

SANDBACH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Sandbach Town Council held on 22 May 2003 in the Council Chamber, Westfields.

PRESENT

Councillor: J M Keeling, Chairman
Mrs M E Smith, Vice-Chairman
Councillors: Mrs D E Alcock
Mrs P M Minshull
Mrs P E M Price
Mrs G M Thomas
P J Darnes
E A Lea
D Lloyd-Griffiths
J J Moore
B E Moran
L Morris
N T Price
D Robinson
W W Scragg
M R Sherman
R W Sutton

The Opening Prayer was read by the Reverend Adrian Lloyd.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor: J Iddon
Councillor: N T Price would be late.

2. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Chairman had had a quiet start to his term of office. He attended the Borough Mayor making ceremony at Congleton Town Hall. At Sandbach Town Hall he heard a performance of Sandbach Voices which he described as a quite remarkable experience. The sound wraps itself around you.

3. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 13 MARCH 2003

RESOLVED: that the Minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman.

4. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 15 APRIL 2003

RESOLVED: that the Minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman.

5. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAYS 6 MARCH 2003, 27 MARCH 2003 AND 17 APRIL 2003

Cllr Lloyd-Griffiths declared an interest on some of the planning applications.

RESOLVED: that the Minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman.

6. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 17 APRIL 2003

RESOLVED: that item 10.6 the donation to St John's Church of £2,500 for their heating system be confirmed and that the Minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman.

Cllr Lloyd-Griffiths declared an interest on the above.

7. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 6 MAY 2003

Last year's Chairman, Cllr Mrs D E Alcock, in her remarks had failed to pay tribute to last year's councillors who had resigned or who had failed to be re-elected. She wished this to be corrected. She also wished to thank the other unsuccessful candidates.

RESOLVED: that the Clerk write to the ex-councillors and candidates concerned.

RESOLVED: that the Minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman.

8. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE ANNUAL MEETING

8.1 Item 14.1 – Sub-Committee to Liaise With The Sandbach Chamber Of Trade & Commerce

The Annual Meeting appointed four members, viz., Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Cllr Mrs Minshull & Cllr Moore. The Town Council had previously 5 representatives.

RESOLVED: that the fifth member of the sub-committee should be Cllr Mrs D E Alcock and the use of substitutes is allowed.

8.2 Item 16.2 - Sandbach Partnership

Councillor N T Price arrived during the debate on this item and tendered his apologies for lateness.

Following the Annual Meeting the Clerk wrote to ask for two Council representatives on the Sandbach Partnership Executive Committee. At their meeting on Tuesday 20 May the Partnership refused the request.

RESOLVED: that Councillor Mrs M E Smith be appointed the Council representative on the Sandbach Partnership Executive Committee.

9. REPORTS FROM COUNCIL DELEGATES / SUB-COMMITTEES

There were none.

10. QUALITY COUNCILS

Parish and Town Councils are being encouraged by the Government to achieve Quality status. The main obstacles are the accreditation of the Clerk and a period of public participation at meetings.

It was recognised that the membership subscription to the Cheshire Association of Town and Parish Councils was high but the quality of their advice was good. The Council should consider joining.

RESOLVED: that Sandbach Town Council should seek to attain Quality status.

RESOLVED: that at the next meeting a sub-committee is set up to organise the achievement of Quality status.

11. CORRESPONDENCE

11.1 Charlotte Peters Rock - RAF Cranage

Mrs Peters Rock would like the Council's support to have the site scheduled as an ancient monument. Members supported the general proposal.

RESOLVED: Mrs Peters Rock be invited to make a presentation to the Town Council.

11.2 Sandbach RUFC

Cllr D Lloyd-Griffiths declared an interest as a member of the Rugby Club. A letter thanking the Council for its support and a description of the Club's achievements in the last year had been received. Councillor Lea reported that there had been a large increase in light pollution since the installation of the new floodlights. Councillor Lloyd Griffiths undertook to discuss the problem with the Rugby Club Management and report back to the next Council Meeting.

RESOLVED: that Councillor Lloyd-Griffiths' offer is accepted.

11.3 Sandbach Partnership

The Project Manager had produced a "First Quarter Monitoring Report". Following a request from a member the Clerk explained that the Partnership arose over a year ago from a Market Town revival initiative. The Clerk and the Partnership Project Manager had met to understand each other's organisation's position because both organisations had a very similar purpose – the well being of Sandbach and its inhabitants. The Town Council were committed to a financial contribution of £1,000 per year for three years to the Partnership.

Members said that Council needs to be convinced that 'the report demonstrates very good progress is being made and that the Partnership is developing well' as stated in the covering letter, albeit supporting the Sandbach Partnership initiative.

Following Project Management process and practice, the Town Council needs to understand clearly:

- Progress against Plan, particularly in terms of deliverables.
- The schedule of Projects underway, and planned, being managed directly by the Project Manager.
- The schedule of Projects underway, and planned, that the Project Manager is supporting, and on what basis.
- On what basis is it that 'the Borough and Town Councils are particularly crucial to the delivery of actions identified within the current Action Plan'?
- Project Issues.
- Project Risks.
- A Financial Statement.

How does the Project Manager see her working relationship developing with the Town Council?

RESOLVED: that the report is received, that the Clerk write to the Project Manager outlining the above concerns, inviting a written response and

inviting her to attend the next Council meeting so that the Council could ask questions arising from her written response.

11.4 Post Office – Carry on Collecting Initiative

In April the Government began the process of paying benefits, pensions and some tax credits directly into recipients' accounts. The Post Office have described how they can still be used. One member said that the Post Office could only be used if it remained open. The owner of the Sandbach Heath Post Office was retiring and the Post Office was to close. This would be a tragic loss to many pension and benefit recipients.

RESOLVED: that the Clerk write to the Post Office expressing dismay at the prospect of closure and demand that they make every effort to encourage Post Office facilities at an alternative business if necessary.

11.5 Disability Matters Forums

They wish Town Councils to become involved and ask Sandbach to appoint a representative.

RESOLVED: that Councillor W W Scragg is appointed as the Council's representative on the forum with substitutes allowed if necessary.

11.6 Congleton Police Forum

An agenda for the meeting on 27 May 2003 at Middlewich Civic Hall had been delivered.

RESOLVED: that the agenda is received.

11.7 Cheshire Constabulary – Congleton Sector

An open public meeting is to be held at Sandbach School on 3 June.

RESOLVED: that the details are received.

11.8 Cheshire Association of Town & Parish Councils

They had given notification of the QPS Seminar at Byley Village Hall on Thursday 5 June, news of training updates and news of the publication of 'Governance and Accountability in Local Councils in England & Wales – A (New) Practitioner's Guide'.

RESOLVED: that the details are received and that places are reserved for Councillors P J Darnes and Mrs P E M Price.

12. MEMBERS' ITEMS – MATTERS AFFECTING THE TOWN OF SANDBACH

12.1 324 – Cllr Mrs D E Alcock – Street Litter

This item was brought forward and discussed between items 10 and 11 because of the presence of the children from Crewe Road School who had brought the matter to Councillor Mrs Alcock's attention.

The children had observed a large amount of litter and graffiti on their regular walks to and from the Leisure Centre and their School. They had decided to write letters describing what they had observed and saying what they thought should be done to improve the situation.

Members discussed the litter problem. The major culprits were the people who discarded the glass, packaging, paper and other forms of litter but it was not helped when the litterbins were in the wrong place, not emptied or broken, as was frequently the case.

RESOLVED: that the Clerk write to Mr Chambers, Environment Director, CBC, Mr Longshaw, CBC and Councillor Nield, the Environmental Sustainability Portfolio holder with copies of the letters.

12.2 325 – Cllr D Robinson - Sandbach Market

Councillor Robinson described the Sandbach Market as one of the most important assets for the people of Sandbach. He was concerned that if the market were mismanaged in the near future it would be lost forever. The benefits and profits from the market belonged to and should be invested in Sandbach. The Town Council's Market Sub-Committee had agreed the areas where improvements to the market could be made although for all the proposals there were disadvantages as well as advantages. The key points were a move from the Common to provide additional parking, the erection of stalls by the stallholders, thus freeing a commercially valuable property adjacent to the Common and much stronger management of the waste issue. These points must be included in the brief for any new management of the Sandbach Market.

RESOLVED: that the Clerk write to CBC making the above points.

12.3 326 – Cllr R W Sutton - London Road, Elworth Pedestrian crossing

Councillor Sutton had spoken to the County Engineers and Joint Highways and was told that a project to improve the crossing was in the queue. The crossing was especially dangerous when lamps failed as had happened recently. He also believed that traffic was increasing. Councillor Scragg remembered when there had been a fatality at that crossing.

RESOLVED: that the Clerk writes to Joint Highways emphasising the importance that the Council place on this project and request that it is given priority.

12.4 327 – Cllr N T Price – Internal Audit

Councillor Price believed that an immediate audit would be beneficial for new members. The Clerk explained that the date of the external audit had been set by Hacker Young as 18 July 2003 which in turn meant that the internal audit must take place some time before that date.

RESOLVED: that at the meeting on 24 July the Finance Committee set the timing and frequency for tasks associated with the annual audit.

13. DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED: that the next meeting of the Sandbach Town Council will be held at 7.15pm on 10 July 2003 in the Council Chamber, Westfields.

The meeting closed at 9.35 pm.

J M Keeling
Chairman

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