbon neutrality, but also supports the wider efforts of Shrewsbury as a whole to make the town as carbon neutral as possible.
- The Committee will be innovative in being made up of not just Council Members, but it will also bring in co-optees as part of the Council's decision making process. These will be drawn from key local organisations with great climate change credentials. For example: The Environment Agency, Xtinction Rebellion, Friends of the Earth, The Shropshire Wildlife Trust and The Shropshire Partnership group.
- The Town Council will work with Lovely Land, a not-for-profit social enterprise working with schools and community groups in Shropshire, to help transform a neglected pathway in to a wildflower area. Staff and service users of Albert Road Day Centre want to create a wildlife area in an alleyway running alongside the centre, which will not only clear the weeds but help to remove anti-social behaviour there and create a better environment for everyone.
 - Shrewsbury Town Council's Countryside Unit working with Shropshire Wildlife Trust on the Beaver Project to reintroduce beavers on the Old River Bed, an SSSI to the north of the town. Town Council staff have been following a trial of introducing beavers in Devon and the environmental and bio-diversity benefits that this project has brought to the area as well as how it has helped to address modern problems of flood control.
 - The creation of a large countryside park when the Town Council adopts the open space at the Weir Hill development to the east of Shrewsbury. This will provide great opportunities for tree planting, better connections with the Shropshire Way footpath network and measures to combat flooding from the River Severn.
 - Abbey Gardens will undergo a programme of works in relation to trees, the refurbishment of ornamental seating, improved drainage to ensure that flood water drains effectively from the area and improvements to street furniture and selective replanting of shrub borders.
 - To work with Shrewsbury Town Fisheries, Shropshire Wildlife Trust, the Environment Agency, the Severn Fisheries Group for the whole of the River Severn and Action for Rivers to reduce levels of pollution of the Severn and its tributaries to improve wildlife and fish habitats and reverse the decline in salmon and coarse fishing.
 - Development of the town's first Low Traffic Zone to provide greater opportunities for active travel with better walking and cycling connectivity.
 - Phase 2 of the Ash Die Back Plan will see the commencement of replacement planting for trees that were removed as part of Phase 1 of the plan.
 - Installation of a Comic Trail, a series of 9 panels which tells the story of Shrewsbury past, present and future seen through the eyes of Charles Darwin and his pet Monkey Charlie. Written by Judge Dredd writer John Wagner and designed by Walking Dead Illustrator Charlie Adlard (local Shrewsbury residents with international recognition in the Comics world), this will be the world's largest Comic strip.
 - Shrewsbury Town Fisheries will begin their Junior Academy to encourage new young anglers. With support from the Angling Trust, all Bailiffs will be trained to provide support to young people.



Absolutely lovely park, with beautiful views all around! 🥰 We loved having a stroll along the riverside and the scenery was simply gorgeous! Definitely check out The Quarry when you visit Shrewsbury, it's a gem! 🍷🌸

100% worth having a wander Very well maintained the gardens (dingle)
are lovely and have a one way round system. Well organized

We'll have been to Shrewsbury several times but never here. What a beautiful stunning place along the river. Fantastic little coffee shop to grab a drink whilst the kids play on the park. And Percy Thrower used to live in the house at the entrance.

This is a beautiful park where Shrewsbury drops down to the Severn. It's perfect for a stroll along the river or to sit on one of the many benches and take in the beautiful planting. A really special space.



New boards to help guide walkers and share interesting history about a nature preserve will be installed in the Shrewsbury Town Council has installed interpretation boards at five locations across its Rea Brook Valley Local Nature Reserve.

The council looks after more than 20 sites around the town, ranging from large open spaces to small areas of Special Scientific Interest to small Communities Woodlands.

One of the sites is the Rea Brook Valley Nature Reserve which can be accessed from many places along its route, including Sutton Farm, Moole Brace, the Shirehampton and the Rea Brook.

Matt Wilcoxon, countryside and green space manager for the town council, said: "The boards will help visitors to the Rea Brook Valley which has a wealth of history. We thought it would be a good idea to put the site into context with the various historical events and people of the last few centuries and these five boards will help to achieve that."

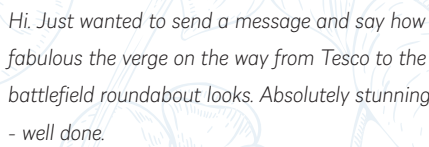
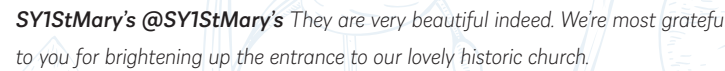
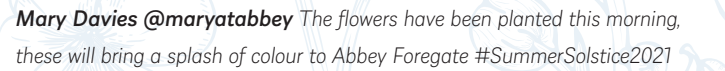
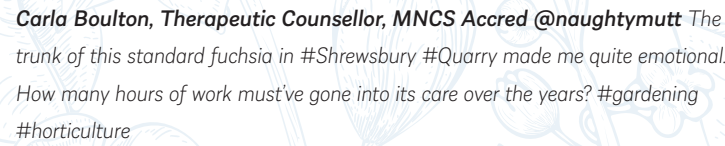
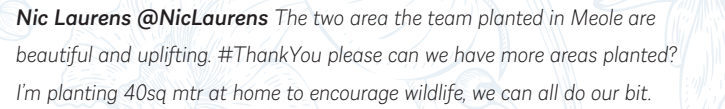
The boards will help to guide visitors around the site. "■

This was a really fun experience for my whole family. The park is large, peaceful, quiet and really pretty. It offers food, playgrounds and benches, and a beautiful river running through it. Really worth a visit!

The quarry is well maintained, and blessed with a sunny afternoon it was well used, plenty of families, runners, cyclists and strollers like myself. With local vendors selling ice cream coffee, I could have stayed longer. Well done Shrewsbury Council.

I've always thought of The Dingle, the sunken garden in the Quarry park, as being a little bit of heaven that has fallen to earth. It doesn't matter when you visit, the trees, flowers, shrubs etc. always combine to provide a lovely background to your walk or sojourn.

If you go Shrewsbury you must visit this park. Fantastic walk all along the river and lots of green space for picnics. Brilliant playground for children, toilet facilities, ice cream van and cafe. There's another cafe by St Chads entrance. Great way to relax while you're away.





With special thanks to all those organisations, companies and individuals who contribute to Shrewsbury in Bloom which helps to improve the quality of life for visitors, residents and those who work in the town.



Shrewsbury Town Council, Riggs Hall, The Library, Castle Gates, Shrewsbury, SY1 2AS

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