

SANDBACH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Sandbach Town Council Meeting held on Wednesday, 6 April 2022 at 7pm in Sandbach Town Hall

PRESENT Councillors: G Price Jones (Mayor)
L Crane
S Broad
R Hovey
A Smith
N Adams
J Beddows
M Muldoon
D Hegarty
S Corcoran
S Crane
G Merry
S Kirkham
R Hoffman
K Seymour

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

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs: K Flavell
A Nevitt

Absent without apologies: P Eaton

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs L Crane and S Corcoran declared a non pecuniary interest in item 19 – Cheshire East Election Invoices.

3. MAYOR'S COMMENTS

The Mayor outlined recent activities in particular the CEC event in support of Ukraine; Pride of Cheshire Awards; Re-opening of a local public house and

the recent Town Meeting. The Mayor thanked all those who had contributed to the Town Meeting and made it such a successful and informative event.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The meeting was adjourned to allow presentations and questions from members of the press and public in attendance.

A presentation was received from the Chief Executive of Sandbach United Football Club and the Chair of the Sandbach Transport Festival Committee. There were no questions from members of the public or press.

The meeting was reconvened.

4. CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL SANDBACH MATTERS – CLLR SAM CORCORAN

Cllr Corcoran raised the following items relevant to Sandbach and Sandbach Town Council.

To support the bid to install lifts at Sandbach Railway Station; to support the bid for Crewe to be the location for Great British Rail HQ and engage in the public vote; to note the Wheelock ByPass will be disrupted 11-15 April for essential maintenance; to note the roll out of CEC £7m road maintenance programme with details available on the CEC website; to note and engage with CEC upcoming Climate Change consultation events; to note and engage with CEC Dementia Strategy consultation; to note road closure service for Jubilee events will be free of charge; to note with regret that the £57m bid for improved Cheshire East bus services had been unsuccessful and that no additional government funding had been allocated, resulting in potential service reduction.

5. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 14 MARCH

Resolved: the minutes were approved

6. THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING & CONSULTATION COMMITTEE HELD ON 7 MARCH AND 28 MARCH 2022 (DRAFT) WERE NOTED.

7. THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE HELD ON 31 MARCH 2022 (DRAFT) WERE NOTED.

8. THE MINUTES OF THE FINANCE, POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 2 FEBRUARY 2022 (DRAFT) WERE NOTED.

9. **THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 2 MARCH 2022 (DRAFT) WERE NOTED.**
10. **THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EVENTS SUB- COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 16 FEBRUARY 2022 (DRAFT) WERE NOTED.**
11. **NO MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ASSETS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE WERE NOTED AS NO MEETING HELD.**
12. **THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SMALL COMMON REDEVELOPMENT SUB COMMITTEE HELD ON 23 FEBRUARY 2022 (DRAFT) WERE NOTED.**
13. **MATTERS ARISING FROM COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

There were none.

14. LOCAL HIGH STREET

This item was deferred to a future meeting as the presentation had been cancelled at short notice due to illness.

15. TRANSPORT FESTIVAL FUNDING

Lead: The Mayor / Locum Clerk

The Chair of the Transport Festival Committee was thanked for his presentation which had outlined the challenges the Committee had faced to ensure the Transport Festival could go ahead this year. Council were informed of the actions to reduce costs where possible but also of some unexpected increases - for eg. the national requirement which now prevents volunteer input for road closures. Council were supportive that the 2 day event went ahead as scheduled with a more affordable Town Council contribution.

Resolved:

- i. Council **APPROVED** the revised grant application of £5,000 to be funded from the 2021-22 underspent Transport Festival budget
- ii. The unspent TF budget be considered for future sponsorship/grant applications which support the Council's corporate strategy
- iii. The Transport Festival Committee and STC work together to determine an effective and sustainable partnership to deliver future affordable festivals and bring proposals to a future Council meeting.

16. SANDBACH SPORTS ORGANISATION SPONSORSHIP

Lead: The Mayor

The Mayor thanked the Chief Executive of SUFC for his presentation which outlined the various diverse and inclusive activities of the Club for the Sandbach community. The Mayor emphasised his aspiration of longer term reciprocal arrangements with local sporting organisations as a mechanism not only to support those organisations but also to establish the Town Council as an active and engaged partner across the community. There was general support for this principle across a wide range of local organisations, but Council were reluctant to commit specific resources until the financial position of the Council was clarified following the closure of the 2021-22 accounts later in the year. An amendment to the recommendation was proposed, seconded and agreed.

Resolved: Council agreed in principle to longer term more sustainable funding through sponsorship for local organisations providing services and activities which are consistent with the draft corporate strategy, and that this should be delegated to Finance and Governance Committee for further exploration and recommendations to Council at a future meeting.

17. SANDBACH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REFRESH UPDATE

Lead: Cllr Kirkham (chair of the Town Council's Neighbourhood Plan Working Group)

Cllr Kirkham noted the sizable achievement to have completed Phase 1 and 2 of the NDP. He stated that this would not have been possible without the significant contributions of John Minshull, Terry Marshall and Peter Stanier.

He also stated that there was a major exercise ahead in Stage 3 and encouraged Council members to help with this work.

18. HANGING BASKETS

Lead: Locum Town Clerk

Council had been notified that proposed cost of flower arrangements across the town was £11,711. This would provide 125 baskets, 9 cauldrons, 2 large planters, and 6 haymangers. It was noted that this cost had increased significantly from previous years due mainly to increase in wages and that the cost related mostly to maintenance and watering of the displays consistently across the season. It was noted that this should be factored into the Council's budget setting process for future years.

Resolved: to **APPROVE** the cost of hanging baskets and floral displays at a cost of £11,711.

19. CHESHIRE EAST ELECTION INVOICES

Lead: The Mayor

Resolved:

- i. Payment of invoice totalling £16900.89 **APPROVED** for Election costs for Ettiley Heath and Wheelock Ward and Town Ward by-elections held on 7 October 2021. Payment to be allocated to budget code 101 4136 (Election costs) and delegated to the Town Clerk's Office.
- ii. Payment of invoice totalling £10394.57 **APPROVED** for Election costs for Elworth Ward by-election held on 27 January 2022. Payment to be allocated to budget code 101 4136 (Election costs) and delegated to the Town Clerk's Office.
- iii. NOTED that Sandbach Town Council has no discretion with regard to the holding and cost of elections.

20. SECOND INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2021–22

Lead: Locum Town Clerk

It was noted that the second audit for the year was a vast improvement on the first following a period of disruption and staff absence during last year. The Clerk thanked the Council's Finance Officer and Assistant Town Clerk for their hard work in ensuring the Council's financial processes were well managed.

Resolved:

- i. The 2021-22 Second Interim Internal Audit Report is received
- ii. Progress by the Council's Finance Officer, supported by the ATC is acknowledged
- iii. Management responses for the historic recommendations are noted.

21. LIST OF PAYMENTS

Lead: Locum Town Clerk

Resolved: *To:*

- i. *Approve the Petty Cash List of payments made between 1/4/2021-31/3/2022.*
- ii. *Approve the Credit Card List of payments made between 1/4/2021 – 28/2/2022*

22. MEMBERS ITEMS

Planting a Tree for the Jubilee

Lead: Cllr L Crane

The initiative was supported by Council and it was noted that all Sandbach Parks should be considered.

Resolved: that options and arrangements be delegated to the Locum Town Clerk in consultation with Cllr L Crane to aim to plant a tree for the Queen's Jubilee in a local park on behalf of the Town Council.

23. CORRESPONDENCE

Council noted the letter from SUFC which was addressed through the discussion at item 16.

24. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved: that item 25 and the discussion of item 7 be considered with the exclusion of public and press, under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 due to references to individuals.

25. STAFFING UPDATE

Town Clerk Update

Lead: Locum Town Clerk

To note that the Town Clerk had left the Town Council on 31 March 2022
(Clerk note – the Locum Town Clerk left the meeting at 9.05pm)

Staffing Review

Lead: Cllr G Merry (Chair of Personnel Committee)

Resolved: that the Locum Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk will review the recommendations from the staffing review in the current context and to provide recommendations for implementation to the next appropriate Personnel Committee and Council.

Locum Town Clerk

Lead: Cllr G Merry

Resolved: To extend the current contract of the Locum Town Clerk until the end of July, pending the outcome of the staffing review

26. DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The next Town Council Meeting is the Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 18th May 2022 at 7pm.

(Clerk note – there is a formal Pre AGM Meeting on Wednesday 4 May 2022 at 7pm)

Meeting closed at 9.30pm

Cllr G Price Jones, Mayor

CL