

# SANDBACH TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting of Sandbach Town Council held on 8 March 2018 at 7.00pm at Sandbach Literary Institution.**

**PRESENT**

Councillors: M Forster (Mayor)  
R Hovey (Deputy Mayor)  
R Hoffmann  
J Cartlidge  
P Eaton  
K Haines  
S Corcoran  
G Merry  
G Price Jones  
A Smith  
M Lea O'Mahoney  
K Flavell  
S Ashcombe-Hurt  
C Lowe  
M Benson  
B Moran  
M Muldoon  
K Southwell  
S Kirkham

Also present were Reverend Shepherd, Mr David Trowler and 18 members of the public and press.

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The opening prayer was read by Reverend Thomas Shepherd and on behalf of the Council, Cllr Flavell was welcomed by the Mayor.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor R Wait.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Merry

Non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 15 as STC representative on Sandbach Partnership.

Cllr Moran

Non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 15 as a representative on Sandbach Partnership.

Cllr Kirkham

Non-pecuniary interest in item 12.1.3.

Cllr Benson

Non-pecuniary interest in item 15 as member of Sandbach Partnership and of Friends of Sandbach Park.

Cllr Price Jones

Pecuniary interest in the Market Hall.

### **3. MAYORS REMARKS**

A full list of events attended by the Mayor since the last Council meeting had been circulated with the agenda pack. The Mayor expressed his thanks to all event organisers for the invitations received and to the groups and individuals organising the events who have made he and Mrs Forster very welcome. It is awe inspiring to see the hard work undertaken in the community.

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### **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

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

Mr Williams.

Advised that a letter received from the Mayor and Clerk did not answer all his queries/comments relating to procurement procedures and that his original letter was not circulated to all Councillors for response.

In reply, Mr Williams was informed that the Clerk involved the Mayor and Council appointed architect as they were in a position of being able to provide all information requested. All Members have received copies of the letter and the detailed reply. Clarification of areas which remain unanswered was sought and Mr Williams was assured that value for money was clearly demonstrated in all reports to Council and robust procedures for obtaining tenders and procurement practices were followed.

Mr Beddows

Made Council aware that he is not involved with political parties; he is a local resident and trader on the market. He has been a member of the Indoor Market Project Group since its formation and is somewhat frustrated to hear comments from people who have not been involved during the 1 ½ year project, not attended the public meetings or consultations, yet are now questioning ability of the group. Mr Beddows referenced the original project amount and compared to the new spend requirement. Councillors are urged to support the proposal and deliver Sandbach what they were promised and what they deserve.

Mr Green

Regarding recent items in the press, Mr Green commented on the good news of new tourism signs and banner leaflets. These, along with other projects and tasks take hours of work and are undertaken at all times of the day, throughout the week, by

unpaid volunteers. On reading an anonymous letter to the press criticising the Mayor and Council, Mr Green suggests that if the anonymous person is so concerned about how the Council and Members work, they stand at the next election, do the work, sit at the table and will then perhaps have a valid opinion - otherwise, put up and shut up!

Mrs McDade

Reminded attendees of the LLR recommendations and asked that, when voting on 13.3 as a confidential item, Members be certain of reasons for keeping discussion private, and make it a named vote.

Mrs Bruderer

Regarding unrecoverable debt (agenda item 12.2.2) what is this debt and does Council have a policy for debt collection and if not, why not?

Mrs Bruderer was advised these queries will be discussed during consideration of the item.

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**4. ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

Having received advice on requirement of confidentiality for item 13.3, Members were informed that, providing contractor names were not mentioned, the discussion need not be private. It was agreed to discuss this item in public.

**Resolved:** Item 7 be considered with the exclusion of the public and press, under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

**5. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 25 JANUARY 2018.**

**Resolved:** That the minutes be approved as a true record of the meeting.

**6. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE PLANNING & CONSULTATION COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON 29 JANUARY 2018.**

**Resolved:** That the minutes be noted.

**7. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE HELD ON 17 JANUARY 2018 (DRAFT).**

Item to be considered with the exclusion of public and press.

**8. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE FINANCE, POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 1 FEBRUARY 2018 (DRAFT).**

**Resolved:** That the minutes be noted.

**9. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE – NO MINUTES AVAILABLE.**

**10. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE ASSETS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD ON 8 FEBRUARY 2018 (DRAFT).**  
**Resolved:** That the minutes be noted.

The Mayor requested item 13.3 be considered ahead of other agenda items and expressed thanks to Mr Trowler for all hard work undertaken during the Market Hall Project tender process.

**13.3 Market Project Report and Options Appraisal**

Members received a verbal update on the project to date, with confirmation that original costs of £146,000 were only ever initial estimates from the Operations Manager, ahead of appointing the Project Manager, and had not included VAT. The figure of £167,181 (excluding VAT) presented now includes redecoration of the communal area within the shop units, as per the condition review survey, and a necessary storage area for gazebos, though several smaller tasks such as brickwork repair and work on a PA system, have been removed for completion at a later date. All planned work preserves and enhances the Grade II listed building, making the building fit for purpose, whilst maintaining the market feel.

During discussion, it was stated that there is no comparison between this and the previous Market Project and assurance given that the initial appointment of the Project Manager and Architectural support was open and transparent, with best value obtained by the Market Hall group.

As the Market Hall Options Appraisal form included requirement that any potential time or financial saving through closure of the Market Hall during the work be established, it was clarified that savings would be minimal and therefore agreed that full closure would not be worthwhile.

With an additional £49,621 sought for commencement of the Market Hall project, a proposal was received that virement be from Committed Reserves of: Office Accommodation at £29,621, Car Park Refurb £10,000 and a further £10,000 from Skatepark. Members debated preferred options for virement of this sum and were reminded that projects were not projects of individuals, but of the Council.

An amendment was presented that the total be obtained from Committed Reserves, with £25,000 from Office Accommodation and £25,000 from the skatepark. This amendment was voted on and carried.

**Resolved:** that:-

1. The report on the Market Hall refurbishment is noted and accepted.
2. Option 3 of the Options Appraisal is agreed, with the contract awarded to the contractor recommended by DTA, and a total budget of £212,095, funded as follows:

£50,999      c/f from committed reserves to the Market Hall 2017-18.

£104,260      line 4613 in the agreed budget 2018-19 at 25 January 2018 STC meeting.

£6,836      £4,100 Public Convenience Condition Survey.

	£2,736 Shop Units Condition Survey In the agree budget 2018-19.
£25,000	to be vired from Office Accomodation Committed Reserves.
£25,000	to be vired from Skatepark Committed Reserves.

3. The revised timeline is agreed.

## 11. UNDISCHARGED RESOLUTIONS

**Resolved:** that the undischarged resolutions are noted.

## 12. MATTERS ARISING

### 12.1 Personnel Committee

#### 12.1.1 Health and Safety Handbook

**Resolved:** the Health and Safety Handbook is adopted.

#### 12.1.2 Employee Handbook

Two amendments to the document were suggested:

- Item 5.7 typo correction to 5.8
- Removal of section relating to 'payments in lieu of notice' due to the sum being taxable.

The Chair of Personnel will review an email sent to the Clerk relating to this section of the handbook.

**Resolved:** that the authority to decide on removal of the section relating to payment in lieu of notice be delegated to the Chair of the Personnel Committee.

#### 12.1.3 Contribution to Eye Test and Prescription Lenses – DSE Users

**Resolved:** that, in accordance with the adopted Health and Safety Handbook, a contribution towards eye tests and prescription lenses for DSE users, subject to an upper limit of £50, is paid on production of a receipt.

#### 12.1.4 Personal Use of Council Van

**Resolved:** that:

- i. reasonable personal use of Council van by staff is approved.
- ii. To adopt procedure and pro-forma.
- iii. To delegate decision of amount to charge for use to the Town Clerk, seeking information of 'benefit in kind'

implications from HMRC website.

## **12.2 Finance, Policy and Governance Committee**

### **12.2.1 2016/17 End of Year Audit Report**

**Resolved:** The 2016/17 Audit Report is received, as recommended by Finance, Policy and Governance Committee.

### **12.2.2 Unrecoverable Debt**

Members were advised that a draft Debt Recovery policy is being prepared and will be presented to the next Finance, Policy and Governance Committee.

**Resolved:** The unrecoverable debt of £7,771.31 is written off, as recommended by the Finance, Policy and Governance Committee on 3.8.17.

## **13. MARKET PROJECT**

### **13.1 Market Project Team**

**Resolved:** that:-

- i. The Project Team becomes Market Project Sub-Committee
- ii. The Terms of Reference are agreed, subject to inclusion of additional Scope and Delivery, item 3.9, Deliver the Project with support from the appointed Chartered Building Surveyor.

### **13.2 Market Steering Group**

**Resolved:** that:-

- i. The Steering Group becomes Market Steering Project Sub-Committee
- ii. The Terms of Reference are agreed.

### **13.3. Market Project Report and Options Appraisal**

Agenda item discussed and resolved following item 10 (above).

### **13.4 Market Marketing Strategy**

**Resolved:** that:-

- i. The Marketing and Promotion Strategy is approved.
- ii. The regular monitoring and review (at least every 6 months) of the Strategy is delegated to the Assets and Services Committee.

## **14. INVOICE APPROVALS**

**Resolved:** payment of the the Cheshire East Council, January 2018 Election cost invoice of £8242.77 is approved.

## **15. SANDBACH PARK PATHS PROJECT**

Council set aside reserves, over a 5-year period, totalling £125,000 for Sandbach Partnership to undertake improvements to Sandbach Park. This paths project is the final link in the park's redevelopment, other projects

have been funded from other time sensitive and s106 funding opportunities. This project is ready to commence and can be concluded during the spring.

Sandbach Partnership Chairman, Mrs Flint, was invited to speak briefly to this item and confirmed the 8-10 years of work undertaken within the park with many local voluntary groups, STC and Cheshire East. The project is to be run by the Partnership, and not STC, which is why 3 quotes are not provided for the Council. Hard copies of estimate costs were circulated to Members for noting. On receipt of approval to release the funding, the quotes for work will be issued and the Partnership will make the decision to appoint preferred company. Members of the Park Steering Group will have sight of all quotes in due course. Reference was made to working together with Town and Borough Council on future projects to find ways of achieving improved project options with the funding available, and that the Partnership seek CEC guidance on availability of s106 funds for this project.

**Resolved:** that £35,088.00 from Sandbach Park Committed Funds (Line 320) is released to allow completion of the Pathway Project.

#### 16. VAT

Reclaim of VAT has been considered and resulted in many issues being encountered. Without full information being available and any potential impact on the Town, through Council opting whether or not to tax, being fully ascertained, Council is not in a position to make an informed decision. The item was discussed at the 6pm Finance, Policy and Governance Committee Meeting and their recommendations were confirmed.

**Resolved:** that:

- i. The report is received.
- ii. The Clerk's observations are noted.
- iii. Delegate decision making regarding retrospective payment of the VAT to the Finance, Policy and Governance Committee as soon as information is made available.
- iv. Decision regarding option to tax be passed to Full Council.

#### 17. NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN (NDP)

A brief update on NDP was received including detail of new policies introduced since adoption of the Local Plan and consultation on the Draft National Planning Policy Framework.

**Resolved:** the report is received.

#### 18. BUS SERVICE REVIEW WORKING GROUP

Following recent campaign, some of the requests made have come to fruition and new timetables will be introduced in April. One proposed change will impact those wishing to travel to Sandbach from Crewe/Nantwich side of Leighton, including approximately 30 school children.

**Resolved:** the report is received.

## 19. OUTLOOK EMAIL

Since migrating to Outlook email many problems in accessing and using the system, and obtaining support, have been encountered. As a costly system, Members were concerned that after many months of the system being implemented training has yet to be received by the IT support provider, following their cancellation of the original sessions booked, and some users were yet to sign in.

A proposal was received to move back to Gmail. This proposal was voted on and lost.

It was generally felt that remaining with Outlook was preferred due to costs incurred to migrate, security and archiving options.

Resolved: that:-

- i. The Report outlining issues and options with Outlook 365 use is received.
- ii. The Clerk contacts the IT support provider to insist that the free of charge training promised within 1 month.
- iii. Decision to source alternative IT support provider is delegated to the Clerk.

Due to the time, the Mayor asked that Members were happy to extend the meeting. This was unanimously agreed.

## 20. WEBSITE

Resolved: That:-

- i. Quotation A be approved for the design and production of a new Council website.
- ii. budget of £5,165 be made available from committed reserves and 2018/19 budget.
- iii. an additional £485 be made available for photographic enhancements the website from the IT/Office Enhancement cost centre.
- iv. That the design, test, implementation and review of the website be overseen by the Website Working Group.

## 21. DOCUMENT RETENTION POLICY

Resolved: that the Document Retention Policy be adopted.

## 22. MEMBER'S ITEMS

### 22.1 Cllr Haines

#### **Sandbach Strategy**

Resolved: that Council agrees in principle to the development of a Medium to Long-Term Strategy for Sandbach and to commit



to engaging in Workshops to identify key issues and deliverables for the Town.

## **22.2 Cllr Eaton**

### **D&G Bus Service No. 78**

**Resolved:** that the Clerk issue a letter to Cllr Paul Bates, based on the draft circulated, and including reference to 'up to 30 students being impacted'.

## **23. CORRESPONDENCE**

[Copies of all correspondence attached]

### **23.1 Mr P I Williams**

Mr Williams was thanked for all his extensive work on this matter.

**Resolved:** that the Town Clerk review the Financial Regulations regarding tender and procurement practices, in view of the policies queried by Mr Williams, and produce feedback for the Finance Policy and Governance Committee.

### **23.2 Mr M Wood**

**Resolved:** that the email exchange be noted.

## **24. DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next Town Council Meeting will take place on Thursday 12 April 2018 at 7.00pm at the Sandbach Literary Institution.

## **25. SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA ITEM**

### **MEMBERS ITEM**

#### **Care4CE**

**Resolved:** that Sandbach Town Council sends the letter of thanks to Cheshire East Council in appreciation of the work completed by their Care4CE Team alongside SWWG in the fulfilment of the Sandbach Woodland walks.

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## **CLOSED SESSION**

Due to the confidential nature of business, public and press will be excluded from the meetings under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

## **7. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE HELD ON 17 JANUARY 2018 (DRAFT).**

**Resolved:** the minutes be noted.

Meeting closed: 9:30pm  
Cllr M Forster, Town Mayor

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