

SANDBACH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Sandbach Town Council held on 15 August 2019 at 7.00pm at Sandbach Literary Institution.

PRESENT

Councillors: M Muldoon (Mayor)
G Price Jones (Deputy Mayor)
S Corcoran
P Eaton
R Hoffmann
M Lea
R Hovey
L Crane
S Crane
S Broad
D Jack
K Seymour
J Beddows
I Williams
K Flavell
A Smith Joined the meeting following his co-option.

Also present were sixteen members of the public and press.

The prayer was read by Rev. Thomas Shepherd.

Rev. Shepherd announced that he was due to retire on 31 October 2019 and invited all to his last Sunday Service at 10am on Sunday 29 September. He said that it has been a privilege to be involved in the meetings of the Council over the past 11 years and to host the Mayor's Civic Services at St Mary's; he hopes the connection with St. Mary's will remain strong. Members were thanked for their kindness.

The Mayor thanked Rev. Thomas and wished him the very best in his retirement.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs: Merry and Kirkham

Absent without Apologies

Cllrs: Ashcombe-Hurt

Belsham

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr S Corcoran declared an interest in item 22.4 as the Leader of CEC and that the Local Authority may be referred to – he will leave the room whilst this item is discussed.

3. MAYORS COMMENTS

The Assistant Town Clerk remains off work, although it is believed that she will soon return; she was wished well.

A new Senior Business Development Officer has been appointed and will commence on 2 September 2019; we are looking forward to welcoming her.

There have been many events attended since the last meeting; a revised list will be presented to the next meeting.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

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

Speaker 1

Made comment/question regarding three agenda items:

21. Transport Festival

Reference was made to the Council's recent change in policy regarding the awarding of grants and that the Transport Festival's recent request for funding is unable to fulfil the new requirements at the current time. In view of this members were asked to consider a 50% contribution, with the balance following when the accounts were available and a member of STC had been invited to join the Committee.

He went on to outline how the annual funding and detailed some larger items of expenditure. Whilst STC contributes £10-12k, this does not fund the entire festival and money has to be raised via alternative sources.

19. Surgeries

Concern was expressed that Council may consider doing away with the monthly surgery. Whilst ward surgeries are commended, it is felt that regular monthly surgeries should continue.

13. Street Furniture

- i) Does anyone know how serious the problem is?
- ii) What action has the Market Tavern taken to deal with the issue?

Concern is that a problem is being passed onto the Town Council, when it really is the landlord's responsibility.

Speaker 2

Speaker 2 has previously raised the issue of communication and drew attention to the fact the forthcoming Market Festival has benefitted from no publicity; she

expressed concern as neither residents or traders are aware of the event. She went on to state that there has been no Facebook update since February 2018.

Speaker 3

Reminded people that next year would mark the 30th anniversary of the Transport Festival.

Following the questions the Town Mayor reconvened the Town Council Meeting.

4. ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED: that item 20 is considered with the exclusion of the public and press, under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

5. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 6 JUNE and 17 JULY 2019.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meetings held on 6 June and 17 July are approved as an accurate record.

6. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE MARKET HALL STEERING GROUP SUB-COMMITTEE – NO MEETINGS HELD.

7. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE PLANNING & CONSULTATION COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON 10 JUNE, 1 JULY AND 22 JULY 2019 (DRAFT).

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meetings held on 10 June, 1 and 22 July are noted.

8. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12 JUNE (DRAFT).

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 June are noted.

9. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE FINANCE, POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 30 MAY 2019 (DRAFT).

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 30 May are noted.

10. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 13 JUNE 2019 (DRAFT).

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 June are noted.

11. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE EVENTS SUB-COMMITTEE HELD ON 12 JUNE AND 17 JULY 2019 (DRAFT).

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meetings held on 12 June and 17 July are noted.

12. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE ASSETS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 4 JUNE and 30 JULY 2019 (DRAFT).

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meetings held on 4 June are noted and 30 July are amended to include Cllr Williams as in attendance and noted.

13. CO-OPTION

Three candidates put themselves forward for co-option to the Town Ward vacancy. Each candidate gave a five-minute presentation on what they would bring to the role, following which there was a closed ballot.

RESOLVED: that Mr Alan Smith is co-opted to the Town Ward.

Following the announcement, Mr Alan Smith signed his acceptance of office and joined the meeting with immediate effect.

14. MATTERS ARISING FROM COMMITTEE MEETINGS

14.1 Assets & Services – Operational Funding

The Clerk outlined six payments from budget and committed reserves, highlighted where an over-spend may be incurred against original budgetary projections and asked for approvals

RESOLVED: that the following financial provision is approved and delivery delegated to Officers.

i) Town Hall CCTV

That £4001.09 is made available to fulfil the quotation for the installation and upgrade of Town Hall Complex CCTV, funding will be via the 2019/20 budget provision of £2,400, with an over-spend of £1,601.09.

Through the last A&S Committee meeting it was also requested that additional CCTV coverage was considered to monitor the area directly outside of the public toilets on Warm Walls, it was resolved that an additional provision will be included of c.£500 (quotation awaited).

ii) Town Hall Ballroom Refurbishment

That Council make available the 2019/20 budget provision of £4,400, with an additional over-spend of £400, plus 10% of the overall cost. Total over-spend = £880.

iii) Pigeon Cleansing and Proofing between the Town hall and Market Buildings (High Level)

That Council make available the 2019/20 budget provision of £4,500, with an additional over-spend of £409.20, plus 10% of the overall cost. Total over-spend = £900.12.

iv) **Town Hall High-Level Clean – Ballroom**

That Council make available the 2019/20 budget provision of £1,970.00, with an additional over-spend of £178.00, plus 10% of the overall cost. Total over-spend = £392.80.

v) **Van (Primary Use Ranger)**

That the Council make available the 2019/20 budget provision of £7,900 and the amount in committed 'van' reserves of £3,286, total £11,186.00 for the purpose of acquisition of a medium sized van for use by the Ranger and agrees to vire the surplus to the equipment budget line, which will enable tools to be bought for use by the Ranger.

vi) **Town Hall Office Furniture**

That the Council make available committed 'office furniture/maintenance' reserves of £1,862 to enable the refurbished Town Hall Office to be furnished.

14.2 Assets & Services – Late Night Christmas Shopping

The Clerk outlined proposals for three late night shopping events during December. One will support the Christmas Market, there are plans to hold a food market on another, with the final evening being supported by a brass band carol concert. The Council will be responsible for the promotion of these events via social media, website, newsletter, banners and flyers.

The Clerk stated that interested businesses have been given until the end of August to confirm they will take part.

Members were asked to note the plans.

RESOLVED: that Sandbach Town Council notes that it will promote late night shopping events in December.

14.3 Assets & Services – Street Furniture Adjacent Market Tavern

Correspondence was shared and the matter reported that under-age people were gaining access to the Market Tavern Beer garden by using the Town Council's street furniture to scale the wall. The Landlord of the Market Tavern has requested that the Council consider relocating the three items to the gable end wall of the Crown.

Members expressed concern that this could set a precedent for the future.

The Clerk referred to a quotation from ANSA received earlier that day, stating that the relocation would cost £361.20 + VAT.

RESOLVED: that the three pieces of Street Furniture should be relocated from outside of the Tavern Beer Garden to stop unauthorised access to the site and that the ANSA quotation of £361.20 is accepted.

14.4 Finance, Policy & Governance – Variances

Item withdrawn.

14.5 Finance, Policy & Governance – Cash handling Policy

RESOLVED: that the revised cash handling policy is approved.

14.6 Finance, Policy & Governance – Business Credit Card

RESOLVED: that approval is given to open a Nat West Credit Card with a limit of £1,000 and a single transaction limit of up to £500. The balance will be paid on a monthly basis via direct debit.

14.7 Finance, Policy & Governance – Role of Town Council Representatives on Outside Bodies Guidance

RESOLVED: that the guidance document is approved.

14.8 Grant Application and Other Funding Policy and Procedure

RESOLVED: that the Grant Application and Other Funding Policy and Procedure is approved.

15. COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

15.1 Assets & Services Committee

RESOLVED: that the revised Terms of Reference are approved.

15.2 Planning & Consultation Committee

RESOLVED: that the revised Terms of Reference are approved.

15.3 Personnel Committee

RESOLVED: that the revised Terms of Reference are approved.

15.4 Community & Environment Committee

RESOLVED: that the revised Terms of Reference are approved.

15.5 Finance, Policy & Governance Committee

RESOLVED: that the revised Terms of Reference are approved.

16. SANDBACH PARTNERSHIP CORE FUNDING

As requested at the last meeting a full report of activities and a copy of the 2017/18 accounts were made available, along with a copy of the 2012 SLI. It was proposed that 50% of the budget, that is £5,000 is granted, with further joint work being undertaken to aid the release of the second £5,000.

RESOLVED: that £5,000 of the 2019/20 core funding is released.

17. SANDBACH CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

The Clerk reported that the Sandbach Christmas Lights Committee Chair was retiring. A meeting with the Mayor, Clerk and Chair of Sandbach Christmas Lights had taken place, whereby there was an offer to transfer all lighting assets to the Town Council for ongoing Christmas Light Displays. The Clerk has contacted two electricians for quotations for the work to be undertaken by an external body, indications are that this should not exceed

£8,000. It was pointed out that the 19/20 grant, which was paid to the Committee earlier this year, has been returned in its entirety.

All those volunteers previously involved with the Christmas Light displays were thanked.

RESOLVED: that the £10,000 be made available for the provision of the 2019 Christmas Lights and Switch-on Event. The Clerk will make provision for the installation and the switch on will be referred to the Events Sub-Committee for delivery.

18. PARISH VICAR RETIREMENT

Rev. Thomas Shepherd is due to retire on 31 October; he has been the vicar of St Mary Church since 2008. Members were asked if they would like to mark this occasion in any way.

RESOLVED: that as many members as possible would attend his final service on 29 September and to present a certificate of recognition during the service.

19. COUNCILLORS SURGERIES

Since the election in May, a number of members have started to hold their own 'ward' based surgeries. Council was asked to consider whether these new surgeries should replace the existing monthly surgery, which is facilitated by the Clerk's office.

There was discussion regarding the location/s and promotion of such surgeries

RESOLVED: that the Council will continue to operate a monthly surgery, which will be facilitated and promoted by the Town Clerk's office, all other surgeries will be the responsibility of members to coordinate and ensure advertised.

20. SAR INVOICE

Considered with the exclusion of public and press.

RESOLVED: that the report is received, with the spend of £810.90 being noted.

21. TRANSPORT FESTIVAL FUNDS REQUEST

Lead: Clerk

A letter dated 29 July was considered in which the release of £12,000 towards the 2020 Transport Festival was requested.

Members noted that the request was not supported by a financial statement and that there was presently no nominated Town Council representative on the Committee. On this basis it was felt that recent rules relating to funding had not been met. Members considered whether it was appropriate to release funding on this basis.

RESOLVED: that subject to the receipt of a financial statement being shared with all members and a nominated STC representative being invited

to meetings of the Transport Festival Committee, that the full 2019/20 budget provision of £12,000 is made available.

Cllr Price Jones will be the nominated representative.

22. MEMBERS ITEMS

22.1 Cllr David Jack – Debate and motion to set up a strategic forum Working Group

Cllr Jack introduced his paper and provided background to his motion that a Strategic Forum is set up.

The work of retired Councillor Haines was referred to. It was suggested that forming such a group could be premature and may jeopardise some of the work and outcomes of the Market Hall LLR.

On balance, Council supported anything which meant public engagement but sought assurance that we would ensure engagement

RESOLVED: that a “Sandbach Strategic Forum Working Group” is created.

The Clerk agreed to share Cllr Haines earlier work to support the work of the group.

22.2 Cllr Kieran Seymour – Debate and motion to modernise Council

In a bid to modernise the Council and to ensure that it functions in a way that assists Councillors, Officers and the Public communicate more effectively, three motions were presented:

- i) To immediately give the option to all Councillors if they would like their papers for meetings printed or not.
- ii) To set up a Working Group to explore, in the longer term, the possible implementation of a modern portable IT system (such as tablets) for all Councillors to help facilitate better Councillor interaction and information retrieval whilst saving on environmental costs.
- iii) To expand the ways Town Council Meetings are currently opened, diversifying and finding other groups who make up Sandbach, as well as (and including still) the Church, to address the Town Council at the six meetings a year.

Cllr Seymour spoke to each of his proposals, stating that the Council spends approximately £150 per annum on printing agenda, that tablets (and other tools) could reduce such costs and additionally, make sharing information much easier. In response, it was suggested that an allowance could be made to each member to enable him/her to ensure they had the required tools.

He also felt that encouraging community groups to present to Council, either in person or in writing, would give members a better understanding of the Sandbach Community.

An amendment to motion ii) was to ask the Finance, Policy and Governance Committee to explore the ideas of modern, portable IT systems and in doing so, consider whether a members allowance would be more appropriate. Cllr Seymour agreed with this approach.

RESOLVED: that

- iv) With immediate effect, all Councillors are given the option to have their papers for meetings printed or not.
- v) The Finance Policy and Governance Committee is asked to explore, in the longer term, the possible implementation of a modern portable IT system (such as tablets) for all Councillors to help facilitate better Councillor interaction and information retrieval whilst saving on environmental costs. Consideration should include whether it is more beneficial to provide a member allowance for this purpose.
- vi) To expand the ways Town Council Meetings are currently opened, diversifying and finding other groups who make up Sandbach, as well as (and including still) the Church, to address or provide a written piece of work to the Town Council at the six meetings a year.

22.3 Cllr Kieran Seymour – Fairtrade

RESOLVED: to agree to Sandbach being re-established as a Fairtrade Town by:

- Renewing its commitment to achieve 'Fairtrade Community' status.
- Actively promoting Fairtrade locally, through support for local groups, in the media including social media, and events, including during Fairtrade Fortnight.
- Supporting local Fairtrade Schools and Universities, and actively promoting Fairtrade teaching materials in local schools and educational institutions.
- Celebrating and incentivising businesses championing Fairtrade products in the local community.
- Reviewing its procurement policy, including its catering offer, to ensure that Fairtrade produce is chosen wherever possible, and that Fairtrade considerations are included as a preference in any contracts going out to tender.

22.4 Cllr Paula Eaton – Debate and motion to call on the refusal and cessation of 5G roll out.

Cllr Corcoran withdrew from the meeting whilst the item was considered.

A paper was presented which outlined concerns about the use of 5G, with the motion that:

That Sandbach Town Council formally notifies the Senior Planning Authority that it objects to the further roll out of 5g technology until all safety issues and concerns have been further explored and tested by the relevant authorities.

There then followed extensive and lively discussion, during which very conflicting and justifiable opinions were shared.

The motion was taken to the vote and lost with a named vote being requested.

For: Cllrs Eaton, Broad, Jack.

Against: Cllrs Smith, Seymour, Williams, Hovey

A second proposal was carried.

RESOLVED:

Accept 5G but request public consultation and information gathering is undertaken by the Principal Planning Authority and that the council is kept informed about placing 5G masts in the Town and any health implications.

23. CORRESPONDENCE

23.1 HM Prison and Probation Service

RESOLVED: that the letter be received.

23.2 Sandbach Walking Festival Organisers

RESOLVED: that the letter be received.

24. DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Town Council Meeting will be on Thursday 10 October 2019 at 7.00pm in Council Chamber, Sandbach Literary Institution.

Meeting closed 9.24pm

Cllr M Muldoon, Town Mayor

ALB