

SANDBACH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Sandbach Town Council held on 6 June 2019 at 7.00pm at Sandbach Literary Institution.

PRESENT

Councillors: M Muldoon (Mayor)
G Price Jones (Deputy Mayor)
S Corcoran
S Ashcombe-Hurt
S Kirkham
K Flavell
P Eaton
R Hoffmann
M Lea
R Hovey
J Belsham
L Crane
S Crane
S Broad
D Jack
K Seymour
J Beddows

Also present were twelve members of the public and press.

Prayer by Rev Thomas Shepherd

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs: Williams
Merry

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Corcoran declared an interest in item 23.1 as the Leader of CEC.

3. MAYORS COMMENTS

The Mayor welcomed all and reminded them of the 75th anniversary of the D Day landings.

He has attended the AGM of the Sandbach Clean Team and a Chairman Training Course hosted by ChALC.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

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

Speaker 1

A copy of the adopted Code of Conduct was requested, with assurance that all members have received a copy; the Clerk confirmed that this is the case.

Council was asked if it would consider keeping a record of attendances; the Clerk confirmed that attendance records have been kept since 2008, although not been made public.

Seating arrangements were queried, with clarification being sought that members are to collect their name card of arrival at full Council meetings; the Clerk confirmed that this is correct.

Speaker 2

Reference was made to a council tax increase made to fund the Market Hall refurbishment and that, due to public outcry, the project did not go ahead. Council was asked if it planned any council tax reductions. Cllr Corcoran responded, stating there was a large reserve, but that this is being used to fund other projects.

Speaker 3

Members were urged to read the Market Hall Lessons Learned Review (LLR) and to pay attention to the recommendations, and reminded to be careful when excluding members of the public from meetings.

Speaker 4

Congratulations to the ne Council and the Town Mayor.

The Clerk was thanked for completing the market signage installation.

Clarification on the new Ranger position was sought; the Clerk outlined the role, emphasising that the Ranger element is 12 hours per week.

Reference was made to the last C&E meeting, where extending the Christmas Lights to Congleton Road and Small Common was considered. It was pointed out that work to extend the lights should be undertaken during the Summer. The Clerk confirmed that plans remain in place and the Support Services Officer was currently trying to obtain prices for the various options available.

Following the questions, the Town Mayor reconvened the Meeting.

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

RESOLVED: that item 15 should 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 11 APRIL, 1 MAY AND 23 MAY (AGM).

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

6. **TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE MARKET HALL STEERING GROUP SUB-COMMITTEE – NO MEETINGS HELD.**

7. **TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE PLANNING & CONSULTATION COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON 1 APRIL AND 23 APRIL 2019 (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 – NO MEETINGS HELD.**

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 10 APRIL 2019 (DRAFT).**

RESOLVED: that the minutes be noted.

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

13. **MATTERS ARISING**

13.1 Events Sub-Committee

Lead: Clerk

The Clerk reported that plans for three town events are well underway and requested that monies to fund the events are made available from Committee Reserves.

RESOLVED: that approval to release funds ‘up to’ the following amounts from committed reserve 333 (Events):

1)Family Fun Day £1500 (+£1000 Sponsorship)

2)Party in the Park £8,000 (+ Income generated from ticket sales)

3)Market Town Festival £4000

To the total of £13500.

13.2 Events Sub-Committee - Invoices

Lead: Clerk

Approval was sought to pay two event related invoices which exceed £1500.

RESOLVED: that the following payments are approved:

| | | |
|-----|-----------|----------|
| i. | Hipswing | £5743.50 |
| ii. | NV Events | £1980.00 |

13.3 Community and Environment

Lead: Clerk

Reference was made to the annual Christmas Market which due to its popularity has been extended to the Small Common Car Park.

Consideration has been given to improving the lighting and Christmas ambience in this area, with a number of solutions being presented. The Operations Support Officer is presently obtaining quotations, with a view to presenting his recommendations to the A&S Committee Meeting on 30 July.

Council is asked to make available 2018/19 Indoor and Outdoor Market Promotion Surplus, along with profit generated by the 2018 Christmas Market.

RESOLVED: that 2018/19 year end surpluses from the Indoor and Outdoor Market Promotion Code, along with the profit from the 2018 Christmas Market are made available for the purpose of installing lighting and advertising poles around the Small Common.

Community & Environment Meeting 7th March 2019 Item 6.

14. VACANCY – TOWN WARD

Lead: Clerk

Following the May 2019 election, one vacancy remains for the Town Ward. Members are asked to approve advertising the vacancy for cooption only. With applicants being invited to present to the next Council meeting.

RESOLVED: that the vacancy is advertised, removing the option for a by-election. Applicant to be invited to present to the next meeting of Council.

15. STAFFING MATTERS

Lead: Cllr Muldoon.

Considered in a closed session.

RESOLVED: that the matter be delegated to the Town Clerk for completion, with support being provided by the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Past Mayor. The Clerk is authorised to make payments as agreed.

16. ACCOUNTS AND GOVERNANCE ANNUAL RETURN 2018/19

16.1 Accounts and Governance

Lead: Clerk/RFO

The 2018/19 end of year Accounts and Governance Annual Return and supporting statements were presented. The Internal Auditor has conducted his inspections and is happy that the Council has a sound system of internal control. Members are asked to oversee the completion of the Annual Governance Statement and to approve the return.

RESOLVED: that Accounts and Governance Annual Return 2018/19 is approved.

16.2 Internal Auditors Report 2018-2019

Lead: Clerk/RFO

RESOLVED: that the Internal Auditor's Report is received, with comments being noted.

17. SANDBACH PARTNERSHIP CORE FUNDING

Lead: The Clerk

A letter dated 9 April from the Sandbach Partnership was presented, in which they request the release of £10,000 annual funding. The Clerk confirmed that there is money in the budget for this purpose.

Members would like to see how the Council's money is being spent, at a minimum with a statement of expenditure being made available. It was noted that whilst the accounts are reported to be available online, they are difficult to locate.

Reference was made to the SLA and appendix and that the finalisation of the appendix was the responsibility of the Chair/Vice-Chair of the Community and Environment Committee. The Clerk confirmed that there was an SLA in place, although it had been a while since the appendix had been updated.

An annual statement about how the money has been spent and what the next year's contribution will be used for is required.

It was questioned whether Sandbach people are happy to fund a salary and deemed that this is not unreasonable.

The Partnership has a year-end balance of over £27k; it was noted that this is a requirement for any body with employment responsibilities.

A motion was put forward and lost, that STC release £5,000, whilst clarification is sought about the current year requirements.

RESOLVED: that Sandbach Partnership be asked to outline how a £10,000 contribution would be spent during 2019/20.

18. SANDBACH PARTNERSHIP - INVOICE

Lead: Clerk

The Clerk reminded Council of the £13,500 that was awarded to the Town by CEC to deliver identified community benefit, under the heading of 'Environmental Funds'. This invoice for £480 is the final instalment of the £13,500 and has been spent on the installation of cycle racks.

Members expressed that they would prefer to see the actual contractors' invoice in future, for the purpose of transparency of public expenditure.

RESOLVED: that the payment of invoice for £480 is approved and noted that this concludes the balance of Environmental Funds.

19. FODEN'S BAND SPONSORSHIP

Lead: Clerk

The Clerk confirmed that the budget of £7,500 is available.

Members considered sponsorship as being different from a grant or core funding.

RESOLVED: that £7,500 sponsorship be released from the annual budget 110-4550.

20. ICT

Lead: The Clerk

The Clerk reported that she had hoped to provide a report which covered replacement desktops/hardware, as well as improved data storage, however due to changes in account manager, there have been delays in completing the desktop quotations.

Replacement of the server, back-up and storage has become a priority due to the age of the current server, which frequently crashes, but more concerning has suffered two serious viruses over a 12-month period. Therefore, attention has been given to this element of work.

Proposals to take the Council to a cloud-based solution have been pursued, to enable this connectivity has had to be factored, as the current upload speed is not sufficient.

Full proposals were shared and it was noted that if supported would remove the need for the replacement of a physical server in the future.

Members were advised that it may not be possible to upgrade desktop hardware during the current year due to budgetary restrictions.

RESOLVED: that the Council approve connectivity improvements and migration to Cloud in accordance with the Prism Quotation of £4191.26 (inc Vat) and an ongoing monthly charge of £874 (Inc Vat), this replaces the current monthly charge.

21. SKATEPARK WORKING GROUP

Lead: Cllr Corcoran

The Skatepark Project has been running for a number of years and started when the 'Ryder Report' recommended a Skatepark in Sandbach Town Park. Since that time a Working Group has undertaken three phases of public consultation, which confirm that a Skatepark is wanted and that the best location would be Sandbach Town Park.

There is a need to develop a scheme, which should include lighting and CCTV, and to raise funding, therefore it is necessary for the Working Group to reconvene.

The next meeting of the Skatepark Working Group will take place on 27 June at 7.30pm in the SLI. This meeting is open to the public should they wish to observe.

RESOLVED: that the report be received and the date of the next meeting noted.

22. MEMBERS ITEM

22.1 Cllr D Jack

Outside Bodies Grants and Funding

A number of community organisations benefit from funding from the Town Council. For the purpose of openness and transparency it is suggested that any organisation wishing to access public funds via the Town Council, should invite a member of STC to work with them to oversee the spend of funds.

There was debate about the amount of funding and levels of scrutiny, with it being suggested that grants or funding less than £3,000 should be supported with a financial statement only.

Should this be approved, it will become effective immediately and retrospectively applied to the financial year 2018/19.

RESOLVED: that any outside body receiving grants or funding up to £3,000 makes available to the Council a financial statement, clearly showing how STC contribution has been spent. Any group receiving in excess of £3,000 shall be required to invite a representative of STC to join their work.

22.2 Cllr D Jack

Licence and Ownership of the Cobbled Market Square

There are a number of anomalies and inconsistencies with regard to the management of the Cobbled Market Square; with many people not fully understanding who holds responsibility.

It is suggested that STC forms a Working Group to investigate the current position and to consider options for future improved management, including the devolved management to STC.

RESOLVED: that a Working Group is set up to liaise with businesses, residents, statutory bodies, voluntary organisations and local authorities in preliminary consultation to explore the costs, implications and process for the adoption and complete devolved management of the market square by STC. To report findings to council within three months.

Cllr Jack to set up and lead the Group

22.3 Cllr R Hoffmann

Youth Engagement in Local Democracy

In 2011 Sandbach Town Council appointed a Youth Council; however intervening years saw its demise. In an attempt to engage with youth, at a later date, the Council appointed representative from each of the Town's Secondary Schools; this ran until 2018 and was superseded by Cadet Representatives.

There is an appetite to encourage young people to have their say and it is felt that a Working Group should be established to look at ways of achieving this.

RESOLVED: that a Working Group be formed to explore options to increase younger residents' participation and input into the business of the Town Council, especially with regard to increasing youth leisure provision in the parish of Sandbach.

Cllr Hoffmann to set up and lead the Group

23. CORRESPONDENCE

23.1 CEC

Letter dated 16th May 2019 concerning VISSIM.

Cllr Corcoran left the room whilst this item was considered.

The Clerk reminded members of the letter from STC, in which CEC had been requested to undertake a full VISSIM review; the letter dated 16 May declined this request.

Members expressed concern that the VISSIM model was flawed and that the data contained within will be used to influence planning and development applications until 2030. Members would like to understand how this will be mitigated as the traffic figure is tripled.

A number of queries and concerns remain unanswered.

RESOLVED: that a letter is sent to the Leader of CEC, in which the unanswered questions are posed and requesting a further VISSIM investigation is undertaken.

23.2 HS2

Letter dated 23 May 2019 concerning High Speed Rail Bill.

RESOLVED: that the letter be received.

23.3 CEC

Letter dated 20 March 2019 Building Regulations Completions Certificate.

RESOLVED: that the letter be received.

Supplementary Item

Mayor's Allowance

Lead: Town Clerk

The Town Mayor 2019/20, Cllr Muldoon, has requested that instead of his Mayoral Allowance being paid to him, he would prefer it to be paid to his Charity Account. This should not set a precedent for forthcoming years.

RESOLVED: that £2,000 Mayoral Allowance is paid directly to the Mayor's Charity Account for one year only 2019/20.

24. DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Town Council Meeting will be on Thursday 15 August 2019 at 7.00pm in Council Chamber, Sandbach Literary Institution.

Please note that this meeting will be recorded and the audio recording made available to the public within 5 working days of the meeting.

Meeting closed 9.32pm

Cllr M Muldoon, Town Mayor

ALB