

SANDBACH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Sandbach Town Council held on 7 December 2017 at 7.00pm at Sandbach Literary Institution.

PRESENT

Councillors: M Forster (Mayor)
R Hovey (Deputy Mayor)
K Southwell
B Moran
S Corcoran
M Muldoon
G Merry
A Smith
C Lowe
S Ashcombe-Hurt
K Haines
J Cartidge
P Eaton
R Hoffmann
M Lea-O'Mahoney
S Kirkham
M Benson
Mollie Burns – Youth Representative
Ben Longwell – Youth Representative

Also present were twenty members of the public/press.

The Opening Prayer was read by the Mayor.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr R Wait
Cllr G Price Jones

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

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

Mr L Thackery

Concern was expressed about the lack of cohesive planning across the town; that planning applications are all considered in isolation, with no apparent control over the area as a whole.

Frustration was expressed with regard to public awareness of emerging applications and also how to access relevant documents on the CEC website.

Members responded by referring to the adopted Local Development Plan. Cheshire East Councillor Corcoran and Merry both offered to take concerns back to CEC to establish how the availability of information may be improved.

Mrs C Bruderer

Reference was made to the Assets and Services meeting which took place on 7 December, with disgust being expressed about the process used to elect a Committee Chair. She felt that a great injustice had been served on Cllr Forster.

Mr R Green

Thanks were given to the organisers and operational staff who were involved with the 2017 Christmas Market; the busiest Christmas Market in six years.

It is noted that the Transport Festival will take place during the week-end of 21 April and suggested that an opening ceremony for the market hall is planned to take place during the same week-end. Cllr Forster and colleagues were thanked for keeping the Market Hall project on track.

With respect to the Spring Fair, members were asked to note the impact that last year's fair had on business in the town. It was queried whether the additional fair could be linked to another regular event e.g. Family Fun Day?

Resident

It was pointed out that there is a 'loophole' between the adopted Local Plan and the Sandbach Neighbourhood Development Plan, which enables developers to build on greenfield sites providing they build 100% affordable housing; this loophole is presently supported by CEC.

Mr J Beddows

Reference was made to recent press coverage, which could portray the Council in a negative light. It was suggested that members consider their conduct and work on building trust with the people who elected them.

Following the questions, the Town Mayor reconvened the meeting.

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

There are none.

4. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 12 OCTOBER 2017.

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

5. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON 9 AND 30 OCTOBER, 20 NOVEMBER 2017 (DRAFT).

RESOLVED: that the minutes be noted.

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

7. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE FINANCE, POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 2 NOVEMBER 2017 (DRAFT).

RESOLVED: that the minutes be noted.

8. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE – NO MEETINGS HELD

9. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE ASSETS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD ON 9 NOVEMBER 2017 (DRAFT).

RESOLVED: that the minutes be noted.

10. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE LLR & GOVERNANCE SUB-COMMITTEE HELD ON 1 NOVEMBER 2017 (DRAFT).

RESOLVED: that the minutes be noted.

11. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE CONDITIONS SURVEY SUB-COMMITTEE HELD ON 12 OCTOBER AND 1 NOVEMBER (DRAFT).

RESOLVED: that the minutes be noted.

12. UNDISCHARGED RESOLUTIONS

A schedule of undischarged resolutions was presented. The Clerk gave a brief progress report.

RESOLVED: that the undischarged resolutions are noted.

13. MATTERS ARISING

FINANCE, POLICY AND GOVERNANCE

13.1 General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

Data Protection Regulations are due to change in May 2018, part of the change is that Local Councils will have to appoint a dedicated Data Protection Officer – at present the extent of this role is not clear.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk is appointed Data Protection Officer (DPO), and that this change in job description and capacity is further considered by the Personnel Committee.

LLR AND GOVERNANCE SUB-COMMITTEE

13.2 Conclusion of LLR

It was reported that all of the actions of the Lessons Learned Review have been delivered or are in progress. Outstanding matters will be reported through the standing committee structure.

Outstanding matters are:

- The Council Website.
- The Communication Policy.

As the Sub-Committee has delivered all recommendations, members were asked to formally dissolve the LLR Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED: that the Council agrees all recommendations have been fulfilled and dissolves the Sub-Committee with immediate effect.

CHAIR'S FORUM

13.3 VAT

On the basis that STC will soon incur significant expenditure in respect of the Market Hall refurbishment, the Chair's Forum has suggested that a formal review of the financial position is undertaken by an external VAT consultant to determine if the Council should 'opt to tax'. If members agree to this approach a budget will need to be made available, it was suggested that £1,000 should be sufficient – no quotations have yet been obtained.

The suggestion was not fully supported, it was felt that the Council should have opted to tax much sooner and would have done had different information been available when the matter was last considered.

RESOLVED: That a budget of £1,000 is made available for the purpose of appointing a consultant to undertake an independent VAT review, which will be used to form a recommendation to a future meeting of STC.

The £1,000 will be used from surpluses within the 'Administration' budget for 2017/18.

13.4 Consultations

The Mayor's Forum has considered ways of ensuring that consultations are referred on through the standing committee structure, so that determination can be made if and how a response from STC should be made. It was suggested that, as the Planning Committee meets

regularly and that the majority of consultations have an effect on planning matters, that the Planning Committee should be renamed 'Planning and Consultation Committee', with its remit being widened to enable it to consider consultations and respond or forward on, as necessary.

Whilst not wanting to be exclusive, when such documents are considered by the Planning and Consultation Committee, all members of the Council will be automatically entitled to be in attendance, debate and vote when consultation documents are presented.

RESOLVED: that the Planning Committee is renamed 'Planning and Consultation Committee', with the Committee Terms of Reference being updated to recognise that the Committee is delegated to respond to or refer on all consultations.

14. RESIGNATION OF TOWN COUNCILLOR

The Clerk reported that she has received a letter of resignation from Mr B Davies. As is required, a vacancy notice was placed on 3 November, the Council has since been called to a by-election. The election will take place on 25 January 2018 and will be managed by CEC Electoral Services. The Clerk asked members to note potential overspend against the Elections Budget of c. £12,000.

RESOLVED: that the Council note the position and that a letter of thanks be sent to Mr Davies.

15. SANDBACH TRANSPORT FESTIVAL

Mrs E Alcock, Chairman of the Sandbach Transport Festival Committee was in attendance to explain how the festival has changed since its introduction 28 years ago and what new plans are in place to continue providing new attractions in forthcoming years.

The Festival Committee has managed to build up healthy financial reserves, however it is known that one of the key sponsors of the festival is unlikely to continue supporting the event beyond 2019, therefore it is expected that reserves will be needed to continue delivering the current standard of event.

The Town Council is asked to consider increasing its annual budget by £1,500 and to release the £10k budget contribution to the 2018 event.

Mrs Alcock, along with all other volunteers who work on the Transport Festival were thanked for their enormous effort every year, which continues to attract many people to the town and to raise the profile of Sandbach.

The Chair of F,P&G said that she was happy to ask members to consider an additional £1,500 to be included in the 2018/19 budget, but highlighted that there were considerable budgetary pressures anticipated; the final budget will be determined by Council on 25 January 2018.

RESOLVED: that:

- i. the presentation from Mrs E Alcock is used to inform the 2018/19 budget requirements and that an additional £1,500 is considered as part of the requirement.
- ii. £10,000 from the 2017/18 budget is released for as a contribution to the 2018 Festival.

16. CEC CONSULTATION – HOUSING POLICY

RESOLVED: that the CEC Consultation ‘Housing Policy’ is deferred to the Planning and Consultation Committee, under the newly approved delegation. (see 13.4 above).

The Planning and Consultation Committee is also authorised to write to CEC about the planning ‘loophole’, as mentioned under Public Questions.

17. AIR QUALITY

A progress report from CEC (Sean Hannaby) was presented in respect of the Middlewich Road Air Quality Management Area, which was declared on 1 October 2018. Concern was expressed that it will be March/April 2018 before any consultation commences with residents of Sandbach, with regard to developing a plan to mitigate the issues on Middlewich Road and noted that the final plan has to be implemented by October 2018 (12 month after declaring). It was proposed that STC write to CEC asking that they commence consultation preparation sooner, allowing time for the mitigating measures to be implemented within the 12 month timeframe.

RESOLVED: that

- i. The update be received.
- ii. To write to CEC asking that the meetings to produce an action plan take place in late January/early February 2018.

18. SANDBACH FAMILY SPRING FAIR 2018 – from A&S November

The Clerk presented a report on behalf of the Operations Manager. She gave a brief overview of the history of the Spring Fair, stating that there was no reason for STC to be involved in the 2018 event as it was neither on STC owned land or operating under the Sandbach Charter. Cheshire East Events Officer Andrew Latham has stated that he would be happy to receive an application for the Spring Fair and to work with the fairground operators directly. A number of recommendations have been made by the Operations Manager.

RESOLVED: that, should CEC be minded to permit the Spring Fair:

- i. CEC to be asked to consult with local businesses and residents, and to feedback any comments received to STC.
- ii. CEC to be asked to open Westfields Car Park as over-flow parking.
- iii. CEC to be asked to notify traffic wardens.

- iv. CEC to be asked to consult with STC Operational Staff to ensure that the good practice that has been established over recent years continues.
- v. STC to advise Joe White Fairs to apply to CEC for licensing.

19. PAYMENT OF INVOICES

RESOLVED: that the following payments be approved:

- i. Cheshire East Council, Election Costs £7,679.93
- ii. Cheshire Police, PCSO £11,918.00

Supplementary Item

- iii. David Trowler Associates, Market Hall Project £11,918.00

20. CORRESPONDENCE

20.1 Cheshire Police Constabulary

Letter dated 11 October re. PCSO provision. The letter was tabled at the meeting held on 12 October and referred to during the Pre-Budget Discussion.

Members were informed that the Clerk is presently trying to convene a meeting with representatives of the LPU to take place early January for the purpose of discussing PCSO provision.

RESOLVED: that the letter be received.

20.2 Cheshire East Council – Cabinet Office

Letter dated 10 October regarding Arclid Waste and Recycling Centre. The letter was tabled at the meeting held on 12 October.

RESOLVED: that the letter be received.

20.3 Northern Rail

Acknowledgement dated 4 November of STC letter dated 27 September.

It was noted that some late trains arrive after midnight, which could result in some rail users falling foul of parking fees that fall over two days.

RESOLVED: that the letter be received.

21. MAYORS REMARKS

A list of Mayoral events attended was circulated.

The Mayor thanked all those involved with the Sandbach Christmas Market for a hugely successful event.

Thanks were given to all staff for their work during a 'challenging' year.

Thanks to all local organisations and voluntary groups for their amazing efforts; thanks on behalf of the Town.

Seasons greeting to all for a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year, all were invited to partake in some seasonal refreshments following the meeting.

22. DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Town Council Meeting will take place on Thursday 25 January December 2017 at 7.00pm at the Sandbach Literary Institution.

Meeting closed: 8.23 pm

Cllr M Forster, Town Mayor

ALB

TCM171207

DRAFT