

SANDBACH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Sandbach Town Council held on 27 February 2020 at 7.00pm at Sandbach Literary Institution.

PRESENT

Councillors: M Muldoon (Mayor)
 G Price Jones (Deputy Mayor)
 S Corcoran (arrived 7.19pm)
 R Hovey
 L Crane
 S Crane
 S Broad
 D Jack
 K Seymour
 A Smith
 S Kirkham
 I Williams
 G Merry
 J Beddows
 K Flavell

Also present were approximately twelve members of the public and press, which included three co-option candidates.

Prayer read by Cllr Price Jones.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs: S Ashcombe Hurt
 M Lea
 P Eaton

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Beddows declared an interest in item 23, he will not participate in the debate and will leave the room.

3. MAYORS COMMENTS

Due to the length of the agenda there were no Mayor's Comments, however he announced his forthcoming fund-raiser quiz on Friday 24 April.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Speaker Number 1

Was appalled when reading last week's Chronicle to see that quoracy was being reconsidered. She reminded members of the Lessons Learned Review and that there had been very good reasons for changing the quoracy.

She went on to mention a report in the Chronicle about the Ranger role and asked in the position was changing; the Clerk responded.

She then expressed concern about the invoice for £16,000 for Blitz. The Clerk gave a breakdown to show that not all of the invoice related directly to the normal Christmas Light provision and reminded all that the budget for Christmas Lights and the Christmas Tree were separate.

Speaker Number 2

Felt the same as Speaker Number 1 and is upset that the Council would consider reducing the number of members needed at a Working Group. She reminded members that the previous problems had related specifically to Working Groups doing work without the knowledge of Council

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

RESOLVED: that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, item numbers 21, 22 & 23 will be debated in the absence of public and press.

Items 21 and 22 due to the personnel nature and item 23 due to commercial sensitivity and that an individual is named.

5. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS HELD ON 28 NOVEMBER AND 5 DECEMBER 2019.

RESOLVED: that the minutes 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 16 DECEMBER 2019, 8 JANUARY 2020 AND 27 JANUARY 2020.

RESOLVED: that the minutes are noted.

8. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE – NONE HELD.

9. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE FINANCE, POLICY AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 6 FEBRUARY 2020 (DRAFT).

RESOLVED: that the minutes are noted.

10. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE – NO MEETINGS HELD

11. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE EVENTS SUB-COMMITTEE HELD ON 22 JANUARY 2020.

RESOLVED: that the minutes are noted.

12. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE ASSETS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD 28 JANUARY 2020.

RESOLVED: that the minutes are noted.

13. TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE SMALL COMMON REFURBISHMENT SUB-COMMITTEE – NO MEETINGS HELD.

14. MATTERS ARISING FROM COMMITTEE MEETINGS

14.1 Assets and Services Committee – Covered Car Park

Lead: Cllr Jack

A report was presented which reminded members of their ongoing committed reserves for the resurfacing of the Small Common Car Park and suggested that wider improvements are considered, which could include a covered market/event area. On commencement of the financial year 2020/21 in excess of £200k will be available for this purpose.

Council is asked to make available not more than £3,500 to enable a feasibility study to be undertaken, through which a range of options will be explored.

Council felt that more consideration should be given before developing the feasibility study, part of this would be to develop a brief to give to whoever undertakes the study.

The original proposal was defeated, and it was

RESOLVED: that the matter is referred back to Assets and Services for further consideration and discussion.

14.2 Finance Committee – Financial Regulations

Lead: Chair of F, P & G

Following the most recent Internal Audit, a change to Financial Regulation 4.1 was proposed to enable the Clerk to approve spend up to £1,500 without the need for second signatory.

RESOLVED: that the amended Financial Regulation 4.1 is approved with immediate effect.

14.3 Finance Committee – Sandbach Partnership SLA

Lead: Chair of F, P & G

The Clerk reported that, due to changes that had been discussed at the last F,P&G Meeting, the Partnership had not yet approved the amendments, therefore the document was not available for adoption at the meeting.

RESOLVED: that the Clerk's report be noted.

15. CO-OPTION

Lead: The Clerk

RESOLVED: that Mr Donal Hegarty is co-opted to the vacant Sandbach Heath and East Councillor seat.

Mr Hegarty signed his Acceptance of Office and joined the meeting.

16. CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT (ANNUAL REVIEW)

Lead: The Clerk

The Clerk presented revised Corporate Risk documents. She informed members that through the annual review some changes have been made and reminded them that as part of the Council's Standing Orders this has to be done on an annual basis at a minimum.

RESOLVED: that the Corporate Risk Management document for 2020-2021 is approved.

17. MARKET OFFICE WORKS

Lead: The Clerk

The Clerk reported that works to the office are now complete. She stated that the works have come in slightly under budget at £48,610.08 and that £1,215 has been held as a retention. She pointed out that we have incurred more VAT than originally expected, due to the levels of irrecoverable VAT which are based on carrying transactions. The Architects invoice has been adjusted and is more than expected, members were asked to approve an invoice for £594.83.

RESOLVED: that

- i) The Report of Office Completion be noted.
- ii) The additional David Trowler Associates invoice of £594.83 plus VAT is approved. Payment to be delegated to Officers.

18. TOWN HALL OFFICE ACCOMMODATION – PHASE II

Lead: The Clerk

Following completion of the Market Office works, focus has moved to office and working conditions for the staff based at the SLI. Having considered various options over several years, it is felt that consideration should be given to our own building: The Town Hall Complex. A move of this nature would generate financial savings and bring all staff together under one roof.

There is currently £74,400 budget for the improvement/creation of office space for the Administrative staff. Members are asked to approve a quotation for £4,500 to appoint an architect, subject to later approval, this fee also includes delivery of any approved project.

RESOLVED: that

- i) the Council accepts the quotation from David Trowler Association and agrees to the appointment of an Architect/Project Manager to draw up plans and deliver the remodelling works to provide a multi-purpose public toilet cubicle and extend the Town Hall office space to utilise the existing

male/female toilets and storage areas. Total quotation for professional fees value £4,500.

- ii) That the Council authorises the Clerk and the Office Working Group to work with Architect B to draw up plans for the works as outlined at 1 (above).
- iii) That the Council commits to the Office and Public Toilet works to a maximum cost of £74,400 + VAT from budget line 347 (Office Project), subject to the approval of detailed plans and with the necessary planning and building conditions being approved.

19. TIDY TOWN AND CONSERVATION WORKING GROUPS

Lead: The Clerk

Since the election in May 2019, there have been insufficient volunteers to enable these two groups to meet. The Clerk gave a brief overview of the work that has previously been undertaken and said that both groups have been regarded as important. She asked members to agree to Tidy Town and Conservation becoming regular items to be considered by the C&E Committee.

RESOLVED: That:

- i) The Conservation Working Group and Tidy Town Sub-Committees are dissolved with both becoming regular agenda items for the Community and Environment Committee, for the purpose of highlighting any items which would previously have been considered and undertaken by the two groups and their members.
- ii) That reporting of these two groups be considered within the Town Clerk's review of current Committee Structure suitability.

20. ELECTRIC BUSES

Lead: The Clerk

The Clerk has previously alerted members to funding available via Central Government to create the first all-electric bus town, after liaising with CEC it is clear that STC is unlikely to meet the criteria to become a Pilot Town. The Clerk informed Council that there will be additional funding available and asked if CEC should be encouraged to support Sandbach when bids are made.

RESOLVED: that STC write to CEC to request that they engage with Sandbach Town Council regarding any future funding opportunities.

21. TEMPORARY STAFF REPORT

Lead: The Clerk

Considerer with the exclusion of public and press.

RESOLVED: that Council notes the two new part-time positions, which are temporary for three months.

22. STAFF WELFARE AND REVIEW

Lead: The Mayor

Considered with the exclusion of public and press.

RESOLVED: that the matter is referred back to the Personnel Committee and that if the current Working Group is unable to meet, that a new Working Group is formed as soon as possible.

23. TRADER DISPUTE

Lead: The Clerk

Considered with the exclusion of public and press.

Cllr Beddows left the room whilst the item was considered.

RESOLVED: that the trader is reinstated with immediate effect, subject to a goodwill payment of £500* being paid to the complainant.

**this payment will be paid to Sandbach Town Council, who will ensure that it is conveyed to the complainant.*

SUPPLEMENTARY

1. FUNDS FOR EVENTS SUB-COMMITTEE EVENTS 2020-2021

Lead: The Clerk

There is currently £15,870 in committed reserves for the delivery of Events; there is no budget for 2020/21. Council was asked to release the committed reserves to enable the events planned for 2020 to go ahead. Management of the funds would be overseen by the Community and Environment Committee.

RESOLVED: that £15,870 (Committed funds) is made available for Events organised by the Events Sub-Committee in 2020-2021. The spend of which is to be overseen by Community and Environment Committee.

2. APPROVAL TO PAY INVOICE – BLITZ FIREWORKS

Lead: The Clerk

An invoice for £16,065.60 has been received from Blitz for the 2019 Christmas Lights. The Clerk gave a breakdown of the invoice, which includes £2677.60 reclaimable VAT, £1,500 pre-approved Christmas Tree, £1,000 for future storage which gives an annual saving of £2,165 and emergency repairs, which had not been expected.

Approval to pay the invoice was requested.

RESOLVED: that the Invoice amount of £16,065.60 is approved for payment. Payment will be allocated to 110 4508 for the Lights and 400 6500 for the tree. Payment is delegated to Officers.

24. MEMBERS ITEMS

24.1 Cllr Jack – Making Council Meetings mobility accessible

Cllr Jack referred to accessibility problems when meetings are held in the SLI and requested that with immediate effect meetings are transferred to rooms within the Town Hall complex. He also asked that improved access to the Board Room is investigated.

Through discussion concern was expressed that in utilising out own rooms for meetings, the potential for income could be lost, also, due to current regular bookings, there may be a need for meeting days to be changed. It was acknowledged that due to sound quality, the rooms might not be ideal for people with hearing difficulties, although generally agreed that there is an easy solution to this.

Members supported the proposal, but felt that more work was required before making any changes.

RESOLVED: that the matter is referred to A&S for further consideration, with a report and recommendations being presented to Council for approval.

24.2 Cllr Jack – Providing a dedicated buyer for Sandbach Town Council

Cllr Jack put forward a proposal that Sandbach Town Council allocates 3 hours per week additional staffing for the role of buyer with the responsibility of pricing, sourcing and reviewing all products and services on a cost and quality base.

Members felt that this should be considered under the work of agenda item 22.

The motion was not seconded, therefore lost.

25. CORRESPONDENCE

25.1 Sandbach Cricket Club

Email dated 3 January regarding letters of support for grant applications.

RESOLVED: that the Council write a letter of support for Sandbach Cricket Club.

25.2 Local Team GB Athlete

Letter dated 11 January regarding support for fundraising.

Cllr Hovey declared an interest.

RESOLVED: that this is delegated to the F,P&G Committee for consideration.

26. DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Town Council Meeting will be on Thursday 16 April 2020 at 7.00pm in The Chamber, Sandbach Literary Institution.

Meeting closed 9.21pm

Cllr M Muldoon, Town Mayor

ALB