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SANDBACH TOWN COUNCIL

ASSETS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes for the meeting held on Tuesday 5 November 2019 at 7.00pm in the Sandbach Literary Institution.

PRESENT

Councillors: John Beddows
Kieran Seymour
Richard Hovey
Geraint Price Jones
Laura Crane
Richard Hoffmann
Ian Williams
David Jack
Gill Merry
Alan Smith (coopted at the meeting)

In attendance was one member of press.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Mike Muldoon

Absent without Apologies

Councillor: Paula Eaton

2. CO-OPTION

RESOLVED: that Cllr Alan Smith is co-opted to the Committee.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr G Merry declared an interest in item 8 as the gentleman named within the report is known.

Cllr Beddows declared an interest in items 7 and 10.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Chairman adjourned the meeting to allow questions from members of the public. There being no questions, the meeting was immediately re-convened.

4. ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE ABSENCE OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED: that item 8 be considered in the absence of public and press due to commercial sensitivity and personal details being shared.

Under the Public Bodies Admissions to Meetings Act 1960.

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5. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 30 JULY 2019.

RESOLVED: that subject to the inclusion of Cllrs Jack and Merry as attending the meeting, they be approved as an accurate record.

6. TOWN RANGER

Neil Pepper was introduced; he gave an overview of his role and the work that he has been involved in to date. The majority of his time has been spent undertaking relevant training and procuring a vehicle and tools. All requirements are now in place and Neil is ready to commence his work in the Town and surrounding areas.

The Clerk explained that whilst Neil is full-time, his working week is split with 25 hours being allocated to the delivery of the market function and 12 hours per week being available for ranger duties. The plan is that the ranger function will be delivered over two days: Monday and Tuesday. The Clerk said that this would need careful review as some of the work would be office based, dealing with enquiries and referring matters to other bodies (as required), which would leave very limited time to make a difference; she felt that member and public expectations would need to be managed and said that there is every chance this position could grow as it becomes established.

Concern was expressed that the Ranger may be undertaking duties of CEC or those that they have a duty to enforce elsewhere. The Clerk and Committee Chair will develop a definitive list of work that the Ranger should and should not be involved with.

RESOLVED: that the report and discussion is noted.

7. MARKETS & TOWN HALL OPERATIONAL UPDATE

A written report was provided in respect of the Town Hall and Market services, these were supported with a breakdown of income for each facility.

The Clerk drew attention to the income schedule and was pleased to inform member that the Market Hall and Outdoor Market were both above the expected level of income for the time of year and look likely to achieve their annual targets. The Town Hall is low at just 35%, however it was noted that quarters 1 and 2 are normally quiet periods, with the Town Hall becoming much busier during quarters 3 and 4. It is likely that the Town Hall will achieve its target.

The Clerk answered member questions.

RESOLVED: that the reports be received.

8. COMPLAINT RE TRADER

To be considered in a closed session due to commercial sensitivity and personal details being included.

9. TOWN HALL COMPLEX FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

The Clerk presented the Fire Risk Assessment which had been undertaken by Wirehouse H&S support, she drew attention to the items highlighted in red and

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gave a progress report to indicate that all of those items have been or are being addressed as a matter of priority. All other items will be prioritised and addressed as soon as possible.

RESOLVED: that the Risk Assessment and actions taken are noted.

10. LATE NIGHT CHRISTMAS SHOPPING

The Clerk informed members that due to limited response on the opportunity to open late, she had consulted with the Committee Chair and agreed that the Council should not promote the event. A letter was written to those shops and traders who had responded informing them of this decision; a flurry of social media comments ensued, with a number of businesses stating that they were staying open. Following a review of the comments and reconsideration, the plans to promote the event were reopened.

Banners have been produced which will be displayed on Congleton Road and the Waitrose roundabout, leaflets will be delivered to every household and a timetable of activities included in the Effective Directories.

It was felt that engagement with the businesses should start much earlier in the year for 2020 and that it would benefit from the creation of a Chamber of Trade in the future.

RESOLVED: that the report be received.

11. FAIRTRADE

Cllr Seymour, Lead Councillor for Fairtrade, reminded members of the Council commitment to support Fairtrade. As part of this commitment the Council should use/stock a minimum of three products. The Clerk stated that we currently offer a Fairtrade coffee option and that sugar was also Fairtrade. It was suggested that we should look to offer a Fairtrade choice on the bar.

RESOLVED: that the report be received and that the Clerk endeavour to increase the number of Fairtrade products available through the bar.

12. ROADS AND MAINTENANCE

Cllr Seymour expressed his concern about the condition of a number of drainage grids and gully in the Elworth area. He went on to say that he has reported these issues on numerous occasions, however they have not been resolved. He appealed to the Committee for help and guidance.

Several other members expressed concern and dissatisfaction regarding the response, or lack of response, being received from CEC, stating that it is becoming impossible to get information or action from them. Initially it was advised that Ward Councillors should be involved and should pursue all items through to a satisfactory resolution, however Town Council members questioned why, as elected members and representatives of the public, they were being ignored.

RESOLVED: that a letter be sent to the CEC CEO, with copy to the Leader of the Council, expressing concern that reports are not being attended to and are being ignored, and that Sandbach Town Council is generally dissatisfied with the

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current level of engagement. The letter will also ask for the communication procedure to be clarified, along with what should be expected as a minimum standard of response.

13. TOWN HALL OFFICE

The Clerk reported that the Contractors began work on 23 October. Good progress is being made, with walls being removed and building commencing. The programme sees completion before the month end, in advance of the busy Christmas period. Furniture has been ordered and can be delivered and installed almost immediately following completion.

RESOLVED: that the report be received.

14. INVOICE FOR APPROVAL – HOPS AND BARLEY

An invoice for £2,370.65 for bar supplies/stock was presented for approval.

RESOLVED: that the invoice be approved for payment.

15. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

- . Ranger Duties
- . Bradwall off-site storage
- . Small Common Car Park

16. DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting of the Assets and Services Committee is Tuesday 28 January 2020 at 7.00pm.

Please note that this meeting will be recorded and the audio recording made available to the public within 5 working days of the meeting.

Meeting closed 8.11pm

Cllr L Crane, Chair

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CLOSED SESSION

Private and Confidential under the Public Bodies Admissions to Meetings Act 1960, due to commercial sensitivity and personal details being included.

8. COMPLAINT RE TRADER

RESOLVED: that subject to confirmatory legal advice being received, the trader will be removed from the market.