

SANDBACH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance Committee held at 7.15pm on 24 July 2003 at the CVS offices, Hope Street, Sandbach.

PRESENT

Councillors: M R Sherman, Chairman
 B E Moran, Vice-Chairman
 Councillors: Mrs P E M Price
 D Lloyd-Griffiths
 J J Moore
 N T Price
 W W Scragg
 J M Keeling, Chairman of the Council

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors: J Iddon
 E A Lea
 L Morris

2. FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR APPROVAL

These were presented with additional information showing bank balances.

The need for membership of the Community Council was asked. This topic was best raised at the November budget meeting. However, membership of the Council was needed to allow Sandbach in Bloom to enter the Civic Pride competition.

RESOLVED: that the statement is approved and that the new format is continued for future meetings.

3. CASH PROJECTION FOR APPROVAL

RESOLVED: that the statement is approved.

4. CONFIRM STATEMENT OF 'EAR-MARKED' RESERVES

RESOLVED: that the statement is approved.

5. LETTERS OF THANKS FOR DONATIONS**5.1 St John Church**

RESOLVED: that the letter is received.

6. APPLICATIONS FOR DONATIONS

A number of organisations had been placed on the agenda that had sent a letter applying for funds but from whom no completed application form had been received. It was decided that future agendas would note the organisation involved and the date that application forms had been sent to them.

6.1 North West Army Cadet Force

They seek support for the North West Army Cadet Force Trust Fund Appeal. Application form sent 21 July 2003.

RESOLVED: that the completed application form will be considered after it has been received by the Clerk.

6.2 Sandbach Town Dynamos

They want £600 for new kit. Application form sent 21 July 2003.

RESOLVED: that the completed application form will be considered after it has been received by the Clerk.

6.3 Air Cadets

They would like help to purchase a set of marching bells. Application form sent 25 June 2003.

RESOLVED: that the completed application form will be considered after it has been received by the Clerk.

6.4 Sandbach Today

They have asked for a further donation for this event. They sent their annual accounts but they seemed to be incomplete. Application form sent 21 July 2003.

RESOLVED: that the completed application form will be considered after it has been received by the Clerk.

6.5 Photographic Society

The Photographic Society applied for help to replace their projector and screen. Members felt that the completed application form that had been sent gave them the information they needed to reach a decision. It was noted that they had not tried any other form of fundraising.

RESOLVED: that a donation of £200 is made towards the cost of a new screen and projector and that they are encouraged to make other efforts to raise the outstanding cash needed.

6.6 Sandbach County Primary School

Cllr Moran declared an interest as a school governor.

They sent a completed application form dated 22 July 2003, requesting a grant of £2,000 towards moving the nursery school into the main building from mobiles in the playground and the provision of a landscaped play area. They had previously received a grant of £1,700 during the financial year 2001/2. Members were not happy with some of the statements in the form.

RESOLVED: that Cllr Moran obtains clarification from the School and report back to the next Finance Committee Meeting.

6.7 Sandbach Voices

They request support for their concerts and enclosed the three years' sets of accounts previously called for by the Finance Committee.

RESOLVED: that they are required to complete a form before their request is considered.

7. INTERNAL AUDIT

The following recommendations were made by the internal auditor, Mr John Henry of JDH Public Sector Services.

- 7.1 Council should consider amending contract regulations to give greater clarity to the procurement process for contracts above the tendering threshold.
- 7.2 Council should forward evidence that three tenders were sought from suppliers on the appropriate approved list.
- 7.3 Cheque stubs should be initialled by cheque signatories in future.
- 7.4 Travel expenses are administrative expenses and should be included in 'Other Payments' in the annual return.
- 7.5 The Inland Revenue should be notified of lump sum allowances (usually via the P11D or P9D forms).

The Committee's comments are as follows: -

- 7.6 It is most unusual for the Council to place contracts. They are usually placed by the Borough or County Councils on its behalf. The bi-annual review of the Financial Regulations is due at the end of the year. The approved lists would be provided by the County or Borough Council.
- 7.7 The advice given by the County Council Joint Highways was that Jarvis were the County's approved highways contractor and that its subsidiary, Prismo, must be used for the procurement of road signs sited on Cheshire roads.
- 7.8 The Council has already started the initialling of cheque stubs.
- 7.9 This will be implemented starting the current year.
- 7.10 This will be done.

It was thought that the internal auditor should have given an explicit response to each of the tests he carried out.

RESOLVED: that the Clerk writes to Mr Henry with the above comments.

8. CHAIRMAN'S CHARITY ACCOUNT

The draft accounts were presented at the meeting. The total raised during the year available for distribution was £2,425. Cllr Alcock had not yet decided on the recipients and the size of the donations. Hitherto the Charity Account had not been published in the Finance Committee minutes. It was felt it was better for those involved if in future the Committee approved the accounts. It was agreed that the Charity financial year should be the calendar year to allow time to collect all contributions, to select recipients and to make donations.

RESOLVED: that the draft accounts are received.

9. MATTERS REFERRED FROM THE TOWN COUNCIL 22 MAY 2003

Members discussed the timing and frequency of tasks associated with the annual audit. Some discussion took place about some of the checks being carried out during the course of the year. The Clerk said that the critical period was time between the end of the financial year on 31 March and the

submission of the audit form to the external auditor mid July. During that time the accounts had to be prepared by the Responsible Finance Officer, audited by the internal auditor and approved by the Council.

RESOLVED: that the internal auditor is asked about the possibility of him being available to answer Finance Committee members' questions in person.

10. MATTERS REFERRED FROM THE TOWN COUNCIL 10 JULY 2003

Approval of Annual Accounts for the year 2002/3 by the Finance Committee.

RESOLVED: that the accounts are approved.

11. DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED: that the next meeting of the Finance Committee takes place at 7.15pm on 25 September 2003 at the CVS in Hope Street (subject to availability).

The meeting closed at 8.50pm.

M R Sherman
Chairman

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