

# SANDBACH TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting of Sandbach Town Council held on 1 June 2017 at 7.00pm at Sandbach Town Hall.**

**PRESENT**

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

Also present were Rev. Thomas Shepherd and 10 members of the public and press.

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The Mayor asked for a minutes silence and time to reflect on the passing of Lily Mae Sharp and the Manchester bombing.

The Opening Prayer was read by Rev. Thomas Shepherd.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor	R Wait
	R Hoffmann
	G Price-Jones
	B Davies
	Mollie Burns (Student Representative)

## **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Benson – non-pecuniary interest in item 18 as a member of the Sandbach Partnership Team.

Cllr Moran - non-pecuniary interest in item 18 as a member of Sandbach Partnership and as appointed by CEC (in the interest of openness and transparency).

Cllr Merry - non-pecuniary interest in item 18 as a member of Sandbach Partnership and as appointed by STC (in the interest of openness and transparency).

## **3. MAYOR'S COMMENTS**

The Mayor welcomed Cllr Ashcombe-Hurt and wished her many years of being fully involved. He then thanked Cllr Haines, for the way in which he led the Council during a very difficult year.

He reminded everyone of his nominated charities, supporting local Scout and Guide Groups, and a national Brain Tumour Charity. A charity event schedule will be published in due course.

He does not plan to detail every mayoral attendance at each meeting, but will provide a written list, drawing out notable events when required.

Members were reminded, that whilst robust debate is healthy and welcome, that there should be a respect for each other; this also applies to comments from members of the public.

## **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

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

Mrs C Bruderer

Confirmation was sought that the recent resolution, that Chairmen will serve for two years, will be effected at the first meeting of each of the Committees. Cllr Forster responded stating that this is the expectation, but it does depend on who presents for the position of Chair.

Reference was made to Item 18, Sandbach Partnership Funding, with the question being asked, why had the accounts not been provided for scrutiny as with other grant applications?

Ms L McDade

There is no dispute about the work of the Partnership, however there is grave concern about the openness and transparency. On 3 November, a member of the public asked for the accounts to be provided, at the time Cllr Benson agreed to take the matter back to the Partnership, it was also agreed that the SLA may need to be amended to include the accounts.

The Council's contribution is considered a significant amount; therefore, accounts should be available.

Cllr Benson clarified that the member of the public (as above) had been offered appointments to inspect the accounts, none of which had been kept. There is presently no requirement for the accounts to be presented as part of the SLA, but it was acknowledged that this is a good point, worthy of future discussion.

Following the questions, the Mayor reconvened the meeting.

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

There are none.

**5. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS HELD ON 20 APRIL AND 2 MAY 2017**

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes be approved as an accurate record.

**6. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD 24 APRIL AND 15 MAY 2017**

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

**7. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE – NO MEETINGS HELD**

There were none.

**8. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE FINANCE, POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE 27 APRIL 2017**

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

**9. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE 18 MAY 2017**

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

**10. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF ASSETS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE – NONE HELD.**

There were none.

**11. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF LLR & GOVERNANCE SUB-COMMITTEE HELD 27 APRIL 2017**

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

**12. MATTERS ARISING**

There are none.

**13. UNDISCHARGED RESOLUTIONS**

[Attached: Schedule]

Lead: Town Mayor

It was reported that there are presently two undischarged resolutions, these may include Work in Progress (WIP).

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

#### 14. END OF YEAR AUDIT – 31 MARCH 2017

Lead: Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer

The end of year Annual Return, supporting information and Internal Audit Report were presented, the Clerk asked that members sign off the documents.

The Chairman of Finance referred to an earlier question about the Town Hall costs and explained that he had done some work in relation to Town Hall salaries; he stated that he had found an error in the allocation of salary costs, although they were not material.

He went on to ask members if they were happy with the level of information provided to support the Annual Return.

- i) the annual return be approved and signed.
- ii) the Internal Audit Report is received.

#### 15. DIRECT DEBIT AND BACS PAYMENTS

Lead: Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer

The Clerk presented a report detailing the Council's use of variable Direct Debits. She informed members that Financial Regulations presently ask for this information to be presented at least once every two years and that through the ongoing review of regulations, this has been amended to annually.

Members were asked to approve the list.

**RESOLVED:** that schedule of Direct Debit payments be approved.

#### 16. INSURANCE PROVISION

Lead: Town Clerk

The Clerk presented three quotations for the insurance renewal, two of which offered incentives for agreeing to more than a single year.

Quotes were:

Came and Company £4655 on a 3 year plan (excluding vehicles)

Aon £8324 annual premium

Zurich £4791 on a 3 year plan (including vehicles)

The Clerk recommended staying with Zurich in view of the favourable quotation and the knowledge of Sandbach Town Council business.

**RESOLVED:** that the Council's insurance be renewed with Zurich Municipal at a cost of £4791 pa, over three years and that Sandbach Town Council retain the option to extend to five years at the same rate.

#### 17. AUTHORISATION OF INVOICES

Lead: Responsible Financial Officer

**RESOLVED:** that the following invoices be approved for payment:

JDH	£1,183.20	Internal Audit
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JDH	£1,160.40	Internal Audit
Boullen Properties	£2,400.00	Storage Unit Rental

## 18. SANDBACH PARTNERSHIP CORE FUNDING 2018/19

Lead: Cllr Benson

It was explained that due to some early difficulties around funding in 2012, Sandbach Town Council and the Sandbach Partnership drew up a Service Level Agreement (SLA), which would be used to form the basis of future funding. Part of the SLA was an appendix, revised every year, which detailed the activities the Partnership would be involved with during the forthcoming year, along with a review of the past year's activities. The appendix and the work of the Partnership is reviewed by the Sandbach Partnership Liaison Committee, comprising representatives of the Partnership and Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council's Community and Environment Committee. The Chairman of the Committee is responsible for providing regular reports. The current SLA appendix was approved by the C&E Committee when it met on 19 January 2017. It was stressed that the funding provided to the Partnership is core funding and not to be confused with a grant.

Members queries why the Partnership accounts had not been made available and suggested that before any payment is made or long-term commitment is entered into, that the accounts should be made available.

**RESOLVED:** that:

- i) The payment of £10,000 core funding is delegated to the Clerk upon receipt of suitable accounts (the accounts to be shared with Council via email).
- ii) The three-year commitment of funding be deferred until the accounts are received, the matter to be brought back to Sandbach Town Council for consideration.

## 19. CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL – BUS SERVICE REVIEW

Lead: Town Clerk

The Clerk reported on a bus service review being undertaken by CEC, she tabled a schedule which shows how Sandbach may be affected by the proposed changes and advised members that there remain two months in which to form a response.

There was an clear appetite to respond to the review, via a Working Group of Council and it was felt that members of the public should form a key part of such a Working Group.

**RESOLVED:** that a Working Group be formed to draft a response, which will be presented to Sandbach Town Council 20.7.17 meeting, before being submitted. The group will comprise of Cllrs Eaton and Smith, Ms McDade indicated a desire to be involved. The Clerk to advertise the opportunity with a view to recruiting community volunteers.

## 20. TOWN HALL COMPLEX – 5 YEAR HARD-WIRING TEST

Lead: Cllr Lowe

It is a statutory requirement that all public buildings have a five year wiring test. Through the A&S Committee, the Operations Manager requested that £2,000 be included in the 2016/17 budget for this purpose. Three quotations have been sought, with the Operations Manager recommending that Quote A is selected as the preferred option (see report) at £1779.50.

**RESOLVED:** Approval is given to spend up to £2,000, as included in the 2017/18 approved budget, to undertake the statutory 5 year hard-wiring test of the Town Hall Complex.

## **21. GUIDANCE FOR SUCCESSFUL OFFICER-COUNCILLOR ENGAGEMENT**

Lead: Cllr Southwell

Draft guidance was presented with the aim of improving the working relationship and understanding between Councillors and Officers.

**RESOLVED:** that the document is adopted as guidance for both Officers and Councillors.

## **22. NDP WORKING GROUP**

Lead: Cllr M Benson

Members were reminded that they had authorised the Neighbourhood Development Plan Working Group to formulate a response to the white paper 'Fixing our Broken Housing Market', they were provided with a copy of the response as submitted.

The comments contained within the response were reviewed, which focussed entirely on the impact the white paper might have on the Sandbach Neighbourhood Development Plan.

The Mayor thanked Cllr Benson and the Neighbourhood Development Plan Team for their hard work in producing the response.

**RESOLVED:** that the Council's response to the White Paper 'Fixing our Broken Housing Market' is noted.

## **23. MARKET WORKING GROUP**

Lead: Cllr Forster

A public meeting took place on 16 May, during which options were shared and feedback sought.

The amended action plan was circulated with the agenda for information.

A detailed report will be presented to Council at the July meeting, which will include recommendations from the Market Working Group.

The Working Group and Lead Member were thanked for bringing about a 'remarkable turnaround'.

**RESOLVED:** that the action plan and notes from the public meeting held on 16 May be received.

## **24. OFFICE ACCOMMODATION WORKING GROUP**

Lead: Cllr Hovey

A verbal report was given stating that the Working Group had viewed Sandbach House as a possible option as it will soon be vacated by the present occupier. An expression of interest in the building has been submitted, but members are keen to keep all options open and are keen to talk with the SLI Trustees at the earliest opportunity.

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

**25. MEMBERS ITEMS**

There are none.

**26. CORRESPONDENCE**

**26.1 HM PRISON AND PROBATION SERVICE**

Letter dated May 2017, regarding Linden Bank Approved Premises. A draft response was tabled, in which the question was asked 'was a thematic inspection of Linden Bank undertaken in 2006', if this had been done, then it is felt that child sex offenders should have been excluded at that time.

**RESOLVED:** that the draft be sent, subject to some grammatical changes.

**26.2 CEC ELECTORAL SERVICES**

Email dated 28 April 2017 in reply to concerns raised by STC regarding General election and Ettiley Heath/Wheelock Ward by-election dates.

**RESOLVED:** that the response be noted.

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

The next Town Council Meeting will take place on Thursday 20 July 2017 at 7.00pm at the Sandbach Literary Institution.

Meeting closed: 8.13pm  
Cllr M Forster, Town Mayor

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