

SANDBACH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Sandbach Town Council held on 31 May 2018 at 7.00pm at Sandbach Literary Institution.

PRESENT

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

Also present were Reverend Shepherd, and five members of the public.

The opening prayer was read by Reverend Thomas Shepherd.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr P Eaton

ABSENT WITHOUT APOLOGIES

Cllr M Lea O'Mahoney

2. DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE BY THE DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR

Cllr M Muldoon read and signed his acceptance of office.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Forster declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 20 as he has discussed the grant application with the applicant prior to submission.

Cllr Moran declared disclosable non-pecuniary interest in items 21 and 22a, in the interests of openness and transparency as a Cheshire East Councillor.

Cllr Merry declared a disclosable non-pecuniary interest in items 21 and 22 as a Cheshire East Councillor.

Cllr Corcoran declared a disclosable non-pecuniary interest in item 21 and 22 as a Cheshire East Councillor.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

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

Reference was made to a public apology by Cllr Lowe, which appeared in the Congleton Chronicle, concerning the abandoned Assets and Services Meeting of 9 November 2018. The timing of the apology was questioned as it appeared several months after the meeting, additionally it was questioned whether there had been a breach of the Council's Code of Conduct.

Cllr Lowe responded, stating that a complaint had been made about her conduct, but not upheld; however the Monitoring Officer had felt that it would be appropriate for Cllr Lowe to issue an apology.

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

4. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 12 APRIL 2018, 26 APRIL 2018 AND 17 MAY 2018 (AGM).

RESOLVED: that the minutes be accepted as an accurate record and signed.

5. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE MARKET HALL STEERING GROUP SUB-COMMITTEE HELD ON 15 MAY 2018 (DRAFT).

RESOLVED: that the minutes be noted.

6. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF MARKET HALL PROJECT SUB-COMMITTEE HELD ON 15 MAY 2018 (DRAFT).

RESOLVED: that the minutes be noted.

7. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE PLANNING & CONSULTATION COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON 3 APRIL 2018, 23 APRIL 2018 AND 14 MAY 2018 (DRAFT).

RESOLVED: that the minutes be noted.

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

9. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE FINANCE, POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 10 MAY 2018 (DRAFT).

RESOLVED: that the minutes be noted.

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

11. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE EVENTS SUB- COMMITTEE HELD ON 4 APRIL 2018 (DRAFT).

RESOLVED: that the minutes be noted.

12. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE ASSETS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD ON – NO MEETINGS HELD.

13. MATTERS ARISING

13.1 Sandbach Town Council – 26 April 2018

Bank Closures

The Mayor reported on the proposed closures of Barclays and RBS banks in Sandbach.

A meeting had been held with representatives from Barclays Bank where it was confirmed that closure is based entirely on commercial reasons and that closures will affect both Sandbach and Alsager. Customers of Barclays are being offered guidance on how to use on-line banking, additionally the Post Office offers most of the counter facilities currently available to Barclays customers.

RBS (Sandbach) branch has confirmed that it is due to close on 9 August. Alternative banking arrangements are via their branch in Congleton or the Natwest in Sandbach.

RESOLVED: that the report be received.

13.2 Finance Policy and Governance – 10 May 2018

Financial Regulations

Lead: RFO

To ensure that Council pays due regard to EU and UK legislation when dealing with high value contracts, the FPG Committee recommends the inclusion of the following under FR11.1k:

“The European Union Procurement Directives and UK Regulations shall apply, which include Public Contracts Regulations, Transparency Regulations and the Utilities Contracts Regulations, including thresholds to be followed. Further information can be found on at www.gov.uk”

RESOLVED: that the recommended insertion is approved.

13.3 Finance, Policy and Governance – 10 May 2018

Annual Risk Review

Lead: RFO

RESOLVED: as recommended by the FPG Committee, that the 2017/18 Corporate Risk Management review is approved.

13.4 Finance, Policy and Governance – 10 May 2018

Internal Audit 2017/18

Lead: RFO

The RFO presented the end of year Internal Audit statement for 2017/18. She drew attention to the additional column which shows progress made against each of the Auditor's comments. She then referred to two key points of the Audit:

1. Working Groups Making Decisions.
2. VAT

RESOLVED: that the final Internal Audit for the financial year 2017/18 is received and approved.

14. ANNUAL AUDIT 2017/18

Lead: RFO

The Annual Return was presented. The RFO drew attention to Section 1 'Annual Governance Statement 2017/18' and that box three had been ticked as 'no', the Council had not taken reasonable steps to ensure no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and proper practices. She explained that this declaration related to the previous years' qualification and that the issue had persisted into 2017/18 until the matter had been addressed by resolution on 1 February 2018. This declaration should not result in further qualification for the same issue, but could if not declared.

She also mentioned the issues of late submission of the Corporate Risk Review and a potential VAT liability.

The Clerk was asked to circulate copies of email exchange between Cllr Corcoran and the external auditor, which were referenced during discussion, to all Members for information.

RESOLVED: that the annual return be approved and that signing and submission to the External Auditor is authorised.

15. EVENTS FUNDING

Lead: Chair of Events Sub-Committee

Members were informed that planning had started on a new event to replace the Sandbach Day of Dance in May, which would also see the reintroduction of the Town Crier's Competition; however, holding the event in May is no longer a possibility. An alternative date has been diarised, but the Sub-Committee has since learned that it will not be able to incorporate the Town Crier's competition, it is therefore looking at other activities to support the event.

There is presently a budget of £2,500 for the Town Crier's competition. Council is asked to consider the virement of this budget to the new event, to enable it to go ahead in September – this is subject to sufficient dance teams being available.

RESOLVED: that the virement of £2,500 from the Town Crier's Competition budget to the new event 'Market Town Festival' is approved.

16. TOWN HALL CONDITION SURVEY (FUNDING)

Lead: Chair of Assets and Services

A condition survey of the Town Hall was undertaken in 2017, the subsequent report was reviewed and prioritised by the Condition Survey Sub-Committee, with recommendations for phased work to be undertaken.

Committed Reserves are available under Asset Maintenance and Council is asked permit the spend of £16,286 + VAT (£19,543.20), to enable works to be undertaken during the current year.

RESOLVED: that £19,543.20 is made available from Committed Reserves (Asset Maintenance) to enable works identified as part of the 2017 Town Hall Conditions Survey.

17. MEMBERSHIP OF SUB-COMMITTEES

Lead: Town Mayor

Membership of the Market Project, Market Steering Group and Events Sub-Committees were to be considered.

The matter of non-elected members rights on Sub-Committees was clarified, with the Clerk saying that they do not have a vote, only on Working Groups would they have a vote.

On the basis of this information, the status of the Sub-Committees was reviewed, with it being agreed to:

Retain the Market Project Sub-Committee as a Sub-Committee.

Make the Market Steering Group Sub-Committee a Working Group.

Retain the Events Sub-Committee as a Sub-Committee.

Membership of each of the groups was considered with the following being agreed:

Market Project Sub-Committee

Cllrs: Forster, Smith, Lowe, Hoffman and Cartlidge.

Public: J Beddows, G Bradford, A Smith, R Green.

Market Steering Group Working Group

Cllrs: Hovey, Forster, Price Jones.

Public: C Bruderer, G Bradford, H Ireland.

Events Sub-Committee

Cllrs: Benson, Moran, Forster, Lowe, Merry, Flavell and Price Jones.

Public: will change as required.

RESOLVED: that Sub-Committees and Working Groups are agreed as stated.

18. LINDEN BANK LIAISON GROUP

RESOLVED: that Cllr Corcoran be included as the Council's representative on the Linden Bank Liaison Group.

19. MARKET PROGRESS REPORT

Lead: Cllr Forster

Three documents were tabled:

Market Hall Construction Programme (V3).

Brief of Works Progress Meeting which took place on 24 May 2018.

Plan of shutter graphics.

It was reported that progress against the plan is good; it might not look like much has happened to date, but a great deal of preparation work has been undertaken during the first few weeks.

It remains likely that the official opening will take place on 26 July; Fiona Bruce MP is doing her best to be in attendance. A series of events are being planned around the opening of the Market Hall, which will also incorporate the Outdoor Market.

Cllr Forster will continue to be the communication channel to members (via the Clerk) and will report progress as it is made.

Mr Steve Minshull was thanked for his work in providing the images for the shutters.

The Operations Manager was thanked for his hard work in communicating between Kaberry, the Project Manager and the Traders; he has dealt with issues smoothly and promptly.

RESOLVED: that the progress report be received and noted.

20. SANDBACH ARTS ROOM

Lead: Cllr Forster

A grant application request for £5,000 was considered. If successful that money would be used to fund a project aimed at supporting young people experiencing emotional or mental distress, through early intervention.

There was some discussion about the status of the organisation's name and whether it was a limited company, it was established following an internet search that Cheshire Arts for Health is a not for profit organisation which appears to have permission not to state 'Ltd.'

The Clerk clarified that the remaining budget for 'grants' is £8,125.

Members recognised the value and supported the project; however, some felt unable to support the full sum as it comprised of core funding. Following an initial proposal to support the full application, an amendment was made that the Council supports the total value of £3,500, which would cover the specified staffing costs.

RESOLVED: that £3,500 be awarded to Cheshire Arts for Health to support the Teenage Mental Health Project.

21. MEMBERS' ITEMS

Cllr K Haines

CEC Local Transport Plan Consultation – Draft Response

The Mayor opened the item and clarified the position regarding CEC and LEP Transport Plan consultations. He stated that the LEP Transport Plan consultation will be deferred to the Planning and Consultation Committee for a response.

Cllr Haines presented a draft response document, which had been prepared by the VISSIM Working Group on behalf of the Council. He outlined the content of the document and summarised the objections. He stated that the VISSIM data had been under-stated and this had been used throughout the CEC LTP Refresh as the basis for statistics used – it has since been clarified by CEC that VISSIM data will no longer be used. Additionally, there was a presumed growth of 6%, where reality takes it closer to 30%; significant housing growth had been omitted from the report. The phasing of lights at J17 is incorrect and exacerbating queues on the A534.

It was noted that if approved, this would be the second response sent by STC, with the first response being written by the Town Council's Cycling Strategy Working Group.

RESOLVED: that the draft response be approved as the Council's response to the Local Transport Plan refresh and that CEC be informed that this is one of two responses from Sandbach Town Council.

22. CORRESPONDENCE

22.1 Cheshire East Council

Bus Service Review

RESOLVED: that the letter be received.

22.2 Foden's Band

Letter of Thanks

RESOLVED: that the letter be received.

23. INFORMATION AND DATA PROTECTION POLICY

Lead: Town Clerk

GDPR became effective on 25 May 2018. Work on compliance has commenced and members have been kept informed via an information bulletin. Following approval by Council, JDH Business Services have been appointed as Data Protection Officer for one year; this will ensure that the Council is fully compliant by the year end.

JDH has advised that two policy documents are adopted as a matter of urgency:

Document Retention Policy – adopted 8 March 2018.

Information and Data Protection Policy – the Clerk advised that she has reviewed a draft document (provided by JDH) and amended for STC needs. She asked members to consider and recommended adoption.

RESOLVED: that the Information and Data Protection Policy is adopted with immediate effect.

The Clerk was thanked for her work to date.

24. UNDISCHARGED RESOLUTIONS

Lead: Town Mayor

The undischarged resolutions we reviewed, with members agreeing that the out-standing item relating to Linden Bank should continue to be pursued.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

25. DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Town Council Meeting will be on Thursday 16 August 2018 at 7.00pm at the Sandbach Literary Institution.

Members were thanked for their attendance. Officers were thanked for their work in supporting the agenda.

Meeting closed: 8.50pm

Cllr R Hovey, Town Mayor

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