



SANDBACH TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Minutes for the meeting held on Wednesday, 13th December 2023 at 7.00pm in Sandbach Town Hall

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

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Cllrs J Beddows and G Price Jones. Absent without apologies Cllrs D Poole and S Broad.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs S Corcoran, N Cook, L Crane and M Muldoon declared a non-pecuniary non-prejudicial interests due to their role as Cheshire East Councillors.

3. MAYOR'S COMMENTS

The Mayor updated the meeting on the last week's activities which had been busy with numerous Christmas events. She made a special mention of the Tree of Life Event organised by Friends of the Cemetery and part funded by the Town Council. The Mayor thanked a member of the Council who had played a major role in organising this event. The Mayor announced that she was delighted to confirm that Sandbach Town Council was now 'officially' a dementia friendly Council and that she had received the certificate earlier in the month. She particularly thanked Cllr Hegarty for his work to deliver this for the Council. Finally, the Mayor thanked all members and staff who had gathered earlier to individually sign the Member – Officer Protocol, adopted by the Council at its meeting last week, as a commitment to follow the best practice model for effective working in the public interest.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

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

Katy O Regan spoke to the Council, regarding some correspondence she had previously sent to all Councillors, regarding her proposal to invite the Council in collaborative working with her local publication 'Go Local Sandbach' for its events and publicity. A number of questions were asked in advance of the debate held on the item later on the agenda.

Ex Councillor, Mr. Richard Hovey, also asked a question, which had been sent in advance to the Chief Officer, regarding the Town Council's plans to reestablish the Neighbourhood Working Group in the light of recent developments and not least the revised HS2 proposals. Cllr Muldoon, as Vice Chair of PCE Committee welcomed the question and confirmed that the PCE Committee would be discussing this at their next meeting and would welcome Mr Hovey's input when the working group was re launched.

After the questions the Mayor reconvened the Town Council Meeting.

4. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Lead: Chair

Resolved: *No items were excluded from press and public under the Public Bodies (admission to Meetings) Act 1960.*

5. CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL SANDBACH MATTERS

Lead: Cllr Sam Corcoran

Cllr Corcoran updated members on Sandbach specific CEC matters. He confirmed the many consultations which are currently underway and provided the deadlines and relevant committee dates. He noted that Crewe was the biggest loser under the revised HS2 plans, yet was receiving no compensatory funding under Network North proposals. He noted that the Sandbach High Street was performing well and felt that this demonstrated change did not necessarily mean decline. Cllr Nevitt sought clarification on when the cemetery report would be published as she felt this was overdue.

Action: *the update on CEC Sandbach matters was received.*

6. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 6 DECEMBER 2023 [ATTACHED].

Resolved: *The minutes of the meeting of 6th December were approved as an accurate record.*

7. CEC STRATEGIC LEISURE REVIEW CONSULTATION LAUNCH

Attached: [email from CEC relating to the Strategic Leisure Review consultation]

Lead: Mayor

A wide discussion took place regarding CEC's Strategic Leisure Review and the impact it could have on Sandbach. Cllr Arnold reported that he and Cllr Crane (and the Chief Officer) had attended a briefing from the Interim CEC Head of Environment Services, who had explained the background and detail of the proposals which focussed on the Sandbach (Joint Use) Leisure Centre. It was highlighted that the major cost of the Centre was the Joint Use Pool and that CEC were exploring a number of options and principles to reduce costs or increase income to meet additional budget reduction targets for 2024-25.

A number of individual points were made to object to any reduction in service or increase in prices for Sandbach residents for this facility and that it was in high demand providing a valuable service, not least teaching young (all) people to swim at an affordable rate. The essential link was made between the provision of leisure services and improved health outcomes, and that the 'Tartan Rug' exercise to identify needs analysis had highlighted that Sandbach had pockets of deprivation, an elderly population and a large cohort of young families. As part of the debate, Sandbach residents were implored to respond to the consultation directly and / or ensure they used the facilities as much as they were able to demonstrate its value to the community and the Borough Council.

The unanimous position of the Council was to respond to the consultation capturing the points made and strongly objecting to any proposals to reduce this provision, increase prices or limit its access in any way.

Resolved: *To approve delegated authority to the Chief Officer to draft a response based on the comments made at Council, share it with Council, publish on the website as a framework for the public to participate, and submit to CEC by the deadline of 7th January 2024.*

8. D DAY 2024 & VE DAY 2025 80 YEAR COMMEMORATIVE EVENTS

Lead: Community & Events Committee Vice Chair

Cllr Nevitt outlined the significance of these events and emphasised the need to plan early in order to make adequate provision. This was supported by Council and Cllr Crane suggested that VJ Day should also be commemorated and dealt with by the same working group. Members were asked to confirm to the Chief Officer to join the working group which would deal with all 3 events.

Resolved: *to develop proposals for 80 Year commemorative events for D DAY (June 2024) VE DAY (May 2025) and VJ Day (August 2025) for Council to consider and include within the Town Council events programme, through one specific working group.*

9. VIMIERA ANNUAL COMMEMORATION VERBAL UPDATE

Lead: Mayor

Resolved: *the arrangements for the Vimiera Commemorative event were noted, and it was approved that this significant event would be included in the Town Council's annual event programme on 9th January each year.*

10. HOSTING YIZKOR IN THE LEAD UP TO HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY 2024 AT SANDBACH TOWN HALL

Lead: Mayor / Cllr S Corcoran

Members felt that this was a valuable event and were happy to support it through free use of the town hall. It was noted that this should not be confused with possible hire of the Town Hall for the annual Holocaust Memorial Day which would be offered to CEC at the standard commercial rate as usual.

Resolved: *To provide the Town Hall free of charge to host Yizkor on Monday 22nd January 2024.*

11. CORRESPONDENCE

Lead: Mayor

The Mayor returned to the presentation which had been made under public questions. She confirmed that the Council had to be impartial in terms of sharing publicity and obliged to meet various financial regulations regarding procurement etc. Overall the Council welcomed the invitation to work with Go Local and all other publicity outlets in the interests of better communications and public engagement. The point was made that this would be dealt with under the Council's wider communications and engagement strategy review.

Resolved: *the presentation and correspondence were noted.*

12. ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS & PUBLICITY

Lead: Mayor

Resolved: *Commemoration Working Group proposals; Vimiera event; Neighbourhood Planning Working Group set up and proposals.*

13. DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Town Council Meeting is the taking place on Wednesday 6th March 2024 at 7pm in Sandbach Town Hall