



SANDBACH TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

Minutes for the meeting held on Wednesday, 30th November 2022
at 7.00pm in Sandbach Town Hall.

PRESENT

Councillors: K Flavell (Mayor)
R Hovey
G Merry
S Corcoran
S Kirkham
A Smith
D Poole
D Hegarty
M Muldoon
G Price Jones
N Adams
R Hoffmann
N Cook
K Seymour

Also present were members of the public and press.

Opening Reflections were read by the Mayor.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies: Councillors J Beddows, L Crane, S Crane, S Broad and
A Nevitt (All personal reasons)

Absent without Apologies: Councillor P Eaton

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Corcoran

Stated that, in the interest of openness and transparency, he is leader of Cheshire East Council but he does not consider this prejudicial in relation to items on the agenda.

Cllr Flavell

Declared that she is a Cheshire East Councillor.

Cllr Hovey

Declared a personal interest in Tree of Light item.

3. MAYOR'S COMMENTS

The Mayor provided an update on events and activities attended during a very busy period following the last meeting, including opening of two new successful Indoor Market Units, the launch of the RBL Sandbach Poppy Appeal, Pub Watch radio launch, Rugby Club Christmas Market and Animal Rescue Cat Café and Christmas Fair.

Having supported Father Christmas in switching on Sandbach's Christmas Lights the Mayor extended her thanks to all involved in making the event, and the beautiful Sandbach lights display, such a success.

2nd December is the eagerly anticipated Christmas Market in Sandbach and 8th December sees a new Mayor's Event 'Carols on the Cobbles, with Foden's band'. All are invited for a community festive sing-a-long.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

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

Speaker 1

Sought support of Councillors, particularly Heath & East Councillors, in lobbying Cheshire East Council to install a crossing on The Hill, due to traffic concerns in the area. It was stated that, with the exception of St John's Primary, all other schools in Sandbach have crossings in their locality, with a total of eight on Middlewich Road.

Speaker 2

In support of Speaker 1, representing St John's Primary, referenced new housing in the vicinity of The Hill which has increased population and traffic volume but has not seen investment in local infrastructure. In a survey of school parents it was confirmed that more children would be allowed to walk to school if it were a safer route. Query was raised as to why Middlewich Road schools have numerous crossings but The Hill, an equally busy road, has none?

Speaker 3

Expressed concern at lack of crossing provision on The Hill, with high traffic levels and increased safety issues for those attempting to cross around parked cars and heavy goods vehicles.

All were thanked for taking time to attend and raise their concerns on this matter.

To assist those members of public in attendance Agenda item 17 will be brought forward on the agenda.

The Mayor reconvened the meeting.

4. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

No items.

5. CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL SANDBACH MATTERS

Cheshire East Councillor Corcoran, reported on cost of living crisis and a recent meeting attended which aims to encourage Town and Parish Councils to work

with Cheshire East for residents over winter to ensure neighbours are safe and well. He further explained various challenges impacting the Borough Council and ensuing difficulties in setting budget next year; factors which individually impact but, when combined, have larger and varied effect on the Council.

6. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 21 SEPTEMBER

Resolved: The minutes are approved as a true record of the meeting.

7. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE HELD ON 5 OCTOBER 2022 (DRAFT).

Resolved: The minutes are noted.

8. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING & CONSULTATION COMMITTEE HELD ON 31 OCTOBER AND 23 NOVEMBER 2022 (DRAFT).

Resolved: The minutes are noted.

9. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ASSETS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD ON 9 NOVEMBER 2022 (DRAFT).

Resolved: The minutes are noted.

10. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE FINANCE, POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 15 NOVEMBER 2022 (DRAFT).

Resolved: The minutes are noted.

11. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 16 NOVEMBER 2022 (DRAFT).

Resolved: The minutes are noted.

At this point of the meeting, agenda item 17 was brought forward to assist the Members of Public in attendance.

17. THE HILL CROSSING CAMPAIGN

Cllr Muldoon introduced the item, which was included on the agenda at his request, and Members provided their personal observations on the requirement for a crossing on the Hill, including query of specific support needed and details of previous assessments from Cheshire East Council. Query was also raised as to whether the earlier review had ascertained suitability of space for a crossing in the locality proposed. If unsuitable, alternative such as crossing person may be needed. It was suggested that priority of s106 spend for Persimmon development could be the required improvements on Sandbach Heath. The Mayor confirmed the area expansion in 5 years since the previous study was undertaken, earlier s106 schemes which have delivered crossings and allocated funds for local infrastructure changes.

The School representative and Resident were asked to email the Chief Officer with their information to assist in preparation of comment from the Council.

Resolved: Town Council supports the addition of a pedestrian crossing on The Hill and, via Planning Committee, writes to CEC to voice its support and raise queries highlighted.

12. MATTERS ARISING FROM COMMITTEE MEETINGS

12.1 Planning and Consultation Committee (23 Nov 2022)

12.1A Response regarding Town Centre Vitality Plan (TCVP)

Consultations (Item 5.3)

[Circulated: 12.1a Sandbach TCVP Consultation Draft;
12.1b TCVP STC Response 2022]

Resolved: The response is noted with no further comments.

12.1B Cemeteries consultation

Chair of Planning spoke to the circulated Planning Committee response and highlighted that this was not a consultation to feed into draft strategy, but opportunity for CEC to gather information from interested parties for future review of the strategy.

All in attendance were reminded that the consultation remains open and that it is important that everyone has their say.

Resolved: The Cemetery Consultation response is approved for submission on behalf of the Council.

12.2 Finance, Policy and Governance Committee (15 Nov 2022 Item 6) Governance Review

[Circulated: 12.2a Full Council Governance Review;
12.2b Revised Standing Orders, based on NALC model]

The Chair of Finance, Policy and Governance Committee thanked the Chief Officer for all her work on the compliance review and advised that the revisions were unanimously supported when considered at the recent Finance, Policy and Governance Committee meeting.

Resolved: That:-

- i) The revised standing orders, based on NALC model document, are approved;
- ii) The policy review approach is noted;
- iii) The approach to other groups addressing Council business, as outlined in the circulated report, is endorsed.

13. 2023-2024 BUDGET

[Circulated: 13a 23/24 Budget Report, 13b Draft Budget 23/24 Appendix 1, 13c Reserves Summary 2023-24 Appendix 2 and 13d Predicted Outturn 2022-23 Appendix 3]

The Chief Officer detailed process followed in reaching draft budget presented to the meeting and requirement for Cheshire East precept request deadlines to be met. The previous Finance, Policy and Governance Committee meeting, to which all members were invited to vote/participate on budget discussion, agreed the following:-

- 2023-24 net expenditure level as £748,290;
- Use of general reserves of £15,910, which adheres to the Council's Reserves Policy;
- Precept level as £732,380 and Council Tax (Band D) to be retained at £82.69, subject to final confirmation of the taxbase

Resolved: That, in accordance with recommendations of Finance, Policy and Governance Committee detailed above, that:-

- i) The 2023-24 net expenditure level is approved;
- ii) Use of general reserves is approved, whilst adhering to the Council's Reserves Policy;

- iii) Precept level and Council Tax (Band D) is approved.

14. CORONATION EVENT

In order to proceed with event planning for the Coronation Members briefly discussed preferred meeting route for discussion and initial costing reviews.

Resolved: That the Events Sub Committee are asked to hold a meeting in January 2023 to form proposals relating to a Coronation event.

15. VIMIERA PRJOECT

[Circulated: Proposal Report]

Detail of the Vimiera ship relevance for Sandbach and the Staff Member's hard work and research, since discovering the plaque, was received and plans for an unveiling event were detailed.

The Staff Member was thanked for their fascinating information and significant efforts in driving forward and delivering on this proposal.

Resolved: That:-

- i) Work undertaken to revive the memorial plaque is noted;
- ii) The proposal to produce a commemorative list and host an unveiling event, 9 January 2023, subject to the necessary authorisations, at a maximum cost of £250 (charged to budget code 101/4670 - New Projects) is approved.

16. TOWN HALL PHONE BOX RENOVATION

The Town Council recently adopted the Phone Box located outside the Town Hall. It is proposed to refurbish the box and make it an attractive feature in the town centre under the Chief Officer's delegated authority. Due to vandalism of defibrillators in Council's ownership outside the Market Store, it was not felt appropriate to install another unit within the phone box.

Resolved: That the refurbishment of the Phone Box, at the total cost of £215 (+VAT). (charged to budget code 101 / 4670 new projects.)

17. CROSSING ON THE HILL

(Considered following Item 11, above)

19. FIRST INTERIM AUDIT & MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

The Council receives three independent internal audits per year and Members received copies of the first 2022/23 Interim Internal Audit report and Management response which demonstrate significant progress made in addressing issues which the Council faced last year. The management response column highlights current and previous action being taken to achieve continuous improvement in the Council's financial and democratic processes. The significant work of the Finance Officer and all staff involved, in clearing previously raised issues, was praised.

Resolved: The Council's first interim audit report and the management action is noted.

20. TREE OF LIGHT GRANT APPLICATION UPDATE

Members were advised that, due to such successful fundraising efforts of the Tree of Light 2022 event organisers, the Sandbach Town Council grant cheque for £1,000 is to be returned to the Council. Thanks were extended to the group.

21. WRITE OFFS AND FINANCE REPORTS

A payment of £838.30 was made on 2 July 2021 to a miscoded bank account. In consultation with the auditor it is proposed that this amount should now be written off. Systems are in place to avoid risk of reoccurrence.

Resolved: That the write off of £838.30 is approved.

22. SO27 URGENCY POWERS

[Circulated: 21a Blitz Sales Invoice SI-930 £11,976;
21b Biltz Sales Invoice SI-932 £27,872.40;
21c Calbarrie Compliance Services – Invoice 166653 £3,184.20;
21d PKF Littlejohn LLP Inv SB20223127 £1,920]

Resolved: The payments detailed above made under urgency powers, within the Town Council Standing Orders, are ratified.

23. INVOICES

[Circulated: Ansa Invoice 11700104471]

Resolved: The payment of invoice 11700104471 for £7,200 is approved and to be allocated to cost centre code 110/4503.

24. MEMBERS ITEMS

24.1 Feedback to Robinsons Brewery

Cllr Beddows.

Could STC write to Robinsons Brewery enquiring about possible plans for the Saxon Grill (formerly the Crown) and the Swan & Chequers public houses.

In the absence of Cllr Beddows, the details of concerns referenced by a member of public at a recent Councillor Surgery were confirmed, which echo those raised within the Members item.

Resolved: That the Town Council raise above concerns with Robinson's Brewery, delegated to the Chief Officer's Office

25. CORRESPONDENCE

None.

26. 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 (Ballroom).

Meeting Closed 8:42pm
Cllr K Flavell (Mayor)

CL