

SANDBACH TOWN COUNCIL

ASSETS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes for the meeting held on Tuesday, 28 January 2020 at 7.00pm in the Sandbach Literary Institution.

In attendance: Cllr L Crane
Cllr G Price Jones (Vice-Chair)
Cllr R Hovey
Cllr R Hoffmann
Cllr I Williams
Cllr J Beddows
Cllr D Jack
Cllr K Seymour
Cllr A Smith

Also in attendance was the Assistant Town Clerk and Support Services Officer and 3 members of public and press.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for Absence

Cllr G Merry
Cllr M Muldoon

Absent without apologies

Cllr P Eaton

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Beddows – declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 12.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Chair adjourned the meeting to allow questions from members of the public. There being no questions the meeting was immediately reconvened.

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

RESOLVED: that under the Public Bodies Admissions to Meetings Act 1960, item 15 is consider in the absence of public and press due to commercial sensitivity and personal details being shared.

4. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 5 NOVEMBER 2019.**

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Assets & Services meeting held 5 November 2019 be approved.

5. MARKETS & TOWN HALL OPERATIONAL UPDATE

Lead: Clerk

The Clerk presented operational reports:

Market highlights include a successful programme of Christmas activities and promotion. There have been two new traders join the market since the last meeting, although it is believed that one of them has since left. Providing gazebos on a Saturday continues to present a problem and the lack of Market Trader engagement during December was noted. It was suggested that the Christmas Calendar is determined and agreed by Committee and that where additional trading days are agreed, that traders pay in advance to ensure that they attend.

The Town Hall has been busy both delivering and securing bookings. We have had one casual member of staff and two temporary part-time caretakers join; this will make delivering events much more manageable. Several new events are being launched, with many more in the early planning stages. The main challenge has been around capacity, with staff continuing to be flexible to cover both Town Hall and Market activities, as well as train new staff. Everyone is looking forward to a busy and exciting 2020.

RESOLVED: that the report be received.

6. CHRISTMAS MARKET REPORT

Lead: Clerk

The Operational Support Officer was in attendance and presented his report. He referred to the success of the evening and thanked staff, councillors and volunteers for their support. The only negativity before and during the Christmas Market came from our own indoor traders, which was disappointing. The market saw a profit of £2,062.38; it was clarified that staff costs had not been factored into the calculation.

Reference was made to Councillor appetite to change the format of the meeting, with several options being outlined by the Clerk. Members were asked to confirm the proposed dates for 2020 and whether the event should be expanded, with consideration being given to the available resources.

It was agreed that the Christmas Lights Switch On and Christmas Market should remain separate events, with the switch on taking place on Saturday 28 November and the Market on Friday 4 December, with the 5th of December being further explored as a second day. Officers should also investigate expanding the market onto side roads such as Welles Street. A progress report is to be presented to the next A&S meeting.

RESOLVED: that:

- i) That the report be received.
- ii) That the Committee resolves to formally thank all the Town Council Officers and volunteers for their involvement in delivering the 2019 edition of this event.
- iii) That all organisation and delivery of the 2020 Sandbach Christmas Market and Late Night Shopping event is delegated to Officers so that organisation of this year's event may begin.

- iv) That the £2062.38 profit is made available for the 2020 Christmas Market.
- v) Extended Christmas Market to be further considered at the next A&S meeting.

7. GAZEBO PROVISION

Lead: Clerk

The Operational Support Officer outlined difficulties in providing gazebos to Saturday market traders, stating that the erection of a single gazebo should be undertaken by at least two staff. For several months, there has been an expectation that one member of staff can manage, this has led to an injury occurring, putting the main market operative out of action.

The Clerk advised that we currently charge £4.50 per gazebo, which would not cover the cost of an additional member of staff and asked members to consider whether we should continue to make available gazebos on a Saturday.

It was confirmed that we would continue to provide tables, even if the decision not to provide gazebos was taken.

RESOLVED: that gazebos and weights are no longer provided on a Saturday. Tables will continue to be provided, with staff considering which type according to weight and staff availability.

One months' notice to be given to Saturday traders of this change, subject to staff availability gazebos will be provided during the notice period.

8. FEES AND CHARGES

Lead: Clerk

The Clerk presented a report which outlined proposed changes to the Town Hall hire fees, the Assistant Town Clerk provided clarification. The Clerk reported that the Market Hall charges were currently being reviewed and as there had been a freeze last year, were likely to go up – any increase should cover the PPS/PRS annual licence fee.

RESOLVED: that, with effect from 1 April 2020:

- i. The pricing rates for the year 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 were approved.
- ii. Authority is delegated to the Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk to review and authorise, at their discretion, discount rates and incentive packages proposed by the Conference and Events staff, where business occupancy and financial growth is evident to support the offer rate.
- iii. The effectiveness of the delegated approval scheme for offers and incentives to be reviewed against booking history.
- iv. No change to the fees confirmed for all existing bookings.

9. CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Lead: Town Clerk

The Clerk reported on the first year of delivering Christmas Lights and outlined the process that led to the appointment of Blitz from Crewe. Being a company that was new to Sandbach, a rigorous testing of both anchor points and electrics was undertaken before any work was carried out. Unfortunately, there were

some areas that required work and upgrading to make them safe and useable. Blitz kindly offered to absorb some of the costs relating to anchor points and fixings, however due to the scale of electrical works required an emergency decision had to be taken by the Mayor, Chair of Finance and the Clerk, to authorise Blitz to undertake all necessary electrical remedial work, this was reported to Council on 28 November – at the time of reporting to the Committee, the actual cost of these works was not known.

The Christmas Lights Switch On event was organised as close to the historic format as possible, with fairground attractions, live music and Santa and his sleigh in attendance. Local shops, bars and cafes embraced the spirit with sales of Mulled wine, hot chocolate and other seasonal refreshments. The event was a success with about 1,000 people in attendance.

Reference as made to a number of inaccurate statements that had been placed in the public domain and it appears, endorsed by some of the previous lights volunteers. Concern was expressed that the truth has been distorted and the Council tarnished by some of the statements.

The Clerk asked members for direction regarding the 2020 Christmas Lights and said that it is essential that we start to plan very early, based on members indications that they wish to see improvements/enhancements. Whilst the lights were in place and during the illumination period, the Mayor and another Councillor met with Blitz, to walk the lights and determine where improvements might be needed, along with discussing options. Following that meeting, Blitz have drawn up a scheme to be presented to Council, the purpose of the scheme is to showcase a number of options.

The Clerk recommended that a small working group is formed, to further develop the scheme, obtain quotations for delivery and present a final report to Council not later than its April meeting.

RESOLVED: that:

- i) The report is received.
- ii) To agree to receive a presentation from Blitz.
- iii) To form a Working Group to gather information, develop a scheme, obtain costings and quotations and report to Council not later than 16 April.

10. SANDBACH IN BLOOM

Lead: Cllr D Jack / Lead Member Sandbach in Bloom Working Group

A report from the Working Group was presented .

Due to time constraints alternative floral providers have not been identified, therefore Council will procure its Summer floral provision from ANSA for 2020. A discrepancy in the number of baskets being provided has been identified and this is currently being looked into.

A number of improvements were suggested and potential events and activities outlined, which include flower and bulb sales, community showcase, and Festival of Colour. The Working Group requested a start-up budget of £1,000 for the Floral Market and Festival of Colour, it was noted that this might result in an 'events' budgetary overspend.

It was noted that the majority of delivery of the events would be undertaken by Councillors, although staff would be required, the idea is to try to reduce the

additional burden of extra events. The Clerk would be responsible for any expenditure incurred within the £1,000 budget provision, if approved.

RESOLVED: that

- i) Working Group given approval to run Festival of Colour.
- ii) A budget of £1000 is made available from 'Community Events' to cover costs of Floral Market and Festival of Colour day and delegated to the Clerk. This may result in a budgetary overspend.

11. RANGER ROLE

Lead: Committee Chair

Following the introduction of the Ranger at the last A&S meeting, members asked the Committee Clerk and Chair to consider and agree some role boundaries, it was felt this was need to provide clarification on tasks that might cross-over and be some else's responsibility.

A document was shared, to outline acceptable levels of involvement, cross-over, provide guidance and a wish list of tasks to be done. It appeared that members have very different ideas and expectations of this role which range from a litter-picker to someone who reports and chases Cheshire East. The Clerk expressed that there is still work to be done if we are to be successful in the delivery of the Ranger position. It was suggested that a good start point would be to establish CEC statutory regime and to determine whether all tasks are being delivered, we could then decide if and how STC wishes to support CEC in its service, without resulting in double taxation.

RESOLVED: that an assessment of CEC Statutory functions is undertaken.

* following the meeting, the Clerk suggested a plan of action, which was implemented immediately. Progress against the plan will be reported to the Committee at its next meeting.

12. MARKET HALL PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM

Lead: Clerk

A PA system was originally included in the Market Hall upgrade but omitted due to the availability of funds, with members indicating that they would like this to remain a requirement for the completed upgrade.

An amount of £3,000 is available through the 2019/20 budget. A quotation of £2867.76 has been received from Hipswing and Officers are in the process of obtaining two additional quotations.

Members are asked to approve the installation of the PA system and to make available up to £3,000 for the purpose, with spend being delegated to the Clerk.

In addition to the purchase of the PA system, the Clerk informed members that a PPS/PRS licence is required for music to be broadcast in the Market Hall, such a licence would cost £879 per annum and it is the Clerk's intention to recommend that this is covered through a slight stall rent increase, which will be reported to the next meeting. Live music licences should be paid for as required and will be charged on an individual basis to the person hiring the hall.

RESOLVED: that purchase and installation of PA System in the Market Hall is approved, with £3,000 being made available through 2019/20 budget line 191 6230. Spend is delegated to the Clerk.

13. REPLACEMENT LITTER BIN O/S TOWN HALL

Lead: Clerk

An email from ANSA was received which reported that the waste bin to the front of the Town Hall was in need of repair; the Clerk reported replacement would be in the region of £400.

Members suggested that full condition audit of all public realm equipment is undertaken, in the meantime a repair of the bin to be undertaken.

Action: To undertake full condition audit of public realm equipment.

14. PAYMENT APPROVAL – TALE GATE

Lead: Clerk

Pre-approval to book Talegate for the 2020 pantomime was sought.

RESOLVED: that expenditure of £1,520 + VAT for the 2020 pantomime is approved.

15. COMPLAINT RE TRADER

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

16. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

None defined.

17. DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting of the Assets and Services Committee is Tuesday 17 March at 7.00pm.

Meeting Closed at: 8.52pm

LC/AB/200128

Cllr L Crane

CONFIDENTIAL

Under the Public Bodies Admissions to Meetings Act 1960, the following item was considered with the exclusion of public and press.

Item 15 due to commercial sensitivity and personal details being shared.

Present: Cllrs Hovey, Jack, Smith, Williams, Seymour, Hoffmann, L Crane

15. COMPLAINT RE TRADER

The Clerk reported legal advice received and outlined options available.

Unanimous decision.

RESOLVED: that the Trader is expelled from the Market. The Council's solicitor to draft a letter to be handed/sent to the Trader as soon as possible

Terms and Conditions to be reviewed and revised as necessary.

Closed Session closed: 9.10pm

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