



## **SANDBACH TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

Minutes for the meeting held on Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> June 2023 at 7.00pm in Sandbach Town Hall.

**Present** Councillors: J Arnold, J Beddows, S Broad, N Cook, S Corcoran, L Crane (Chair), M Deakin, K England, K Flavell, E Gray, D Hegarty, M Hough, G Lindop, L MacGregor, M Mitchell, M Muldoon, A Nevitt (vice Chair), D Poole, S Richards, T Wheatcroft

### **PART 1 : ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

#### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies received from Cllr G Price Jones (personal)  
Cllr D Poole left the meeting at 8.40pm

#### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr N Cook declared a non pecuniary and non prejudicial interest in Item 18.1.

#### **3. MAYOR'S COMMENTS**

The Mayor summarised her many engagements on behalf of the Council since becoming Mayor, starting with a visit to the Welgate supported living facility. Many occupants wanting to Volunteer so please get in touch with the facility directly or with Cllr Nevitt if there are projects for inclusion; Launching the Sandbach Pride Gin; Opening the Big Win Asian supermarket; Attending the Foden's fund raiser quiz which raised over £1K, arranged by Cllr Nevitt to say thank you for the free coronation concert; Sandbach Pride stall last weekend – please get in touch if you wish to help with the annual Pride event on 3 September; Elworth Hall Primary school fete arranged by their PTA which was well attended and very hot!

The Mayor commented on the marvellous community spirit in Sandbach and thanked all the volunteers involved.

Finally, the Mayor gave notice for her 2 Mayoral events to be held on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2023 (details to follow) and 16<sup>th</sup> March 2024 for an accessible cinema, afternoon tea and themed disco.

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#### **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

The Town Mayor adjourned the meeting to allow questions from members of the public relating to items on this agenda.

Sandbach Partnership Chair, Helen Dorney, asked to speak to her correspondence on the Agenda, Item 18.1. She explained that there were 2 main reasons to provide the paper i) to address some of the negative comments made at the last Sandbach Town Council meeting ii) to update on the activities which have taken place – the Youth Showcase attended by over 200 people and the big help out day on the Coronation weekend. Helen also clarified the arrangements surrounding the licence of the Cobbles which was inherited by the current partnership and was a legacy arrangement from the original Cobbles project where the funding and entertainment licence had to be managed through a voluntary body (not the Councils). Helen explained that, as the partnership is an unincorporated body, the management team members have personal liability to execute the licence correctly. She confirmed that although there was no charge for use of the licence, the current partnership had decided to request a voluntary contribution (set by the requester) to the cost of administering the licence correctly, as the Partnership no longer had any funding from either Council or any other organisation.

There was a discussion about the appropriateness of an unelected body now having ownership of the entertainment licence and a general view that it was timely to review these arrangements, following concerns raised by Cllr A Nevitt.

Cllr N Cook thanked the Partnership for the successful events they had held.  
Cllr J Beddows challenged whether the Youth Showcase hit the target audience of young people and there was a difference of opinion.  
Cllr M Muldoon asked for clarity re insurance & arrangements for access to the electricity box (additional keys now held by TC and Partnership).  
The Mayor thanked Helen for attending.

Meeting was reconvened.

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#### **4. TERMS OF REFERENCE (ToR)**

[Attached: Draft Council ToR]

**Resolved:** *The revised Council Terms of Reference, in line with the Council's Standing Orders approved on 30 November 2022, were approved.*

#### **5. MINUTES OF TOWN COUNCIL MEETING 24 MAY 2023**

**Resolved:** *The Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 24 May 2023 were approved*

*All Minutes for Agenda item 6/7 can be viewed via Sandbach Town Council website:  
<https://sandbach.gov.uk/council/meetings/>*

#### **6. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING & CONSULTATION COMMITTEE HELD ON 5 JUNE 2023 (DRAFT).**

*The Minutes were noted.*

**7. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SMALL COMMON REDEVELOPMENT SUB COMMITTEE HELD ON 23 APRIL 2023 (DRAFT).**

*The minutes were noted.*

**8. MATTERS ARISING FROM COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

**8.1 Planning, Consultation and Environment Committee**

**Terms of Reference**

[Attached: Committee Terms of Reference]

Lead: Planning, Consultation and Environment Committee  
Chair

Cllr N Cook suggested that the Terms of Reference should be strengthened on the subject of Climate Change to reflect the Council's stated commitment.

**Resolved:** *Following recommendation from the Committee at its meeting 5 June 2023, adoption of the revised Terms of Reference was approved, and authority delegated to the Chief Officer to strengthen the statement regarding Climate Change.*

**9. CORPORATE STRATEGY REVIEW – OBJECTIVES**

[Document previously circulated via email and available at

<https://sandbach.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Corporate-Strategy-Review-Council-14-June-2023.xlsx>]

Lead: Mayor

**Resolved:** *The updated and referenced version of the Council's Corporate Strategy was noted, and the approach that each Committee will review and prioritise actions to meet the objective within their remit under the Council's scheme of delegation, was approved.*

**10. COMMUNITY RESILIENCE RESPONSE**

To create a Task & Finish Group including at least one member of each Committee to prepare the Council's response to community emergencies in partnership with other local organisations and volunteer groups. Suggestions were made to ensure all wards and all parties were represented whilst ensuring the group was not too large to function effectively.

Lead: Mayor

**Resolved:** *the setting up of a Task & Finish Group, to make proposals for a Community Resilience Response to Full Council in September 2023, and nominations for membership to be sent to the Chief Officer by 30 June 2023, was approved.*

**11. SO27 URGENCY DECISIONS**

Two urgent decisions made, in line with requirements of Standing Order 27

- Sale of Fork Lift Truck, in order to progress new operating model of the Market.

Totalling income of £5,200 (inc vat)

Date of requested approval: 26.4.23

The Chief Officer confirmed that the truck sale had been advertised nationally and that the Council had received a positive response and good price for the asset.

- Payment of Hipswing invoice for the Coronation Event concert equipment provision (inc staging) at £5277.13 (inc vat)

Payment due by 28.4.2023 and Concert held 6/7 May.

Lead: Chief Officer

**Resolved:** *the urgent decisions under SO27 were ratified.*

## 12. PUBLIC CONVENIENCE CLEANING CONTRACT

Lead: Chief Officer

Following short-notice cancellation of public toilet cleaning provision, it has been necessary to source a replacement service provider. No less than thirteen companies were approached – with request to meet all expected requirements and 7 day/week attendance for facility cleaning - and, of those responses received, Luella Rose (Reach for the Broom) were preferred. Previous cleaning cost was £252.50 per week and new supplier £262.50 per week (both + VAT).

The Chief Officer explained that there was a shortage of provision for these services. Cllr N Cook requested an amendment that the Council would explore the option to directly employ a cleaner. The Chief Officer explained that this had been previously complicated by TUPE requirements and that there was an urgency to retain a contractor to avoid closure of the Council owned public toilets. Cllr T Wheatcroft noted that direct employment could bring issues of holiday cover and other absence.

**Resolved:** *To:-*

- The new rolling contract with Luella Rose (Reach for the Broom) was noted;*
- The weekly payment of £262.50 + VAT (invoiced monthly) delegated to the Finance Officer to pay, in line with Council's Financial Regulations, is approved*
- The Chief Officer's Office is requested to investigate the implications of direct employment of a cleaner for all its facilities, and avoiding contractual arrangements which prevent this option.*

## 13. GRANT APPLICATIONS OVER £5,000

None.

## 14. FINANCE MATTERS

*All additional documents relating to item 14 can be viewed at:*

Lead: Chief Officer

**14.1 Annual Audit 2023-24  
Internal Audit & Management Response**  
[Attached: Internal Audit]

The Chief Officer emphasised the progress in financial administration demonstrated by the final internal audit report. Cllr S Corcoran thanked the staff for the improvements that had been made and noted the key phrase in the final report – no additional issues identified.

**Resolved:** *the Internal Audit, Management Response was approved and auditor's comments noted.*

**14.2 External Audit – Annual Governance and Accounting Return (AGAR)**  
[Attached: AGAR]

The Chief Officer highlighted that the source of reassurance to complete and approve the AGAR was the internal audit reports, Council approved risk assessments and the publication of accounts within statutory timescale.

**Resolved :**

- i) *Section 1 of the Annual Governance statement was completed and the return approved*
- ii) *Section 2 of the Annual Governance Return, based on the supporting documents and 2022-23 final accounts, was approved.*

**14.3 Q4 Payments List**  
[Attached: Payment lists]

**Resolved:** *Payments made 1.1.23 – 31.3.23 were ratified.*

**14.4 Aged Debt Report**  
[Attached: Aged Debt and Write off reports]

**Resolved:** *Aged debt was noted and write off of £1498.62 was approved.*

**15. INSURANCE RENEWAL**

[Attached: Renewal Quotation]

Lead: Chief Officer

As the current three year term of insurance is due to cease at end July 2023, we have approached three companies for Town/Parish Council insurance. One quote has been received from our current insurance provider which offers options of a single year or further long term agreement (three year) at a reduced price.

**Resolved :** *That Council:*

- i) *the quotations were considered and a three year renewal was approved;*

- ii) *regular payment by direct debit of agreed sum (based on i above) to be delegated to the Finance Officer, from budget code 101 4120 (Insurance) are approved;*
- iii) *the future premium is included for budget setting 2024-2025.*

## 16. INVOICES

- 16.1** [Attached: Invoice from AGI Catering]  
 Lead: Mayor  
**Resolved:** *Payment of invoice amount £1,875 for Catering of Town Hall, in house, December event from budget code 180 4831 (Town Hall Events) is deferred, pending explanation of significant advance payment. The event will be income generating.*
- 16.2** [Attached: Invoice from Hipswing]  
 Lead: Mayor  
**Resolved:** *Payment of balance invoice INV-15234, totalling £4,825.76 for Staging, Sound and Lighting at the Party in the Park, to be allocated to Cost centre code 140 4820, is approved. (Community Events).*
- 16.3** [Attached: Invoice from John Greenall & Co]  
 Lead: Mayor  
**Resolved:** *Payment of invoice number 215, totalling £2760, for the provision of payroll services 6 April 2022 – 5 April 2023 to be paid from budget line 101 4114 (Accountancy Support) is approved.*
- 16.4** [Attached: Invoice from Prism IT]  
 Lead: Mayor  
**Resolved:** *Payment of invoice 178414 totalling £2129.80 for IT installation at the Enterprise Centre. To be coded to IT (101 4109) from Office Accommodation EMR 347 allocation approved by Council 14 December 2022) is approved.*
- 16.5** [Attached: Invoice from Blitz]  
 Lead: Mayor  
 Cllr N Cook requested that a firework free event was explored in the future by Community & Events Committee, following feedback from some residents based on previous events.  
**Resolved:** *Payment of invoice SI-1061 totalling £2976 for Party in the Park firework display and allocated to Cost centre code 140 4820 (Community Events) is approved.*

## 17. MEMBERS ITEMS

None received.

## 18. CORRESPONDENCE

**18.1 Sandbach Partnership**

Email received on 6 June 2023 providing information relating to the Partnership.

Members revisited the earlier discussion. Cllr S Corcoaran requested that the Chief Officer investigate the implications of STC taking over the entertainment licence, potentially in the interest of all parties, which she agreed to do. Cllr T Wheatcroft suggested this encompass insurance impact. Cllr Nevitt expressed concern about a previous Vice Chair having access to the bank account and asked the Council's representative, Cllr D Hegarty, to look into this. It was clarified that any involvement from any organisation into the Council's proposed lantern event (in January, subject to resources) would be approved by an upcoming Community & Events Committee.

**19. DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next Town Council Meeting is taking place on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2023 at 7pm in Sandbach Town Hall

**20. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

Action: Under the Public Bodies (admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and accredited representatives of newspaper be excluded from the meeting for item 21 of business, 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**

**21. COMPLAINTS REPORT**

**Lead:** Chair of Personnel

The Chief Officer left the meeting for this item to avoid a conflict of interest. A summary was given of action taken regarding formal complaints received by the Council. Cllr D Poole left the meeting during the penultimate case reported.

**Resolved:** *the report, required by the Council's Customer Care, Contact and Complaints Policy, was noted.*

Meeting Closed 8.50pm / Mayor Cllr Crane / CL