

SANDBACH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Sandbach Town Council's Finance, Policy and Governance Committee held at Sandbach Town Hall, Monday 23rd August 2021 at 7pm.

PRESENT

Councillors: A Smith (Chair)
G Price Jones (Town Mayor)
R Hovey
L Crane
G Merry
S Kirkham
S Crane

The existing Chair, Cllr Alan Smith, opened the meeting and welcomed Members.

1. FINANCE, POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE CHAIR

RESOLVED: It was resolved that Cllr Alan Smith be the Chair for the 2021/22 financial year.

2. FINANCE, POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED: It was resolved that Cllr Sam Corcoran be the Vice-Chair for the 2021/22 financial year.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr M Muldoon
Cllr S Corcoran

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members present declared the following interests. Members listed abstained from all votes under the items listed.

- Cllr Price-Jones Rep. Transport Festival Committee (item 12.3)
- Cllr Merry Trustee of Sandbach Concert Series (item 12.6)
- Cllr Hovey Trustee of Sandbach Concert Series (item 12.6)
Friends of Sandbach Station (item 12.5)

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

Speaker Number One

Vexatious Persons Policy – generally supportive of protecting staff from abuse but thought that the policy's tone was not appropriate including the use of words such as 'banning' which should not be used. It was felt that any Investigating Committee should avoid being politically weighted and should include independent members outside of the council. The term 'impaired' is not reasonable to use in the policy and the Council should seek specialist

advice on matters such as these. In addition the policy does not define terms such as 'abuse' properly and could be used to stifle debate. Such a policy also needs to work alongside the Code of Conduct.

Speaker Number Two

Spoke in favour of the Concert Series grant application – the group has worked for many years and has developed a great reputation. The three year grant will help with forward planning for events.

Speaker Number Three

Disappointed that the Equality Policy is not on the agenda. Cllr Smith commented that the Council will appoint an Equality Champion at Full Council in September 2021.

5. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED: Item 11 to be debated and voted upon with the exclusion of both public and press, under the Public Bodies Admissions to Meeting Act 1960.

6. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FINANCE POLICY AND GOVERNANCE MEETING ON 29th APRIL 2021

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Finance, Policy and Governance Committee meeting held 29th April 2021 are approved as a true record of the meeting.

7. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS: INTERIM FIRST QUARTER 2021-22 STATEMENTS [FINANCE]

The Committee considered the above statements including: -

- Detailed Income and Expenditure Cost Centre Report
- Payments Made, Receipts Received
- Bank Reconciliation (Main accounts)
- Balance Sheet
- Variance Report

RESOLVED: That the following be resolved in relation to the above

1. Approval of payments between 1st April to 30st June 2021
2. Note receipts received between 1st April to 30st June 2021
3. Approval of first quarter interim financial statements
4. Approval of website pack interim paperwork for website

8. PAYMENTS MADE

The Committee received the latest schedule of payments.

RESOLVED: That payments made between 1st April and 30th June 2021 be approved.

9. PAYMENTS AUTHORISED BY THE ACTING CLERK

The Committee received a list of payments approved by the Acting Clerk between meetings of the Committee.

RESOLVED: That the payments made by the Acting Clerk between meetings of the Committee be noted.

10. VEXATIOUS PERSON POLICY

The Committee considered a draft of the policy covering vexatious, unreasonable and persistent enquiries to the Council.

RESOLVED: The Committee agreed to the following actions.

1. To set up a Working Group to examine the policy and to ensure that the Group reflects the political balance of the Council
2. To speak to all relevant bodies covering town and parish councils, including Ellis Whittam and to bring a revised policy to the next meeting of the Committee

11. DATA PROTECTION

This item was considered without the public and press present as per agenda item 5.

The Committee considered a report from the Council's Data Protection Officer relating to potential data protection issues.

RESOLVED: That the DPO's report be accepted and approved and that the necessary mitigating actions are implemented. These are

- Councillors will be informed that Council emails, or extracts of emails, containing personal information must not be published.
- All Councillors will be asked to review and refresh their knowledge of the Council's data protection policies.
- The Council will review any complaint letter from the data subject and determine a response within the time limit specified by the complainant.
- New Councillors will receive data protection information in their induction pack and all data protection policies will be freely available. The Council will also review whether all Councillors should also be offered formal data protection training

12. GRANT APPLICATIONS [FINANCE]

The Committee considered a number of grant applications these are listed below.

12.1 Sandbach Police

An application was made for a grant of £600 to purchase purse bells and card reader covers.

RESOLVED: That the application be approved.

12.2 Sandbach Woodland and Wildlife Group

An application was made for a grant of £5,500 split over three years to fund a number of projects.

RESOLVED: That the application be approved, with a focus on access issues.

12.3 Sandbach Transport Festival

An application was made for a grant of £12,000 to help deliver the 2022. It was noted that there had been changes to the Festival Committee and Members were asked to defer a decision on the application.

RESOLVED: That the Festival Committee be asked to submit a new application which will be considered at the next meeting of the FPG Committee.

12.4 SANDBACH ARTS SOCIETY

An application was made for a grant of £200 to help establish the society by enabling the opening exhibition to be affordable to as many exhibitors as possible.

RESOLVED: That the application be approved.

12.5 FRIENDS OF SANDBACH STATION

Note – Cllr R Hovey did not take part in the decision on this item.

An application was made for a grant of £1,400 to install original signs at Sandbach Station.

RESOLVED: That the application be approved.

12.6 SANDBACH CONCERT SERIES

Note – Cllrs R Hovey and G Merry did not take part in the decision on this item.

An application was made for a grant of £3,500 to help with the running of Sandbach Concert Series.

RESOLVED: That the application be approved.

13. SUPPLIER INVOICES [FINANCE]

The following invoice was presented to Members for approval.

13.1 ZURICH INSURANCE

The Committee considered an invoice for £5,430.38 to pay for the Town Council's insurance policy for 2021/22.

RESOLVED: The Committee approved payment of this invoice.

14. UNDISCHARGED FUNCTIONS

The Committee considered the following undischarged items.

- Bank Balances – to review the cashflow position prior to any decision about movement of funds between bank accounts
- Equality Policy – to review the roll-out and implementation of the Policy
- Pensions Discretion Policy – to review the existing policy and present to the next meeting of the Committee

RESOLVED: That these matters be delegated to the Acting Town Clerk for action.

15. LETTERS OF THANKS

There were no letters of thanks presented to the Committee.

16. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence for the Committee to consider.

17. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

The Committee agreed the following items for the next meeting of the Committee.

- Pensions Discretion Policy – review
- Equality Policy – implementation
- Bank Balances – review of cashflow
- Water Invoice – update
- Vexatious Persons Policy – update
- Grants – Transport Festival

18. DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 17th November 2021 at 7pm , Sandbach Town Hall.

The meeting closed at 8.32pm
A Smith, Chairman
MB