

# SANDBACH TOWN COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Meeting of Sandbach Town Council held on 21 February 2013 in the Sandbach Literary Institution, Hightown.

### PRESENT

Councillors: C D Lowe  
M P Benson  
V Thompson  
B E Moran  
G M Merry  
D Robinson  
L Chadwick  
W W Scragg  
D E Allcock  
A J Wood  
S Furlong  
G W Bell  
R Hoffmann  
S A M Corcoran  
I Victor  
L Morris  
N K Cook

Also present were twenty members of the public, one member of press and Sandbach Town Council's Operations Manager.

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### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors: Griffiths  
M Furlong

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

#### Cllr N K Cook

Cllr Cook expressed a non-pecuniary interest in item 14.

#### Cllr B Moran

Cllr Moran expressed interests in:

Item 12 - **Sandbach Development Strategy** - disclosable non -pecuniary interest in view of position on CEC; will withdraw from the meeting but stay in the chamber.

Item 16.2 - **Town and Village CCTV** - disclosable non-pecuniary interest, as a member of CEC; will not withdraw from the meeting.

### 3. MAYOR'S REMARKS

The Mayor outlined events and activities that she has attended since the last Council meeting, they include:

- Citizen's Advice AGM
- Can't Sing Choir and Sandbach School's Carol Concerts
- British Legion Dinner
- Rotary Christmas Luncheon
- Opening of the Age UK Shop
- Air Cadets Annual Award Evening
- Wheelock School 'Beauty and the Beast' Lunch. This was described as a highlight of the year, where the children prepared a lamb hotpot and then invited the Mayor to join them in ballroom dancing.

She also reflected on her attendance of the funeral of Godfrey Williams.

Future fund-raising events include:

- Ceilidh on 16 March
- Mayor's Ball on 12 April
- Music and Dance Show on 20 April.

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The Town Mayor adjourned the meeting to allow questions from members of the public.

#### Mrs Anne Jones

Reference was made to a recent planning application to build 160 properties on land off Congleton Road. On behalf of residents of Congleton Road, Mrs Jones thanked Cllrs Moran and Wood for their robust presentation to the CEC Planning Committee and thanked Cllr Merry, along with Ward Councillors Benson and Thompson for their support.

#### Mrs Pauline Minshull

Three areas of concern were expressed by Mrs Minshull and the following questions asked:

- i. Who was responsible for moving St Luke's Light up a Life tree?
- ii. Was there a problem with the Christmas Lights, as it appeared that the lights were out for some of the time?
- iii. Could the blue light hanger across the Market Square be changed to a more appropriate colour, white or amber?

Cllr Alcock, as Christmas Lights representative, responded to the questions.

- i. It was a joint decision
- ii. The excessively wet weather caused a problem
- iii. The light colour cannot be changed

Following the questions the Town Mayor reconvened the Town Council Meeting.

**4. CO-OPTION**

The Mayor informed members that two of three applicants had withdrawn and no longer wished to be considered for co-option. She also advised members that the remaining applicant had suffered a recent close family member bereavement. Due to the circumstances she proposed that the item be deferred to the next meeting of Council; this went to the vote and was lost.

Mr Glynn Robinson was in attendance at the meeting as the remaining applicant and spoke briefly about why he wished to become a Councillor, indicating that he was brought up and had worked for most of his adult life in Sandbach.

**RESOLVED:** that Mr Glynn Robinson is co-opted to the casual vacancy of Ettiley Health and Wheelock Ward Councillor.

Mr Robinson signed his Acceptance of Office form and was invited to join the meeting.

**5. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 6 DECEMBER 2012 AND 24 JANUARY 2013.**

**RESOLVED:** that subject to a correction regarding Cllr Moran's declaration of interest, that the minutes are approved as an accurate record.

**6. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 10 DECEMBER 2012, 7 JANUARY AND 28<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2013.**

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes are noted.

**7. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 17 JANUARY 2013.**

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes are noted.

**8. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 15 JANUARY 2013.**

Members were informed that the date of the Foden's Band Open Air Concert has been changed and will now take place on 22 June 2013.

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes are noted.

**9. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE ASSETS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 13 DECEMBER 2012 AND 7 FEBRUARY 2013**

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes are noted.

**10. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

## **10.1 Personnel Committee**

Lead: Clerk

The Clerk reported on a change to the Personnel Committee Terms of Reference and asked that members approve.

**RESOLVED:** that the amended Terms of Reference be approved and adopted with immediate effect.

## **10.2 Assets and Services Committee**

Lead: Operations Manager

The Operations Manager gave an overview of his written report. He extracted the following salient points:

Transfer of the market service will take place on 1 March 2013.

There has been significant discussion over the recent past about the relocation of the Charter Market, recently the Assets and Services Committee resolved to pursue a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) which would enable a move to the High Street and Market Square; the Operations Manager has commenced the process. It was agreed that consultation is required before the move is finalised.

**RESOLVED:** that the report be received.

## **11. MAYOR/DEPUTY MAYOR 2013/14**

Lead: Clerk

**RESOLVED:** that Cllr M P Benson be appointed Town Mayor for the Civic Year 2013/14.

**RESOLVED:** that Cllr D E Alcock be appointed Deputy Town Mayor for the Civic Year 2013/14.

## **12. SANDBACH DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

Lead: Cllr Corcoran

Sandbach Town Council's draft response to the Sandbach Development Strategy was presented. The document has been developed by a working group of the Town Council, all those members and CEC Officers who have been involved were thanked, in particular Cllr Corcoran who lead the group.

**RESOLVED:** that the draft response to the Sandbach Development Strategy Consultation be approved and submitted to CEC no later than 26 February 2013.

## **13. SANDBACH MEMBERS' SURGERY**

Lead: Clerk

The Town Council has held monthly surgeries for over four years; on the whole these have not been well attended.

An operational trial of the surgery at the Farmers' Market took place on 9 February 2013, whilst there were some 'teething' problems that would need to be resolved, initial reports were very positive.

Some reluctance was expressed regarding the surgery being outside during the Winter months, however it was felt that an extended trial should be undertaken.

**RESOLVED:** that the surgery continue on a trial basis at the Farmers' Market for six months, following which a report will be presented to Council. Council authorised the purchase of appropriate table, cover, seating and display.

#### 14. CHESHIRE POLICE CONSTABULARY

Lead: Cllr D E Alcock

The third, three year, Service Level Agreement (SLA) was presented to Council for approval.

There have been a number of changes since the last SLA was signed, including the appointment of a new Community Inspector and PCSO.

The Neighbourhood Policing Group continues to meet about six times a year, when all local policing issues are discussed, including linking back into the approved Town Action Plan.

The SLA indicates that there will be no additional cost to the provision of two PCSOs in Sandbach, with the annual cost remaining the same at £23,600pa.

**RESOLVED:** that:

- i) a further commitment to contribute to the Cheshire Police Authority for the employment of two PCSOs for Sandbach for a period of three years is agreed and the SLA signed.
- iii) the release of payment on receipt of invoice for the duration of the SLA is approved.

#### 15. REPORTS

##### 15.1 Sandbach Crosses

Cllr G W Bell

A report outlining suggestions to complete the work on and around the Saxon Crosses was tabled. The content of the report will also be shared at the forthcoming Annual Town Meeting, where public opinion will be sought. Before any work can be undertaken, approval of Council is to be sought.

**RESOLVED:** that the report be received.

##### 15.2 LSD Projects

Cllr Mrs C Lowe

Verbal update. Handover of the market service due to take place on 1 March 2013. Wider consideration is being given to the Town Council's future office and meeting requirements. The refurbishment of the Town Hall is at pre-planning stage; it is hoped that the plans and timetable will be available to share at the Annual Town Meeting.

**RESOLVED:** that the report be received.

#### 16. CORRESPONDENCE

##### 16.1 Elworth Approved Premises, Linden Bank, Sandbach.

Letter received from Fiona Bruce MP dated 4 January 2013.

**RESOLVED:** that a further reminder be sent to Kenneth Clarke MP.

**16.2 Town & Village Centre CCTV**

Letter received from Cheshire East Council dated 11 February 2013.

**RESOLVED:** that STC positively engages with CEC regarding future CCTV provision, but emphasises that changes with budgetary implications cannot take place until 2014/15. Cllr Benson to be nominated representative for STC.

**17. MEMBER'S ITEMS**

There are none.

**18. DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next Town Council Meeting is the Annual General Meeting and will be held on Saturday 4 May 2013 at 3pm at Sandbach Town Hall.

The date of the next Business Meeting is to be announced.

**19. KEY DATES (*MEMBERS ONLY IN ITALICS*)**

- Thursday 7 March 2013 - Annual Town Meeting
- *Monday 18 March 2013 - Code of Conduct/General Power of Competence Training*
- *Thursday 21 March 2013 - Planning Awareness*
- Friday 12 April 2013 - Civic Dinner and Ball
- Saturday 4 May 2013 - Sandbach Town Council AGM

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**CLOSED SESSION**

Due to the confidential nature of business, public and press were excluded from this part of the meeting under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

**20. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 5 DECEMBER 2012**

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes are noted.

**21. SANDBACH TOWN COUNCIL – OPERATION**

The Clerk introduced the item by stating that there had been a number of members expressing a feeling of discord about the way in which the Council operates. She explained that, in her opinion, there has been no improper ways of working, however following discussion with the Mayor felt that it would be appropriate to give all members the opportunity to express any concerns they might have.

The Clerk confirmed that members were happy with and fully understood the purpose of the Chairmen's Liaison Meeting.

Reference was made to the Committee Structure, Terms of Reference and Scheme of Delegation. These had been put into place to assure the swift transaction of business, however it was felt that some members do not fully understand their purpose; it was suggested that members re-visit these documents.

*A number of members felt that there were too many committees and that a review should be undertaken. It was suggested that some of the Committees could be merged and that more work could be undertaken by working groups. It was confirmed that a full review of the current structure, by the LSD Steering group, is due to commence April 2013 and that the points made would be considered at that time.*

Poor attendance had been an issue that had caused some concern toward the end of 2012, so much so that it prompted a local newspaper to print an article about it. The Clerk assured members that the article had not been her instigation, but sought to establish whether there was an underlying reason for absences.

*On the whole members did not feel that attendance was a problem. It was stated that some members have more free time than others, and members “do what they can”. Whilst this statement is accepted, there was some concern that those who had more free time and so were more involved could be perceived as a clique by those with less time.*

It was questioned if the method of circulating summons and agenda was part of the problem; it did not appear that it was.

A draft protocol entitled ‘Conduct and Meetings’ has recently been circulated for comment. Comments have been received and will be considered before final amendment and decision to present to Council is made.

It was generally accepted that the Council has undergone huge changes recently and that practices have also needed to change. The Clerk expressed that she is willing to receive suggestions from members if they have ideas on how service could be improved.

There was a suggestion that members receive an allowance as an incentive for them to be more involved in a busier Council.

Although there were not too many issues raised, it was felt that the opportunity to talk freely was useful and it was suggested that this might become a regular feature. “Good communication is key.”

## **22. CLERK – ANNUAL REVIEW AND INCREMENT**

Lead: Cllr Lowe

**RESOLVED:** that:

- i) the report from the Personnel Panel is received.
- ii) a single increment to the Clerk’s salary, as recommended by the Personnel Panel is approved.

Meeting Closed: 9.53pm  
C D Lowe, Town Mayor