

SANDBACH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Sandbach Town Council held on 25 January 2018 at 7.00pm at Sandbach Literary Institution.

PRESENT

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

Also present were twenty members of the public/press.

The Opening Prayer was read by the Deputy Mayor

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs: R Wait
M Benson
K Southwell
G Merry
Mollie Burns - Youth Representative

Absent without apologies

Cllr R Hoffmann

There were fourteen members of the public and press in attendance.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Corcoran

Declared an interest in item 21.3 under correspondence 'Union Street' as the, CEC ward councillor for the area, not considered to be prejudicial.

Cllr Moran

Declared an interest in item 17, Year-End Audit Report, refers to the Sandbach Partnership as an option, a personal interest was declared as a member of the Sandbach Partnership, appointed by CEC.

Cllr Price Jones

Declared an interest in item 19.2 as a market trader.

Cllr Hovey

Declared an interest in items 4 and 13 as he has a pre-determined and published view, he intends to vote on the matter.

3. MAYOR'S REMARKS

Condolences to the family of the past Town Councillor Bill Scragg and recognition of the work he did over a number of years in a variety of capacities.

Concern expressed about the attendance of members at meetings, some meetings have been close to inquorate. On occasions, the Clerk/Chair of the Committees/Groups have not been advised. Can members please try to attend meetings, or at minimum tender apologies.

Councillors were reminded to publish a written agenda at least three days ahead of a meeting; this includes Working Groups – a pro-forma is available.

The Mayor drew attention to the length of the agenda and reminded members that this was an extra meeting, mainly for the purpose of setting the budget. He recognised that there are items included which will have an impact on the budget which should be prioritised above others. He sought support in deferring items should the need arise.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

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

Mr R Green

Has there been any response from CEC regarding proposed Spring Fayre. CEC was to be asked to consult local businesses.

The Clerk reported that CEC is liaising with STC. A meeting is being agreed for a joint STC and CEC meeting, where good practice will be shared.

Mr R Ashley (Marsh Green Road Action Group)

An update was requested on the action taken to resolve the discrepancies between the CEC Local Plan and the STC Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) to protect Sandbach Greenfield sites and the Marsh Green development.

A report prepared for item 19.4 was read in its entirety, in which it was stated that the NDP Working Group will review the documents to identify where policies require alignment, following which they will seek approval for Cheshire Community Action to be engaged to provide further planning advice.

Mr L Thackery

Concerns were expressed concerning the way in which planning matters are communicated to the public, with the Housing Strategy (item 12.1.2) being used as an example, that many members of the public are not aware.

Agreed to await the report at item 12.1.2.

Ms L McDade

Shocked to read that item 13 is to be considered under a closed session, and can think of no valid reason for this to be considered in private, she asked for an explanation of why this would even be considered as such?

Agreed that this would be explained at item 4.

Mrs C Bruderer

It was made quite clear at a meeting with the Clerk and Cllr Hovey that the complaint at item 13 should not be considered in private; the matter is procedural and does not name any individual.

She also asked if a named vote could be taken for item 13 and suggested that should any Councillor disagree with the Deputy Mayor's recommendation, that they should listen to the audio recording.

Mr D Williams

On January 23rd, at a meeting of the CEC Environment and Overview Scrutiny Committee, a proposal was discussed to cut £500k from the responsible highway repair budget. Alarmed that to balance this, it was suggested that free car parking should cease in CEC towns. Whilst this is yet to be agreed, there is concern that Sandbach free parking may be at risk.

Sandbach Town Council was asked to re-affirm its position on free parking in Sandbach.

It was clarified that free car parking across Sandbach has never been the agreed position of the Council and reference was made to the detailed report published during 2009, which should remain the response to CEC. It is thought that there are two types of groups within Sandbach, one that is against charges, the other that they will not shop in Sandbach if there is no parking space, but they don't mind paying for it; there is a need to satisfy both groups.

The Mayor reminded members of the ongoing Transport Review, of which car parking is an element.

Following the questions, the Town Mayor reconvened the meeting.

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

There are none.

5. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 7 DECEMBER 2017.

RESOLVED: that the minutes are approved.

6. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE PLANNING & CONSULTATION COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON 11 DECEMBER 2017 (DRAFT) AND 8 JANUARY 2018(DRAFT).

RESOLVED: that the minutes are noted

7. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE HELD 17 JANUARY 2018 – MINUTES NOT AVAILABLE.

The minutes were not available for noting.

8. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE FINANCE, POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – NO MEETINGS HELD.

There were none.

9. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 11 JANUARY 2018 (DRAFT).

RESOLVED: that the minutes be noted.

10. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE ASSETS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD ON 7 DECEMBER 2017 (DRAFT).

RESOLVED: that the minutes be noted

11. UNDISCHARGED RESOLUTIONS

RESOLVED: that the undischarged resolutions are noted

12. MATTERS ARISING

12.1 Planning and Consultation Committee

12.1.1 Terms of Reference

RESOLVED: that the amended Terms of Reference are approved.

12.1.2 CEC Housing Strategy

The Chair of Planning and Consultation presented the response that had been made on behalf of the Council.

Mr Thackery was happy with the response.

Cllrs Hovey and Haines were thanked for their work on the document.

RESOLVED: that the response is noted.

13. COMPLAINT

The Clerk reported on a letter from Mrs C Bruderer dated 29 November 2018, in which she complains about 'maladministration' and the possible breach of the Council's Standing Order 4d, that is that 'chairs should not serve for more than two consecutive years'. It was clarified that the complaint is procedural and does not mention any individual, therefore should not be made personal.

The Town Clerk and Deputy Mayor met with Mrs Bruderer to understand the complaint and what she would like the outcome to be, which is that the Council acknowledges in writing that there has been a breach. At the meeting, the Deputy Mayor agreed that there had been a breach and offered to write a letter in his own name, however as he has not been delegated to respond on behalf of the Council this was not sufficient.

It is to be noted that Mrs Bruderer has no issue with the subsequent meeting when Cllr Muldoon was elected as Chair.

A discussion ensued, whereby the allegation that Standing Orders had been breached was disputed, stating that the nomination/s for Chair had not been accepted nor voted upon, therefore there could not be a breach.

A named vote was taken:

That there has been a breach in the Code of Conduct:

Cllrs Forster, Hovey, Smith, Eaton, Cartlidge, Price Jones and Haines.

That there has not been a breach in the Code of Conduct:

Cllrs Moran, Kirkham, Lowe, Muldoon and Ashcombe-Hurt.

Abstentions:

Cllr Lea-O'Mahoney

RESOLVED: that the Council agrees to write to Mrs Bruderer acknowledging that there has been a breach in the Council's Standing Orders.

14. **DISPENSATION**

RESOLVED: that a dispensation is agreed to allow STC to consider and resolve budget and precept requirements for the remaining electoral term (lapsing May 2019).

15. **2018/19 BUDGET AND PRECEPT REQUIREMENTS**

Items 18, 19.2, 19.3 and the supplementary were considered ahead of the budget setting, as they all could have implications.

The Vice Chair of the Finance, Policy and Governance Committee tendered apologies on behalf of the Chair and read a pre-prepared report. The report outlined the budget setting process so far and stated that particular attention has been given to fulfilling the demands of service provision and additional projects. In addition, reserves have been calculated to exclude projects and one-off payments, thus reducing the three month requirement, which previously had been calculated as three months business (25%).

The budget has been through several renditions since its first draft, with the main changes being around the market requirement, tax base, car park reserve and change in reserve calculation.

Concern was expressed that the Council may be over-stretching itself by trying to deliver too many projects; it was suggested that current projects should be prioritised and planned over a three-year period, which would also free up funding to fulfil the additional requirement for the market project.

It was agreed that the £50k provision for the Office Project should be split to show £40k for the office project and £10k for SLI support, this recognises an ongoing commitment to the SLI.

A request was received to include £15k for the Sandbach Heath Play Area, this funding would be used to provide match funding for other grants that may be

available. Whilst members supported the request in principle, they felt unable to increase the budget/precept and therefore did not include.

RESOLVED: that:

- i) the 2018/19 Budget Requirements be approved at £812,639
subject to future Council resolution funds may be vired between budget lines
- ii) the 2018/19 Precept Requirements be approved at £647,110
- iii) the attached list of regular payments to be made during 2018/19 is approved.

16. VAT

Deferred to Finance, Policy and Governance on 1st February 2018.

17. 2016/17 YEAR END AUDIT AND MATTERS RAISED

Deferred to Finance, Policy and Governance on 1st February 2018.

18. PCSO PROVISION

The Clerk reported on meetings that have taken place with Senior Cheshire Police Officers, and stated that it was the Cheshire Police plan to provide 3x full time, fully funded PCSOs for Sandbach wards one each in:

Sandbach Town

Sandbach Ettiley Heath and Wheelock, paired with Sandbach Heath and East

Sandbach Elworth, paired with Brereton Rural

Sandbach Town Council currently contributes >£23k towards the provision of two PCSOs for the area. There is an option to pay for additional 'enhanced' PCSOs at a cost of £33k. The draft budget presently includes £23,838, members were asked to decide if they wish to fund an enhanced service or wait to see how the new proposals develop.

It was proposed that the draft provision within the budget is removed, with a letter being written to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) supporting his proposals, this proposal was lost.

RESOLVED: that Council retain the current draft budget provision and write to the PCC supporting proposals to fully fund three PCSOs as outlined.

19. WORKING GROUPS

19.1 Market Hall Steering Group

Deferred to a future meeting of Sandbach Town Council.

19.2 Market Hall Project Team

The Lead Councillor gave a progress report, stating that tenders have been received for the Market Hall refurbishment, however they are more than originally expected. The Project Manager is currently in touch with the contractors to establish why the costs are so high and is reviewing options prior to attending a briefing session with the Town Council on 1 February at 6.00 pm in the SLI; members are urged to attend.

On the basis of the tenders received, it is anticipated that the current draft budget provision will result in a shortfall of c£90k, however it is felt that this shortfall could be accommodated within existing and proposed budget lines if members approve.

Due to the tenders being high, progress against plan has been delayed. It is hoped that the final report can be presented to Council on 22 February for approval. In the meantime, members are asked to agree to £104,260 being agreed for inclusion as a budget requirement for 2018/19.

RESOLVED: that

1. an amount of £104,260 be included in the 2018/19 budget, with an understanding that there may be a requirement to vire monies between budget lines to meet the final cost of the project.
2. The Council confirms its commitment to the Market Hall refurbishment project.
3. The Market Hall Project Team will present an options appraisal to Council on 22 February, which incorporates pros and cons, risk analysis and recommendations from the Project Manager.

19.3 Office Project

The Lead Councillor reported that the Council had been looking at Sandbach House, Crewe Road as a possible solution to the Council's office a meeting room issue. Through the Working Group, the Council has been in communication with CEC, however has decided that they will no longer pursue the building as an option. CEC was thanked for giving the Town Council the opportunity to consider the building.

A position update has been received from the SLI Trustees, regarding their plans for the future of the Sandbach Literary Institution; plans which see the Town Council as an ongoing tenant. There may be a requirement for the Council to support the Trust as they progress their plans, whether the Council remains in occupation or not.

RESOLVED: that the report be received.

A proposed budget of £50k has been included in the draft 2018/19 budget, it was agreed that this could be split to read £40k Office Project and £10k SLI Support.

19.4 Neighbourhood Development Plan Working Group

Deferred to a future meeting of Sandbach Town Council.

19.5 Bus Service Working Group

Deferred to a future meeting of Sandbach Town Council.

19.6 Website

Deferred to a future meeting of Sandbach Town Council.

20. OUTLOOK AND IT SERVICES

Deferred to a future meeting of Sandbach Town Council.

SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM

SANDBACH SKATEPARK WORKING GROUP REPORT

The Lead Member presented a progress report. A consultation has been undertaken and 760 responses received, of which 60% indicate that they are in favour of a Skatepark and BMX track

Through the approved Terms of Reference, the Working Group has the authority to undertake consultations, however it expected that a consultation on proposed locations may be controversial, therefore it was felt that STC should be alerted before the next phase of consultation commences.

RESOLVED: that

- 1 The report be noted.
- 2 The Town Council agrees consultation on the nine site options, plus others.
- 3 The Working Group will produce a Business Case and report the consultation results to the Council

21. CORRESPONDENCE

21.1 Chronicle

Email dated 3 January regarding use of email.

The Mayor reminded members that they should be using their Sandbach.gov.uk email addresses for all Council business and that any

problems or difficulties should be reported by the member to Prism for support.

It was noted that one member had been contacted directly by the Chronicle with a request for information concerning a political candidate and it was felt inappropriate to use the .gov. email address for this purpose.

It was suggested that a Working Group should be formed to look at the current email system to establish whether the current system is appropriate for needs. Members disagreed and felt that such a piece of work should be officer led, the purpose for the .gov email is clearly identified within the LLR report and recommendations, and has been agreed and accepted by full Council.

RESOLVED: that the Clerk undertake a review of the current email system and report back to Council.

21.2 Mr R Hamilton

Letter dated 5 January (addressed to Mayor) regarding Elworth Hall Farm, S 106 Highway Contributions.

RESOLVED: that the letter be passed to the Planning and Consultation Committee to determine recommendations to be conveyed to Council.

21.3 Petition received 5 January from the residents of Union Street

Objection to the proposed change of use of No.79 Union Street to a car wash.

RESOLVED: that the petition be noted.

22. DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Town Council Meeting will take place on Thursday 22 February 2018 at 7.00pm at the Sandbach Literary Institution.

Meeting closed: 9.29 pm

Cllr M Forster, Town Mayor

ALB

TCM180125

To consider advance approval through budget of regular and routine payment in excess of £1,500.

Nominal Code	Item	Budget	Town Clerk/RFO Recommendation	Justification	Chair FPG Recommendation	RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL
SALARIES AND STAFF COSTS						
4000/6022/6023	Salaries	£316,660	Approve	To avoid delay.	Approve	APPROVE
4001/6021	Employer NI		Approve	To avoid delay and possible charges.	Approve	APPROVE
4002/6022	Pension Contributions		Approve	To avoid delay and possible charges.	Approve	APPROVE
PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT						
4110	IT Support (Prism) Contract	£6,000	Approve. Paid by DD.	With committee review at next renewal. DD approval to FPG every April.	Not agreed	APPROVE, review when renewal due.
4108	Outlook Emails	£2350				
4112	Internal Audit	£3,000	Approve	Appointment of Auditor agreed at each AGM.	Not agreed	APPROVE
4112	External Audit		Approve	External Auditor appointed by Smaller Authorities Audit	Not agreed	

				Appointments (SAAA) Ltd., until 2021.		
4114	Accountancy Support	£3,250	Defer to Committee approval.	This does not preclude the Clerk accessing accountancy support as required, in accordance with ToR.	Not agreed	COUNCIL/COMMITTEE (on receipt of invoice)
4120	Insurance	£9500	Approve.	Continuity of service.	Approve	APPROVE
4152	HR and H&S (Wirehouse)	£2,500	Approve. Paid by DD.	Continue with contract, delegated to the Clerk. There is a need for continuity where personnel are concerned. DD approval to FPG every April.	Not agreed	APPROVE
4630	Legal Services	£1,500	Defer to Committee approval.	This does not preclude the Clerk accessing legal support as required, in	Not agreed	COUNCIL/COMMITTEE (on receipt of invoice)

				accordance with ToR.		
GRANTS, SPONSORSHIP AND CORE FUNDING						
4500	Transport Festival Grant.	£10,000	Defer to Committee approval.	Based on application.	Approve	COUNCIL DECISION
4508	Christmas Lights Grant.	£5,000	Defer to Committee approval.	Based on application.	Not approve	COUNCIL DECISION
4550	Foden's Sponsorship	£7,500	Defer to Committee approval.	Consideration due to level £7,500.	Not approve	COUNCIL DECISION
4601	Sandbach Partnership, Core Funding.	£10,000	Defer to Committee approval.	Based on SLA and report.	Not approve	COUNCIL DECISION
4560	Churchyard Maintenance	£1,580	*****	*****	*****	*****
PUBLIC REALM						
4503	Hanging Baskets	£7,500	Approve.	Continuity of service.	Approve	APPROVE
4640	CCTV	£5,700	Approve.	Continuity of service.	Approve	APPROVE
6500	Christmas Tree	£1,500	Approve.	Continuity of service.	Approve	APPROVE
OPERATIONAL						

4300	Newsletter	£4650	Approve.	Continuity of service, deemed as business as usual.	Not agreed	APPROVE
4570	PCSO	£23,838	Defer to Committee.	Defer until such time SLA in place, then seek advance approval.	Not agreed	COUNCIL, until such time SLA in place.
6010	Bar Purchase	Variable	Approve.	Continuity of service	Approve	APPROVE
7000	Loan	£29,606	Approve.	To avoid charged. Will be included in DD schedule from April 2017.	Approve	APPROVE
PREMISES						
4121	Rent (Storage Unit)	£2,200	Defer to Committee.	Storage unit use should be considered.	Not agreed	COMMITTEE
	Rent (SLI)	£7,120	Approve.	To avoid delay in payment.	Approve	APPROVE
4122	Utilities @ SLI	£4200	Approve.	Continuity of service.	Approve	APPROVE
4123	Phones (Flexitel/BT) – regular line	£8450	Approve.	Continuity of service.	Not agreed	APPROVE

	rental wifi provision etc.					
6100	Heating and Lighting	See utilities above	Approve.	Continuity of service.	Approve	APPROVE
6110	Rates and Water		Approve.	Continuity of service.	Approve	APPROVE

DRAFT