



## SANDBACH TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Minutes for the meeting held on **Wednesday, 6 March 2024 at 7.00pm** in Sandbach Town Hall.

Present: Cllrs J Arnold, J Beddows, S Broad, N Cook, S Corcoran, M Deakin, K England, K Flavell, R Gray, D Hegarty, M Mitchell, M Muldoon, A Nevitt (Acting Chair), D Poole, G Price Jones, S Richards, T Wheatcroft.

The meeting was clerked by the Chief Officer, Ceri Lloyd.

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

Apologies were received by Cllrs L Crane, M Hough, G Lindop, L MacGregor (all personal).

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

All CEC members declared non-pecuniary non prejudicial interests for CEC related items on the agenda. Cllr Nevitt declared a non-pecuniary non prejudicial interest in items 4, 9, 16 and 19. There was no stated intention to withdraw from debate or voting for these items. Cllr Beddows and Price Jones later declared a non-pecuniary non prejudicial interest in item 15 and withdrew from the vote.

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

Deputy Mayor Cllr Nevitt confirmed that she would undertake the role of Acting Mayor as the current Mayor is not well enough to undertake Town Council duties until further notice. This was confirmed by the Chief Officer as the correct procedure in the circumstances.

The Acting Mayor reported that she has attended the opening of the Buddies session since the last meeting and that it had been an amazing and heartening experience. She encouraged others to get involved if they could.

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### **PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

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

Mr Bunte spoke to item 11 in support of the proposed updated CEC crossing strategy but requested Town Council support for his concerns regarding pedestrian resting places.

Martin Forster spoke in support of item 9 for a 3 year funding request for the Transport Festival Committee and provided an update on arrangements for the 2024 Festival which are well underway. He stated that approximately £7.5K had been raised for the 2024 Festival through other sources than the Town Council.

A resident asked how much a parking meter would cost to install under item 10, the CEC Parking Strategy and stated that he opposed any parking charges in Sandbach. He felt that the costs would outweigh the benefits.

The Mayor thanked all the speakers. She also thanked the Transport Festival Committee for all their hard work and voluntary contribution to the significant town event. She confirmed that the Town Council had comprehensively responded to the Parking Consultation and strongly objected to the parking proposals but that a decision had now been made by Cheshire East Council.

The Mayor reconvened the Town Council Meeting.

*If a member of the public wishes to speak to an item which is NOT on the agenda, we request that written confirmation of the question to be raised is received by the Chief Officer three working days prior to the meeting, via [chiefofficer@sandbach.gov.uk](mailto:chiefofficer@sandbach.gov.uk)*

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#### **4. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**Lead: Chair**

**Resolved:** *Under the Public Bodies (admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and accredited representatives of newspaper, be excluded from the meeting for the items 23 and 24 of business on this Agenda 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.*

#### **5. CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL SANDBACH MATTERS**

**Lead: Cllr Nicola Cook**

Cllr Cook updated the Council on a number of developments from recent Committees, this included:

- i) That as part of their budget strategy CEC are now prioritising to work more closely with town and parish councils.
- ii) CEC have now approved its submission to the independent electoral commission in regard to the ward boundary review. Cllr Cook outlined recommendations made and encouraged councillors to submit their views to the consultation which finishes on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2024.
- iii) The CEC Local Nature Recovery Strategy was briefly outlined, and Cllr Cook suggested the council forms a response.
- iv) An update on the approval of the Green Spaces Strategy was provided, which included a number of positive changes made to the strategy that affect green spaces in Sandbach.

- v) There was a brief update on the Cemetery Strategy, during which Cllr Nevitt's work was commended for her well documented work on Sandbach Cemetery which had now been reflected in CEC policy.

**Resolved:** *the verbal update was welcomed and noted.*

**6. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 13 DECEMBER 2023.**

**Resolved:** *Subject to the correction of E Gray to R Gray of Councillors present, the minutes were approved.*

**7. TO NOTE COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**Resolved:**

*7.1 Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning, Consultation & Environment Committees held on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024 (DRAFT) were noted.*

*7.2 Minutes of the Meeting of the Assets & Services Committee held on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024 (DRAFT) were noted.*

*7.3 Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance, Policy & Governance Committee held on 07<sup>th</sup> February 2024 (DRAFT) were noted*

**8. MATTERS ARISING**

**8.1 Assets & Services Committee 31 January 2024**

[Link: Item 10 A&S Agenda]

Lead: Assets & Services Committee Chair

**Resolved:** *the recommendation of the Committee was approved as follows:*

- i) The business case for updated single gazebos was noted;*
- ii) The committee recommends to Council that an investment of £10,516, funded from the earmarked reserve for this purpose, is approved.*

**8.2 Finance, Policy & Governance Committee 7 February 2024**

[Attached: Draft Investment Policy]

Lead: Finance, Policy & Governance Committee Chair

**Resolved:** *the updated investment policy was approved as drafted, subject to a statement being added which states 'the Town Council will ensure there is an ethical statement on record from the organisations in which it invests'.*

**TRANSPORT FESTIVAL 3 YEAR FUNDING APPLICATION**

[Attached: Transport Festival Committee Report; Transport Festival Grant Application & supporting documents]

Lead: Mayor

Several members spoke in support of the Transport Festival and the Town Council's role to financially support a key annual event in the town. Whilst acknowledging this was a sizable financial commitment it was generally felt that this was in keeping with the Council's corporate objectives and good value for money for residents who could enjoy a free event in the town at a useful time in the event calendar. The overall gross cost of around £30K, and additional funding streams generated by the committee, was noted.

**Resolved:** *the requested (and capped) grant application of £20,000 per year for a 3-year agreement to fund the Transport Festivals in April 2026, April 2027 and April 2028 was approved.*

**9. CEC CAR PARKING STRATEGY – STC RESPONSE**

[Link: CEC Approved Parking Strategy found here:

[https://moderngov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ecminutes/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=961&MId=9854&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://moderngov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/ecminutes/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=961&MId=9854&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)]

Lead: Mayor

Members discussed the outcome of the parking strategy and their ongoing concerns on behalf of residents. It was agreed that further work needed to be done in liaison with CEC officers to develop possible costed mitigations.

Reference was made to including exploring better public transport for the town as part of this exercise. It was agreed that a task and finish group should be set up so that options could be properly researched and explored with key partners and contributors. Several members expressed an interest and were asked to confirm with the Chief Officer. It was noted also that the previous parking strategy consultation response was available on the Town Council's website and still had relevance as a useful reference document.

**Resolved:** to set up a task and finish group to research costed mitigations available and to report back to the next Full Council for decision.

**10. CEC CROSSING STRATEGY (Deadline 10 March)**

[Attached: CEC Crossing Strategy]

Lead: Mayor

The strategy was welcomed as it was felt that more effective criteria was now being proposed. Mr Bunte was thanked for his continued contribution to improve conditions for cyclists. Cllr Wheatcroft was thanked for preparing a useful draft response on behalf of the Council which was endorsed with the inclusion of Mr. Bunte's comments ref pedestrian resting places.

**Resolved:** *delegated authority was approved to the Chief Officer, in consultation with Cllr Wheatcroft, to submit the draft Council's response prepared by Cllr Wheatcroft, amended to reflect Mr. Bunte's comments, by the deadline of 10 March.*

**11. ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOR (ASB) FRAMEWORK**

[Attached: ASB Framework Report]

Lead: Mayor / Police Lead Member Cllr Kelvin England

Cllr England's work to move this forward was acknowledged but it was felt that further work needed to be done on the framework and to clarify the role of Town Council members in this regard. It was agreed that a small task and finish group should be set up to complete this work and ensure that the Council delivers its contribution for anti social behaviour in the town in partnership with others.

**Resolved:** *To set up a task and finish group to finalise and clarify the ASB Framework for consideration at a future Full Council Meeting.*

**12. COUNCIL EVENT PROGRAMME**

[Attached: Chief Officer Report]

Lead: Mayor / Community & Events Committee Chair

The events programme and report ,was endorsed. A question was raised about the inaugural Festival of Light event which had been postponed by Council for consideration in January 2025, but not yet designed or costed. The Chief Officer will progress the necessary arrangements via the Community and Events Committee.

**Resolved:** *the events programme for 2024-25 was endorsed.*

### **13. SANDBACH TOWN CRIER**

Lead: Mayor

The Acting Mayor reported her discussions with the Town Crier. Council unanimously thanked the Town Crier for his service to the town and a suggestion was made to commemorate this in a special way. This will be progressed by the Chief Officer's office.

**Resolved:**

- i) the Sandbach Town Crier was whole heartedly thanked for his excellent service having been a great ambassador for the town for over forty years;*
- ii) the final event for the Town Crier to be during the Transport Festival on 20 and 21 April 2024 was confirmed;*
- iii) the appointment of a new Town Crier through a competition during the Day of Dance event on 1 June or other suitable occasion, and delegate the new appointment to the Chief Officer in consultation with the Mayor, was approved.*

### **14. YOUTH CLUB & CONSULTATION UPDATE**

[CEC Draft SLA and Chief Officer Report circulated to members]

Lead: Mayor

The proposal for the Town Council to set up and run a weekly Youth Club in the Town Hall, supported professionally by the CEC Youth Service through a service level agreement was very positively received by Council and the Chief Officer and CEC officers were thanked for developing the proposal.

**Resolved:**

- i) the joint public consultation for Youth Service Provision in Sandbach between CEC Youth Service and Sandbach Town Council, approved by Council; was noted*
- ii) the CEC SLA for Youth Service Support to run a Youth Club was approved;*
- iii) the appointment of staff initially on a 12 month contract to deliver a Youth Club, as approved by Council on 13 December 2023, funded by the Youth Provision earmarked reserve of £30K was approved.*
- iv) the intention to apply for grant funding of suitable Youth Club kit based on the outcome of the Consultation and CEC Youth Service advice was noted.*

### **15. D DAY 2024 PROPOSALS**

[Attached: D Day Working Group meeting notes and actions]

Lead: D Day Working Group Lead Cllr Ann Nevitt

The Council welcomed the work of the D Day Working Group and supported the approach being developed.

**Actions:**

- i) the proposal for the D Day Event was noted and approved;*
- ii) delegated authority of the implementation of the event to the Chief Officer in consultation with the D Day Working Group was approved;*

- iii) *a maximum budget of £2,000 to be funded from General Reserves to fund this one off event, was approved.*

**16. MEMBER'S ITEM (CLLR WHEATCROFT – MONITORING PLANNING DECISIONS)**

[Attached: Member's item form]

Lead: Cllr Tim Wheatcroft

Several members felt that this proposal would be difficult to implement, replicate the role of CEC Councillors and would absorb town council resources.

**Resolved:** *the member proposal fell.*

**17. MEMBER'S ITEM (CLLR RICHARDS – SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT)**

[Attached: Member's item form]

Lead: Cllr Simon Richards

The proposal was welcomed by Council as a really positive way to engage with young residents of Sandbach and schools. Cllr Richards was thanked for his work on this.

**Action:** *the member proposal was approved.*

**18. GRANT FEEDBACK**

[Attached: Grant Feedback Form]

Lead: Mayor

Acting Mayor Cllr Nevitt reported back on the event which had been very well attended and valued in the community. Cllr Nevitt also reported that due to additional fund raising activities of the Friend of the Cemetery Group £1,000 was being returned to the Town Council, reducing the grant contribution to £500.

**Resolved:** *the feedback from Council funded event was noted and the refund of £1,000 welcomed.*

**19. FINANCE UPDATE**

[Attached: Third Quarter budget statement and variance analysis]

Lead: Chief Officer

The Chief Officer commented on the variance analysis provided and the Council was still in track to come within its budget for 2023-24.

**Resolved:** *the third quarter budget statement and variance analysis was approved.*

**20. SO 27 URGENCY DECISIONS REPORT**

**21.1 Festive Illuminations Lighting Contract 2024 to 2026**

[Attached: Festive Illuminations Lighting Contract]

Lead: Chief Officer

**Resolved:** *The decision taken under the Council's urgency procedures to approve a 3 year contract with Blitz Fireworks Limited was noted.*

**21.2 Bloom Service Agreement 2024**

[Attached: Bloom Service Agreement]

Lead: Chief Officer

**Resolved:** *The decision taken under the Council's urgency procedures to approve a 1 year contract with ANSA was noted.*

## 21. SANDBACH TOWN COUNCIL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION APPRENTICE SCHEME

[Attached: Chief Officer Report]

Lead: Mayor

The proposal to appoint an apprentice was unanimously supported by Council. The Chief Officer was asked to ensure liaison with all suitable colleges for this initiative.

**Action:** *the proposed apprentice scheme to be launched in 2024-25, delegated to the Chief Officer, subject to arrangements explored with suitable colleges, was approved.*

## 22. RANGER SERVICE

[ANSA Ranger Service Level Agreement circulated to members]

Lead: Mayor

Council resolved, at its meeting on 6 December 2023, that it would buy in a Ranger Service from 2024-25 as part of its budget approval decision. It was noted that there would be a part year cost effect of this proposal on the 2024-25 budget provision due to an in year start date.

**Resolved:**

- i) *the Service Level Agreement to be funded by the 2024-25 revenue budget provision was approved;*
- ii) *delegated authority to the Chief Officer to finalise and implement a 2 year SLA during 2024-25 was approved;*

## 23. STAFFING UPDATE

Lead: Chief Officer

**Resolved:**

- i) *an update regarding current staffing issues was noted;*
- ii) *delegated authority to the Chief officer in consultation with the Chair of Personnel and the Council's external HR adviser to progress a current issue to conclusion as agreed at the meeting was approved;*
- iii) *a permanent contract to a position below scale 18 change was noted*
- iv) *a 6 month temporary staffing structure to be implemented 1 April 2024 through a process agreed with the Council's external HR adviser was noted and supported.*

## 24. ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS & PUBLICITY

Lead: Mayor

**Resolved:** *Several positive items for publicity delegated to the Chief Officer's office.*

## 25. DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 15 May 2024 (Annual General Meeting and Mayor Making) at 7pm in Sandbach Town Hall.

Meeting Closed 9.30pm (resolved by Council)

Acting Mayor Cllr Ann Nevitt

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