

# SANDBACH TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting of Sandbach Town Council held on 16 July 2020 at 7.00pm, via Zoom.**

**PRESENT**

Councillors: G Price Jones (Town Mayor)  
K Flavell  
G Merry  
J Beddows  
D Jack  
S Kirkham  
A Smith  
S Corcoran  
S Crane  
L Crane  
M Muldoon  
P Eaton  
R Hoffmann  
R Hovey  
S Broad  
K Seymour  
D Hegarty  
I Williams (arrived 7.33pm)

Also present were ten members of the public and press, the Finance Officer and Operational Support Officer.

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The Mayor confirmed process for the meeting and that, as a continuation of the meeting held 9 July.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllrs: I Williams (Later joined the meeting)  
S Ashcombe Hurt  
M Lea O'Mahoney

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr L Crane.

Declared an interest in item 6.3 and will leave the room.

Cllr Beddows

Interest in item 5.1 and will not participate in discussion or voting.

### **3. ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

It was resolved at the meeting of 9 July 2020 that item 8 be considered with the exclusion of public and press, under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

### **4. FINANCE MATTERS**

#### **4.1 ChALC – Annual Membership**

Lead: Assistant Town Clerk

**Resolved:** that the invoice for £1487.04 for annual membership and one copy of the Local Council Review is approved for payment.

#### **4.2 Town Hall Roof Repairs**

Lead: Assistant Town Clerk

In the absence of an update on current situation, the meeting Clerk and several Councillors provided background information regarding the Condition Survey undertaken in 2016 and works identified, including problem areas in the Town Hall roof. These areas have continued to deteriorate and, following recent inclement weather, has resulted in roof leaking into the ballroom and market hall. As such the repairs to the Listed Building are essential to avoid further damage.

Clarification of appropriate Committed Reserve fund allocation was received from the Finance Officer.

**Resolved :** That £14,420 + VAT is made available from Committed Reserves: Asset Maintenance, for the purpose of carrying out essential and urgent repairs to the Town Hall Complex Roof.

### **5. ASSETS & SERVICES MATTERS**

#### **5.1 Christmas Market**

Cllr Beddows did not take part in discussion or voting.

In referencing his agenda report the Operational Support Officer provided an additional verbal recommendation of hosting a much reduced Christmas market for local traders in 2020, incorporating late-night shop opening, sited on small common and within the Market Hall, which would ideally be combined with the Christmas Light Switch on evening. Further suggestion from Members included live streaming the Switch on Event, implementing necessary management of any distancing measures in place and, in due course, and in line with Government Guidelines, an invite be extended for the Town Hall to host the popular Olive and Stitch market.

**Resolved:** A reduced Christmas Market remains Officer led, and forms part of the Christmas Lights 2020 switch on event.

## 5.2 Christmas Lights

Lead: Cllr G Price Jones

The proposed lighting schemes, necessary remedial work and anticipated 2020 costs, based on quote provided, were clarified by the Mayor ahead of Member discussion.

Cllr Jack detailed his concerns regarding the Working Group processes and current status of the lights, and asked that this be noted on record.

**Resolved:** that:-

- i. The report is received.
- ii. £15,605 (+VAT) is made available from the 2020/21 budget to upgrade the Cobbles illumination to suggested silhouette icicles and to install the rest of the remaining scheme as previous years, with a 5% contingency made available to cover any unexpected maintenance that might be required.
- iii. The installation of 2020 scheme and switch on event (subject to Government Guidance) be delegated to the Clerk.
- iv. Upgrade plans are further investigated by the Assets and Services Committee, with funding requirements for 2021/22 to be factored into budget discussions.

## 5.3 Office Accommodation

A brief verbal status update was provided by the meeting clerk, based on previous meeting notes, in which the recently received plans for office space were confirmed as unsuitable. A further Councillor and Architect site visit had since taken place and new drawings expected in due course to include ground floor office and first floor meeting space.

**Resolved:** the verbal update is received.

## 6. MEMBERS ITEMS

### 6.1 Cllr A Smith – Complaints Process

Referencing the copy policies and procedures which had been circulated with the agenda pack, the meeting Clerk provided clarification of Complaints processes for:

- Councillor Conduct – Principle Authority/via the Monitoring Officer.
- Council, it's administration or procedures or a staff member – in writing via the Clerk or Mayor.
- Complaint about Clerk or Mayor – To Council.
- Staff or Member complaint about a Council Employee would be reported to the Line Manager or Town Clerk.

Following receipt of any complaint the recipient would duly respond in writing to confirm timescale of complaint review process.

## 6.2 Cllr A Smith – COVID-19 Press Release

This item was deferred to the next Finance, Policy and Governance meeting.

Members were encouraged to submit details of groups who may benefit from a Covid-19 grant to Cllr Smith or the Town Clerk.

## 6.3 Cllr D Jack – Parking charges

Cllr Crane left the room during this agenda item.

Members discussed at length the relevance of contacting Cheshire East, in advance of receiving formal parking consultation documents and timescales, and submitting initial objection to any future recommendations regarding potential parking changes for Sandbach. Reference was made to the detailed 2009 STC parking document which has served to protect the Town and included, but was not limited to, resident parking schemes, car park capacity and legal position regarding the status of Scotch Common and has been used to protect the town from parking charges being imposed over more recent years.

A proposal was made that: Sandbach Town Council does oppose any suggestion or plan to impose parking charges of any type, on Cheshire East Land, within the parish boundaries of Sandbach and any planned consultation must be made only with those residents and businesses within the Parish of Sandbach and not draw on the wider borough of Cheshire East.

A named vote was requested

For: Cllrs Jack, Williams, Kirkham, Muldoon, Hovey and Seymour

Against: Cllrs Price Jones, Smith, Hoffmann, Beddows, S Crane, Eaton, Flavell, Corcoran and Hegarty

Abstention: Cllrs Merry and Broad.

The vote was lost.

**Resolved:** that Sandbach Town Council reviews its previous consultation on car parking; referring the file to the Planning and Consultation Committee to bring the document up to date, in preparation for consultation concerning parking, in its broadest sense, for Sandbach.

## 6.4 K Seymour – Wildflower Seeding

Members were informed of the significant environmental and community benefits of seeding native wildflowers within the wards of Sandbach and visual enhancement of the currently derelict spaces with seeding, which will become self-sustaining once established.

It was confirmed that not all sites which are currently empty could be considered for the planting due to potential sightline obstruction.

**Resolved:** That Sandbach Council agrees in principle to seeding all appropriate sites with wildflower seeds and delegates to the Community and Environment Committee to consider details of costs, sites, seeds, process to be followed and report back to Council in due course.

## 7. CORRESPONDENCE

### 7.1 High Street – Cycle Lane

Members reviewed the resident's email received, dated 5 May 2020, regarding High Street cycle lane and current restrictions in place and agreed it be forwarded to the Planning and Consultation Committee.

**Resolved:** that the correspondence be deferred to the Planning and Consultation Committee for response.

## 8. PERSONNEL WORKING GROUP

### Confidential

**Resolved:** that:-

- i. The report is received.
- ii. The report is referred to Personnel Committee to put in place a robust action plan for the Working Group report recommendations.

## 9. DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Town Council Meeting will be on Thursday 24 September 2020 at 7.00pm on Zoom. The room code will be shared on the agenda for the meeting.

Meeting closed 8.55pm

Cllr G Price Jones, Town Mayor

KP