

SANDBACH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Sandbach Town Council Meeting held on Wednesday, 8th June 2022 at 7pm in Sandbach Town Hall

PRESENT

Councillors: K Flavell (Mayor)
R Hovey (Deputy Mayor)
L Crane
D Hegarty
N Cook
A Smith
G Merry (left 8:45pm)
D Poole (left 9:15pm)
S Corcoran
P Eaton
M Muldoon
S Kirkham
G Price Jones
A Nevitt
S Broad
J Beddows
S Crane (left 8:45pm)

Also present were the Locum Town Clerk, Assistant Town Clerk and twelve members of the public and press.

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

Opening Reflections read by Cllr L Crane.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors: R Hoffmann (personal reason for absence)
N Adams (personal reason for absence)
K Seymour (personal reason for absence)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Corcoran

In the interest of openness and transparency, declared that he is the Leader of Cheshire East Council but does not see this as prejudicial in respect of any items on the agenda.

Cllrs L Crane & K Flavell

Declared that they are both Cheshire East Councillors

Cllr G Price Jones

Confirmed that he is the external representative to the Transport Festival Committee.

Cllr Beddows

During discussion of agenda item 13.3 Cllr Beddows declared an interest and did not comment or vote.

3. MAYORS COMMENTS

In a very busy start to her year as Mayor, Cllr Flavell detailed the many Jubilee events and activities attended, visits made to meet the Market Traders and confirmed plans for a celebratory Afternoon Tea which will take place in lieu of a Civic Parade and Service.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

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

Speaker 1

Having had involvement with Sandbach Partnership Forum, as a Community Volunteer Group Member, referenced concern regarding the accounts presented at the Partnership AGM and unanswered queries raised at Forum meetings relating to income and expenditure details. The speaker asked that, as STC are funding providers, are they looking into the matters raised?

The speaker was thanked for raising the issues and comments.

Speaker 2

Speaking in reference to the Transport Festival agenda item, thanked the Council for funding support and confirmed the volunteer time and goodwill involved in organising the large event; paying tribute to the new committee members who go above and beyond in their support.

Having received many positive and encouraging comments following the event, ahead of the 2023 festival – the thirtieth Transport Festival to be held in Sandbach - the Committee will look at various improvements, such as reducing Saturday road closures and bringing events into the park and are seeking confirmation of Council funding availability to aid planning processes.

The speaker was thanked for comments and the Meeting was reconvened.

The Mayor confirmed that agenda item 22 would be considered immediately following item 14, for the benefit of members of public in attendance.

4. CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL SANDBACH MATTERS – CLLR KATHRYN FLAVELL

Cllr Flavell drew Members' attention to the adoption of Community Governance Review Boundary Change which will impact Sandbach Town Council's boundaries and advised that a Central Government review of Cheshire East Boundaries will take place in due course.

Details of several CEC consultations, which are all available on the Borough Council website, were mentioned including Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment and Childrens Centre Satisfaction Survey.

Confirmation of £17 million in additional Highways investment will mean more roadworks, in order to undertake the necessary improvements and, in the

Elworth Ward, during summer holidays, a planned crossing on Middlewich road is scheduled to be installed and Cllr Flavell continues to support the residents in addressing parking issues on New Street.

Query was raised regarding safety of the remaining cycle lane discs on Old Middlewich Road.

Request for signage will be referred on to CEC.

5. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 6 APRIL AND 18 MAY [ATTACHED].

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

6. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING & CONSULTATION COMMITTEE HELD ON 19 APRIL AND 11 MAY 2022 (DRAFT).

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting are noted.

7. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE HELD ON 25 MAY 2022 (DRAFT).

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting are noted.

8. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE FINANCE, POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 27 APRIL 2022 (DRAFT).

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting are noted.

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

10. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EVENTS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 29 MARCH AND 3 MAY 2022 (DRAFT).

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting are noted.

11. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ASSETS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD ON 23RD FEBRUARY AND 26 APRIL 2022 (DRAFT).

Punctuation amendment is required to the 23rd February to clarify cost.

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting are noted, subject to amendment above.

12. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SMALL COMMON REDEVELOPMENT SUB COMMITTEE HELD ON 9 MARCH AND 30 MAY 2022 (DRAFT).

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting are noted.

13. MATTERS ARISING FROM COMMITTEE MEETINGS

**13.1 Planning and Consultation Committee
Highways Winter Maintenance Top up Scheme
[Attached: Information from CEC Highways]**

Members noted the verbal update from the Chair of Planning and Consultation Committee and that further information will be received in due course, for 2023-24 budget considerations.

13.2 Assets & Services Committee

Selection of a Market Tested Provider of External Skills

Lead: Assets and Services Committee Chair

Resolved: That the selection and formation of a list of market tested skilled external providers is approved and delegated to the Locum Town Clerk, with update to Assets and Services in due course.

13.3 Assets & Services Committee

Markets Fees and Charges update

During review of this agenda item Cllr Beddows declared an interest in and did not participate in discussions or voting.

[Attached: Report Presented to A&S 26 April 2022]

Lead: Assets and Services Committee Chair

Resolved: that Council ratifies the Assets and Services resolutions (as below) from the meeting of 23 April 2022:

- i) The refund policy to be retained and amended to impose a £50 limit for any compensation paid by the Council in all circumstances;
- ii) The proposed increase to fees and charges, as shown at Appendix A to this report, are approved and introduced wef 1 June 2022 to allow the necessary notice period

13.4 Finance, Policy & Governance Committee

Dignity at Work Policy

[Attached: Updated policy]

Lead: Finance, Policy & Governance Committee Chair

The Chair of Finance expressed her thanks to those involved with the review of the policy and confirmed that Council's HR advisor, WorkNest, are happy with the draft presented.

Resolved: The Dignity at Work Policy is adopted.

13.5 Small Common Refurbishment Sub-Committee

Small Common Project Update

[Attached: Report]

Lead: Small Common Sub-Committee Chair

The Chair of Small Common Sub Committee provided verbal update on the recent group meeting and outcomes of the public engagement, which had been considered during discussions and in forming in the sub-Committee recommendations presented within the agenda pack.

Resolved: That:-

- i. The Council supports the outcome of the public engagement exercise;
- ii. That a modified public space design is developed to include public feedback and Sub-Committee

- suggestions in particular with regard to the inclusion of disability and environmentally friendly features and the removal of the glider canopy;
- iii. That the revised design is fully costed to ensure affordability;
 - v. Revised costed plans are brought back to Council for sign off pre-planning application stage.

14. SANDBACH TRANSPORT FESTIVAL

[Attached: Report]

Lead: Locum Town Clerk

Members debated the running of the festival event, including queries on sum requested, availability of additional funding options and value to the Town in holding Saturday event. There was also concern raised at the lack of reference to and promotion of the Town Council as key sponsor within the festival's marketing, which it was hoped could be addressed and improved by the Committee.

Due to highlighted practical issues in regard to availability of gazebos and Council staff it was requested that this aspect of the proposal be delegated to the Clerk's Office to liaise with the Festival organiser.

It was confirmed that without the new level of funding from STC the event will not go ahead and that, as funds are capped, the whole amount may not be required if other income can be sourced and balance will therefore be returned. Volunteers were thanked for all their time to organise and run the event.

Resolved: That:-

- i) delivery of a successful Transport Festival in 2022 is noted;
- ii) the request, in the interests of more sustainable working partnership, of a rolling 3 year budget, reviewable every 3 years is approved;
- iii) the request is approved for this 3 year figure to be capped at £18,000 per year and that any additional funding generated by the Festival is returned to the Council each year;
- iv) the proposal is approved that the increase in contribution is funded by the cumulative underspend of £19,000 against the Transport Festival budget, since the first cancelled festival in 2020, and therefore increase the provision in 2022-23 by £6,000 to £18,000, and this figure is submitted to the Council's budget setting exercise.
- v) Council delegates to the Town Clerk to make decisions as to the use of STC gazebos and casual staff for the 2 day Festival, at a cost to the Festival budget.

At this point of the meeting agenda item 22.1 was considered.

15. GRANT APPLICATIONS

Attached: [Three Applications]

Lead: Chair of Finance, Policy & Governance Committee

During discussion of the applications it was noted that there can be delays between meetings in review and award of grants to community groups and, as such, a smaller grant award could be delegated to the Town Clerk. This will be passed to Finance Committee for consideration.

15.1 SANDBACH PRIDE

They have applied for a grant of £3,500 to assist in the establishment and running of the 2022 Sandbach Pride.

An amendment was proposed to reduce this award to £1,500. There was no seconder to the amendment.

Resolved: The grant of £3,500 is approved from budget line Community Grants- 110-4350, payments to be delegated to the Finance Officer.

15.2 CHESHIRE ARTS FOR HEALTH

They have applied for a grant of £6,000 to setup and run two after school mental wellbeing groups for children aged 8-13 years and young people aged 14-18 years.

Resolved: The grant of £6,000 is approved from budget line Community Grants- 110-4350, payments to be delegated to the Finance Officer.

15.3 FRIENDS OF SANDBACH STATION

They have applied for a grant of £210 to purchase and install anti vandalism Perspex on waiting room artwork and to pay for labour to repaint damaged artwork.

Resolved: The grant for the full project amount of £280 is awarded from budget line Community Grants, 110 4350, payment delegated to the Finance Officer.

16. DRAFT CORPORATE STRATEGY AND CAPITAL ASSET DEVELOPMENT

[Attached: Report]

The Locum Clerk introduced the item and reported on public consultation response and the circulated report.

Resolved: That:-

- i) Feedback to the Draft Corporate Strategy is noted;
- ii) The capital asset development approach is endorsed;
- iii) Next steps recommended within the report are agreed;
- iv) The establishment of a Corporate Strategy Task and Finish Group is agreed, comprising of Committee Chairs (Vice Chairs as substitutes where necessary), the Mayor, Cllrs Adams and Eaton and the Town Clerk (supported by other STC officers, as appropriate).

17. HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY DOCUMENTS

[H&S Policy Manual and H&S Handbook supplied to Members via email due to document size]

Lead: Locum Town Clerk

Resolved: The Health and Safety Policy Manual and Handbook are approved for adoption.

18. FINANCE MATTERS

Lead: Chair of Finance, Policy & Governance Committee

18.1 Annual Audit 2022-23

Internal Audit

[Attached: Internal Audit]

Resolved: That the Internal Audit is received comments noted.

18.2 External Audit – Annual Governance and Accounting Return (AGAR)

[Attached: AGAR]

The Locum Clerk consulted Members in review and completion of section one of the Annual Governance Statement 2021/22, with all relevant sections (1-8) agreed

Resolved: That:-

- i. Section one of the Annual Governance Statement is duly completed and the return approved.
- ii. Council accept the responses given are a true record that, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2022.

18.3 Final Accounts – Income write off

Following the production of final accounts, the Council's external accountant has advised that the balance for deposits held in the year-end balance sheet is £13,326.10 which exceeds the analysis of deposits held for events at £9,815.60, and recommends that the balance of £3,510.50 is written off to the Town Hall income code. This difference related to items such as deposits not converted into payments for invoices and deposits for events cancelled by the customer who has then forfeited the non-refundable deposit. The Internal Auditor has recommended procedures for timely reconciliation of deposits which will be adopted with immediate effect. The effect of this write off will be to increase Town Hall Income by £3,510.

Resolved: That:-

- i) Council approves £3,510.50 to be written off to budget line Town Hall Hire Fees code 6000;
- ii) It is noted that regular reconciliation of deposits will be undertaken with immediate effect, as recommended in the year end internal audit.

19. TOWN HALL REINSTATEMENT VALUATION INSURANCE IMPACT

[Attached: Report]

Lead: Locum Town Clerk

Resolved: That:-

- i) The Reinstatement Valuation of £5,000,000 is accepted
- ii) Payment of additional cost to renewal of £541.97 is approved and allocated to 101 4120 (Insurance).
- iii) Payment of renewal premium of £8,067.96 for insurance cover from 16th July 2022 – 17th July 2023 is approved and payment allocated to 101 4120 (Insurance).
- iv) the increased premium for budget setting 2023-2024 is noted.

20. CHRISTMAS MARKET OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

[Attached: Quote]

Lead: Locum Town Clerk

Resolved: That quote SQ-9 (£11,976 including vat) for Operational Support at Sandbach Christmas Market 2022 is approved.

21. INVOICES

21.1 [Attached: Invoice from ChALC]

Lead: The Mayor

Resolved: invoice 2022/033 is approved for payment of £7,948.85 to ChALC and allocated to Cost centre code 101 4850.

21.2 [Attached: Invoice from Hipswing]

Lead: The Mayor

Query was raised as to why this amount is payable, in full, in advance of the event. This will be investigated and reported back to Council.

Resolved: that payment of invoice INV-13283 is approved for the sum of £4,295.03 for provision of Staging, Sound and Lighting at the Party in the Park, to be allocated to Cost centre code 140 4820.

22. MEMBERS ITEMS

22.1 **Cllr Ann Nevitt**

Accessibility Walkabout

This item was considered immediately following agenda item 14, for the benefit of public in attendance.

Having been alerted by a Sandbach resident to issues they faced in travelling through Town with a mobility aid and, to continue the excellent work of Grassroots Disability, a group of residents and Councillors joined together and commenced a review of Sandbach's accessibility.

A report of feedback from these visits was circulated with the Council agenda and informs of numerous concerns and issues in the areas visited and further review is planned on Saturday, to which all are invited.

It was suggested that an action plan be formed from the visits and feedback, which can then be reviewed with relevant organisations in terms of improvement or revision feasibility.

The work and report was commended as an excellent example of residents working together with Council.

The report was noted.

23. CORRESPONDENCE

23.1 Union Street Residents

Email received on 5 April 2022 highlighting issues currently being experienced by residents on Union Street.

During discussion on the issues raised it was confirmed that a Ward Councillor is visiting the group over coming days.

An appeal was made for residents to park courteously in the vicinity and for assistance in solving issues of large vehicles travelling on Union Street, which is a dead end road.

It was suggested that the Housing Management Company improve parking signage and that Union Street signage is also enhanced and that STC writes to the Air Cadets group towards end of the year and darker months, regarding issued raised.

Resolved: Correspondence is received.

23.2 Cheshire East Council

Email received on 6 May 2022 concerning The Community Governance review carried out by Cheshire East Council.

Correspondence is noted.

23.3 ZZoomm

Email received on 6 May 2022 concerning Full Fibre Broadband installation in Sandbach.

An invite to meet with the Planning and Consultation committee be extended to Zzoomm to discuss the plans.

23.4 NWAS First Responder

Email received on 17 May 2022 concerning a request for sponsorship for the local First Responder vehicle.

Information from neighbouring Town Councils, detailing the levels of support provided, be obtained and reported to next meeting.

24. DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

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

25. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Resolved: that items 26.1 and 26.2 be considered in the absence of public and press, under the Public Bodies (admission to Meetings) Act 1960 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

26. MATTERS ARISING FROM COMMITTEE MEETINGS

26.1 Personnel Committee

Staffing Update

[Attached: Structure to be tabled at the meeting due to confidentiality]

Lead: Personnel Committee Chair

Resolved: That the structure is approved and its implementation delegated to the (Locum) Town Clerk subject to:

- a) Final consultation with Council staff;
- b) Advice on the appropriate HR processes from the Council's HR adviser WorkNest;
- c) Liaison with the Personnel Committee Chair to approve amended/new job descriptions for the roles outlined within the new structure.

26.2 Personnel Committee

Town Clerk Replacement

[Attached: Documents to be tabled at the meeting due to confidentiality]

Lead: Personnel Committee Chair

An addition to the Town Clerk Job Description was proposed. This was seconded and carried.

Resolved: That Council approves:

- i) The revised job description for the role of Town Clerk (subject to amendment above);
- ii) The revised job title of Chief Officer;
- iii) That the current Locum Town Clerk is offered a 2 year fixed term contract on the current negotiated terms to undertake the main responsibilities within the agreed job description for the Council's Chief Officer.

Meeting closed 9.38pm
Cllr K Flavell, Town Mayor

KP