



SANDBACH TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

Minutes for the meeting held on Wednesday, 21st **September 2022**
at **7.00pm** in **Sandbach Town Hall**.

PART 1 : ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Opening Reflections – one minute's silence was held to pay the Council's respects following the passing of the Monarch.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received for Councillors M Muldoon (personal), N Adams (personal), A Smith (personal). Councillor P Eaton was absent without apology.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Non pecuniary interests were declared as follows: Cllr A Nevitt item 26.2; Cllr S Corcoran items 28.1, 28.2; Cllr N Cook item 17; Cllr G Merry items 13.4, 20; Cllr R Hovey items 26.2, 29.1.

3. MAYOR'S COMMENTS

The Mayor updated Council on her recent major events including the excellent Pride event, funded mainly through a grant from the Council, and the historic proclamation of King Charles III led by the Sandbach Town Council Mayor, following the Cheshire East proclamation held on the same day. The Mayor paid tribute to the large number of people who attended at short notice and noted what an honour it was to be part of such a significant event.

The Mayor confirmed, for the avoidance of doubt, that members were not entitled to attend officer / operational meetings unless specifically invited by the lead officer.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The meeting was adjourned to allow questions relating to items on this Agenda from members of the public.

A member of the public spoke in favour of the development of a Skate Park in the town and suggested that local schools should be consulted. It was noted that this was being progressed by an STC Working Group and that the member of the public would be contacted regarding the engagement process.

A member of the public referred to items 15 and 23 and asked what reassurance she would be offered to members of the public for inappropriate behavior from Council members. It was noted that this would be dealt with by correspondence.

The Mayor reconvened the meeting.

4. PETITION TO BAN SCHOOL UNIFORMS IN SEX SHOPS AND PORNOGRAPHY

Lead: The Mayor

Resolved: To defer this item to a future meeting when the school children could attend - to commend and support the impressive work undertaken by Sandbach High School students who have raised a petition for Government to Ban School Uniforms in Sex Shops and Pornography.

5. CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL SANDBACH MATTERS – CLLR MIKE BENSON

An update was provided on Cheshire East Council Sandbach Matters - Review of cemeteries; Electric car free day; Cycle lanes; Planning application developments. Detailed report available on request.

6. THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 8 JUNE [ATTACHED] WERE APPROVED.

All Minutes for Agenda items 7 – 12 can be viewed via Sandbach Town Council website: <https://sandbach.gov.uk/public-meetings-2022-2023/>

7. THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING & CONSULTATION COMMITTEE HELD ON 6 JUNE, 27 JUNE, 18 JULY, 8 AUGUST AND 30 AUGUST 2022 (DRAFT) WERE NOTED.

8. THE MINUTES OF THE FINANCE, POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 4 AUGUST 2022 (DRAFT) WERE NOTED

9. THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17 AUGUST 2022 (DRAFT) WERE NOTED.

10. THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EVENTS SUB- COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 22 JUNE AND 11 AUGUST 2022 (DRAFT) WERE NOTED.

11. THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ASSETS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD ON 10 AUGUST 2022 (DRAFT) WERE NOTED.

12. THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SMALL COMMON REDEVELOPMENT SUB COMMITTEE HELD ON 26 JULY 2022 (DRAFT) WERE NOTED

13. MATTERS ARISING FROM COMMITTEE MEETINGS

13.1 Planning and Consultation Committee

Letters and response regarding Abbeyfields and Patrons Drive, Sandbach

[Attached: Letters]

Lead: Planning and Consultation Committee Chair

Resolved: *The letters and response were noted.*

13.2 Planning and Consultation Committee

CEC Highways Priorities

[Attached: List of priorities submitted to CEC]

Lead: Planning and Consultation Committee Chair

Resolved: *The priorities submitted following consultation with all Councillors via email were noted and agreed.*

13.3 Small Common Redevelopment Sub-Committee

Small Common Project Update

[Attached: Report]

Lead: Small Common Redevelopment Sub-Committee Chair

Resolved: *That Council:*

- i. Approve the proposals contained in this report as the revised scheme;*
- ii. Approve the revised scheme cost (including professional fees) is capped at the earmarked reserve level of £204K and is reduced below that as far as possible, whilst delivering the specification;*
- iii. Request that architect to prepare a full planning application based on the approved revised scheme;*
- iv. Ensure that robust project management plans are put in place;*
- v. Authorise appropriate tendering process to be put in place in line with Council's Financial Regulations;*
- vi. Delegate the selection of the successful tender to the Small Common Sub Committee and Chief Officer in line with the Council's Financial Regulations;*
- vii. Delegate the delivery of the project and authority to spend within the agreed budget level and against the agreed specification to the Small Common Sub Committee and Chief Officer.*

13.4 Finance & Governance Committee

STC Discretionary Payment Policy Review

[Attached: Report]

Lead: Finance Committee Chair

- Resolved:** *That Council:*
- i. Confirm its strong commitment to community activities and services identified within its corporate strategy through discretionary funding;*
 - ii. Approve and adopt the Grants, Small Grants and Sponsorship policies attached to this agenda, including an amendment to the small grants draft policy that applicants DO NOT need to be independently audited;*
 - iii. Create a small grants budget through virement from the existing grants budget up to a maximum of £2,500 in the current year;*
 - iv. Confirm that the Annual Small Grants provision is determined through the budget setting process*
 - v. Confirm that sponsorship provision is determined through the budget setting process*

13.5 Finance & Governance Committee

STC Reserves Policy and Reserves Review

[Attached: Report]

Lead: Finance Committee Chair

Resolved: *That Council:*

- i. Approve the proposed review and rationalisation of current earmarked and general reserves and subsequent adjustment to the Council's Accounts;*
- ii. Agree the use of this revised reserves position as a baseline for the corporate strategy development and budget setting process;*
- iii. Approve the Policy for adoption.*

13.6 Community & Environment Committee

Diversity & Inclusion Training

Lead: Community & Environment Committee Chair

Resolved: *That Council:*

Approve the commission of training by Cheshire Halton & Warrington Race & Equality Centre at the costs of £500 plus travel expenses. To be coded to Cost centre 101 4151 (training and approve the organisation to be delegated to the Chief Officer's office.

13.7 Assets & Services Committee

Fit for Purpose Accommodation

Lead: Chair Assets & Services Committee Chair

Resolved: *That Council:*

Approve the creation and membership of a Fit for Purpose Accommodation Task and Finish Group to

produce fully researched and costed options for Council consideration by Mid 2023.

13.8 Events Sub-Committee

Festival of Light

Lead: Events Sub-Committee Chair

Council felt that although it would welcome this additional event for the town in January, it should be sensitive to the current cost of living crisis and communicate clearly that this event does not involve use of additional utilities. A press release was considered a good idea nearer the time. Council felt that a modified event not requiring road closure would be more appropriate and more affordable and was supportive of the requested allocation being reduced from £5,000 to £2,500.

Resolved : *That Council:*

- i. Approve the revised allocation of a budget of £2,500 for the Festival of light event, to be drawn from General Reserves;*
- ii. Consult with the Chief Officer regarding resource implications of delivering this new event in the Council's community programme.*

14. GOVERNANCE REVIEW

[Attached: Report]

Lead: Chief Officer

Council welcomed the opportunity to review its governance but felt that more time was required to consider the implications of the Chief Officer's recommendations given its magnitude in the context of a congested agenda.

Resolved: *That Council:*

Consider the approval of the revised standing orders based on NALC model standing orders, note the approach to policy review and note the approach to other groups addressing Council business as outlined in this report, at the next Finance, Policy and Governance Committee to make recommendations to the next Council.

15. CUSTOMER CARE, CONTACT AND COMPLAINTS POLICY (INCLUDING TREATMENT OF VEXATIOUS CONTACT)

[Attached: Draft Policy]

Lead: Chief Officer

Resolved: *That Council:*

- i. Adopt the policy;*
- ii. Delegate the setting up of an Appeals Committee (as referenced in the policy) of 5 members for the handling of complaints.*

16. RANGER SERVICE

[Attached: Report]

Lead: Chief Officer

Members were keen to ensure that direct employment would also be considered as part of the process to reinstate the Council's Ranger Service, which would be addressed by the Chief Officer as part of the process.

Resolved: *That Council:*

- i. Give delegated authority to the Chief Officer, in consultation with the Chair of personnel Committee, to continue negotiations with ANSA regarding the option of a costed service level agreement for the Council's ranger service and to commission that service;*
- ii. The cost of the service is funded from the existing staffing budget.*

17. USE OF STANDING ORDER 27 TO APPROVE EXPENDITURE FOR REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY PARADE

Lead: Chief Officer

As reported to Events Committee, due to national changes in traffic management regulations and RBL insurance requirements an increased role has emerged for the Town Council to fund and support aspects of this event in partnership with the local RBL branch. Purchase orders for a traffic management provider and sound system provider had to be placed without delay due to the demand for such services on Remembrance Sunday. Approval was also sought to increase the 2022-23 budget provision from £2,000 to £3,500 in order to meet these additional demands.

Resolved: *i) To note the usage of SO27 and ratify the decision to spend £2,530 on traffic Management and £702 on hiring of adequate sound system, and increase the 2022-23 budget provision to £3,500 from underspends elsewhere.*

ii) To approve the permanent budget increase to £3,500 per annum as part of the Council's budget setting process and supported by a Service Level Agreement to be produced by the Chief Officer.

18. ENVIRONMENTAL, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY

Lead: Chief Officer

Resolved: *To jointly appoint Cllr N Adams and Cllr S Broad as the STC Climate Change Champions to work alongside the Chief Officer to finalise the policy and implement the actions already identified within the Council's draft Corporate Strategy under objective 'A sustainable Environment,' incorporating feedback received during consultation and engaging with interested parties.*

19. COMMUNITY ACTION FUND

[Attached: Email]

Lead: Chief Officer

Resolved: *To note the launch of the Community Action Fund and contact the Chief Officer with suggested suitable projects by 30th September 2022.*

20. FODEN'S PLINTH (FUNDED BY HERITAGE FUND)

[Email circulated to members]

Lead: Chair Small Common Sub-Committee

Resolved: *To launch a small task and finish group, consisting of Cllr D Hegarty, Cllr G Merry and the Chief Officer to be given delegated authority to identify the location and oversee the implementation of the Foden's plinth within the necessary funding deadline (Mid November 2022).*

21. NHS COVID RECOGNITION

Lead: Chair Community and Environment Committee

To consider an appropriate and sensitive form of recognition for the NHS and COVID victims in Sandbach.

Resolved: *To launch a small task and finish group to make a proposal to next Council and for interested members to contact the Committee Chair.*

22. FIRST RESPONDER VEHICLE SPONSORSHIP

[Verbal update]

Lead: Chief Officer

Resolved: *To refer further actions and sponsorship award to the next Finance, Policy and Governance Committee.*

23. COMMUNITY SAFETY CHARTER

[Attached: Information on the Community Safety Charter]

Lead: Mayor

Resolved (by unanimous named vote of all members present): that:

- i. All existing Councillors sign up to the Charter;*
- ii. That all future new Councillors sign up to the Charter as part of their New Councillor Induction.*

24. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP

Lead: Mayor

Resolved: *That the Chief Officer and Cllr Crane become the Town Council Representatives of the Community Rail Partnership (first meeting 22 September 2022).*

25. CEC TOWN CENTRE VITALITY PLANS

[Slides circulated via email]

Lead: Chief Officer

Resolved: *To receive the update on the plans produced by CEC and the forthcoming consultation and note the forthcoming publication of plans by CEC.*

26. GRANT APPLICATIONS

Attached: [Two Applications]

Lead: Chair of Finance, Policy & Governance Committee

Resolved: *To approve grant applications from budget line Community Grants- 110-4530, payments to be delegated to the Finance Officer. Fund balance currently £10,440.*

26.1 SANDBACH PARK BOWLING CLUB

Application approved for a grant of £100 to supplement the prize fund for the Annual VJ competition.

26.2 FRIENDS OF SANDBACH CEMETERY

Cllr Nevitt updated Council that due to additional fund raising since the application the requested amount was reduced to £1,000. Application approved for a grant of the modified amount of £1,000 to help fund the 2022 Tree of Light.

27. NEW WEBSITE

Lead: Chief Officer

The Council's current website is becoming unfit for purpose and requires a fresh replacement which is modern, accessible, well organised and up to date. Discussions with suppliers suggest a cost of between £2,000 - £5,000.

Resolved: *that the allocation of a maximum of £5,000 from general reserves for this purpose is approved and authority delegated to the Chief Officer to procure, in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations, a suitable new website including design, build, security, maintenance, training and support.*

28. INVOICES

28.1 [Attached: Invoice from Cheshire East Council]

Lead: The Mayor

Resolved: *Approve payment of invoice amount £11,418.64 for Town Ward by-election costs (21 April 2022), to be allocated to Cost centre code 101 4136.*

28.2 [Attached: Invoice from Cheshire East Council]

Lead: The Mayor

Resolved: *Approve payment of invoice amount £6,874.01 for CCTV contributions, to be allocated to Cost centre code 101 4136.*

29. MEMBERS ITEMS

29.1 Cllr Donal Hegarty

Dementia Friendly Council

[Attached: Report]

Resolved: *That:*

- i. This Council supports the initiative;*
- ii. The Council approves setting up a task and finish group with an identified lead Councillor to Chair;*
- iii. Full Council receives a report in 3 months with proposals to become a Dementia Friendly Council.*

29.2 Cllr Ann Nevitt

Accessibility Update

Verbal update

Resolved: That

- i) the current accessibility working group is adopted by Sandbach Town Council and reports periodically to Community and Environment Committee.*
- ii) a CEC highways officer is approached to join the working group.*

29.3 Cllr David Poole

Sandbach Bins

[Attached: Report]

Resolved: *That Community and Environment Committee consider the proposals and make costed recommendations to the next Council regarding:*

- i. Purchase at least two new litter bins via ANSA. This will be a great opportunity to support our climate emergency and promote STC.*
- ii. Purchase at least 4 dog poo dispensers and purchase plastic free dog poo bags.*

29.4 Cllr David Poole

Community Garden

[Attached: Report]

Resolved: *That Community and Environment Committee oversee the proposals and the setting up of a Working Group regarding:*

- i. Enter into talks with CEC as they are the land owners.*
- ii. Provide up to £10,000 for the project and get 3 quotes for the work.*
- iii. Has a park and open spaces working group. This will enable the town to get grants from organisations such FCC Community Foundation <https://fcccommunitiesfoundation.org.uk/>*

- iv. *Purchases a dog poo dispenser for the site asap, as the temporary one provided by me is working really well. Residents have noticed a reduction in the dog poo being left on the green and I am led to believe that the dog warden can confirm that there is less waste on the field.*

**29.5 Cllr Nicola Cook
Cost of Living Crisis**

[Attached: Report]

Council welcomed the opportunity presented in this proposal to assist residents affected by the Cost of Living Crisis. It was felt that this should be done via better links and resourcing through the Connected Cheshire Group.

Resolved: that Council;

- i. *Ensure that STC assistance for residents affected by the Cost of Living Crisis is managed through the Connected Cheshire Group and that progress is clearly reported to the Community and Environment Committee as a standing item.*
- ii. *Approve delegated authority to the Chief Officer in consultation with this group to spend up to a maximum £7,500 for the assistance to residents affected by the Cost of Living Crisis through the Connected Cheshire Group from underspends within the 2022-23 budget.*

**29.6 Cllr Laura Crane
Councillor Surgeries**

[Attached: Report]

Resolved: *That Sandbach Town Council moves Councillor Surgeries to the 3rd Saturday of each month Outside the Market Hall and generally seeks to review its approach to effective engagement.*

30. CORRESPONDENCE

30.1 Foden's Society

Resolved: Email received on 27 August applying for a Blue Plaque to be placed at 22 Hill Street, CW11 3JE. Action – to raise no objection to the placing of the plaque, subject to affected residents being consulted.

31. DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Town Council Meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 14th December 2022 at 7pm in Sandbach Town Hall

32. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Action: To consider that, under the Public Bodies (admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and accredited representatives of newspaper be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

PART 2 : ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE ABSENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

33. STAFFING UPDATE

[Verbal update]

Lead: Chief Officer

Resolved: *that Council:*

- i. Note the severe pressure STC staff are currently working under due to increased workload and expectations through the continuous shrinkage of partnership provision within the town, high level of vacancies, and prolonged unjustified personal attacks from a member of the public;*
- ii. Recognise the commitment, good will and high standards of delivery which continue to be provided by STC staff, despite these circumstances;*
- iii. Approve additional and proportionate one-off payments for staff (excluding the Chief Officer) in recognition of additional hours worked and vacancy cover, delegated to the Chief Officer and Chair of Personnel Committee and funded from within the existing staffing budget underspend.*
- iv. Approve in advance the agreement of the NJC recommended pay award for all staff so that once an agreement is made this can be implemented without delay and back dated to April 2022.*

Meeting Closed at 22.03

(following Council approval to extend the meeting by 30 minutes)

Cllr Kath Flavell Mayor; CL

Audio recording available to the public within 5 working days of the meeting.