

SANDBACH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Sandbach Town Council held on 10 July 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
J Iddon
D Lloyd-Griffiths
J J Moore
L Morris
D Robinson
W W Scragg
M R Sherman
R W Sutton

The Opening Prayer was read by the Reverend Rex Buckley.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors: E A Lea
B E Moran
N T Price

2. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Chairman had made the presentations for the Sandbach Ladies Darts League and for the cadets at the Army Cadet Force Drill Hall. He had attended the Borough Civic Service but the Parade had been spoilt by torrential rain.

He had attended the centenary celebrations of Messrs Rigby & Co. at Gawsorth Hall.

Rotary had invited him to address them about the Town Council. He had said that he believed that all Councillors had the interests of Sandbach at heart even if they may have differing priorities.

He was pleased to have excellent weather and a good attendance for his own Civic Parade and Service. Later in the day he attended the Alsager Civic Service.

He attended the opening of the new £300,000 Sandbach High School and Sixth Form College all-weather pitch carried out by Dario Gradi. John Leigh, the Head, had thanked the Council for their contribution of £5,000 to the project.

He attended the Sandbach School awards ceremony and was impressed by the talent shown. He thanked Cllr Elsie Alcock for attending the Fire Cadet Presentation Evening on his behalf.

3. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 22 MAY 2003

Cllr Lloyd-Griffiths' declaration of interest on item 11.2 had been omitted.

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

4. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAYS 15 MAY 2003, 5 JUNE 2003 AND 19 JUNE 2003

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

5. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 29 MAY 2003

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

6. SANDBACH PARTNERSHIP

The Sandbach Partnership Project Manager, Mrs Helen Beech spoke to the Council role of the Partnership.

The Partnership's partners were the Town Council, the Chamber of Trade, the Borough Council and nine local parishes. They intended to put ideas into reality. They wanted to add value to what the Council does.

Mrs Beech welcomed Cllr Mrs Smith as the Council's representative on the Partnership.

The Health Check and Action Plan had been produced in the early days. Recently they had produced a constitution that was to be adopted at the September AGM.

The action plan is a flexible document and will be amended as new projects arise. They would ensure that projects were properly funded and carried forward. Projects so far included a youth shelter for teenagers, a new Town Trail being organised by the History Society, cycle racks at the railway station, a pilot project to give advice to small businesses and a directory of local organisations.

She would like to know what projects the council would like to see driven forward. The original action plan had mistakenly set timescales before the projects had been clearly defined with milestones. This was being corrected.

The Partnership wished to harness local enthusiasm.

Finally she thanked the Town Council for its financial contribution to the Partnership.

Members commented that the production of a constitution demonstrated positive progress. It was important that efforts must not overlap and be duplicated. The Council would like to see reports that included timelines, evaluation of projects for risk and full financial reports. Mrs Beech agreed.

It was also agreed that she would let the Clerk have a copy of her statement for circulation to members.

7. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE FINANCE MEETING OF 29 MAY 2003

The Finance Committee Chairman gave a report of the meeting. He recommended that members considered their own training needs. He believed that a properly trained council would be essential if and when Regional Government and a Unitary Authority come about. It might be appropriate to join

the Cheshire Association of Town and Parish Councils who organised the training locally. The cost would be £823 per annum. He commented on the Council website saying the Clerk had done an excellent job. However the site can be expanded and the Clerk would appreciate helpful comments. The website would contribute towards the Council obtaining Quality status.

7.1 Sandbach School

Cllr Lloyd-Griffiths declared an interest as governor.

RESOLVED: that the second grant of £5,000 is confirmed.

7.2 Training Budget

The Finance Committee recommended that an additional item for Member and Council employee training amounting to £1,500 be inserted into the 2003/4 budget.

RESOLVED: that the addition to the budget is confirmed.

7.3 Recommendations for a Training Programme.

The Clerk attended the Local Council Advisory Service Annual Health & Safety Seminar at Winsford on 25 June. Subjects covered were Accident Reviews, Working Alone, Manual Handling and Risk Assessment. Items learnt have been included in the Risk Assessment report item 9.2.

It is recommended that members and the Clerk attend the Basic Induction Course. Other courses that cover the subjects required for a Clerk's accreditation are: -

Roles & Responsibilities, Law & Procedures, Finance, Planning and Partnership Working and Community Engagement.

It is recommended that these are attended by the Clerk and those members who feel they would benefit. Courses will cost between £20 and £25 per person per course. It is also recommended that the Council purchase a copy of the NALC distance learning pack "Working with your Council" at a cost of £130.

RESOLVED: that the report is accepted and the recommendations implemented.

8. REPORTS FROM COUNCIL DELEGATES / SUB-COMMITTEES

8.1 CBC Market Management Committee – Cllr D Robinson

The meetings are confidential and therefore he was restricted in what he could say. Two possible contractors had given good presentations. One of the suggestions was that there should be a charge to stallholders for stall erection. It is apparent that the market is not marketed. CBC's proposals are awaited.

8.2 Sandbach Almshouse Trust

There had been a recent meeting and a report from the Council representative was sought. It was pointed out that the Council's representative was ex-councillor Bernard Edwards who was not in a position to give a report. The Chairman of the Council was a trustee in his own right and he was able to inform the meeting that the new chairman and vice-chairman of the Trust were Messrs Norman Rogers and Richard McMillan.

9. EXTERNAL AUDIT FOR THE YEAR 2002/3

The papers have to be sent to the external auditor by 18 July 2003. This date is before the next scheduled Finance committee meeting on 24 July 2003 therefore the following were submitted to members for approval: -

9.1 Accounts for the year 2002/3

RESOLVED: that the accounts as submitted be approved.

9.2 A Sandbach Town Council Risk Assessment

A risk assessment report had been prepared by the Clerk and submitted to members for approval.

Particular note was made of the suggestion that the Council might be held partially liable for incidents that happened at events organised by outside organisations funded by the Council. Councillors representing the Transport Festival, Sandbach in Bloom and the Christmas Lights assured members that risk assessments were undertaken and that the necessary insurance was in place.

RESOLVED: that the opinion of the CBC Legal Department is sought.

RESOLVED: that the report be approved.

9.3 Sandbach Town Council Statement of Assurance

The statement of assurance form was submitted to members for approval.

RESOLVED: that a positive response could and should be given to the form.

10. QUALITY COUNCILS

It was agreed at the last meeting of the Town Council that members of a sub-committee would be selected to organise the achievement of Quality status.

RESOLVED: that the sub-committee should comprise Cllrs Mrs D E Alcock, Mrs P E M Price, P J Darnes, B E Moran and M R Sherman with substitutes to be allowed.

11. CORRESPONDENCE

11.1 Charlotte Peters Rock - RAF Cranage

Mrs Peters Rock has accepted the Council's invitation to address the next meeting on 4 September.

RESOLVED: that her letter is received and the invitation confirmed.

11.2 Sandbach RUFC

Cllr Lloyd Griffiths and the Club secretary responded to the Council's comments about floodlights and light spillage.

RESOLVED: that the letter is received.

11.3 Sandbach Partnership

The Project Manager had replied to the Council's comments.

RESOLVED: that the letter is received.

11.4 Post Office – Carry on Collecting Initiative

The Post Office replied to the Council's comments.

RESOLVED: that the letter is received with regret.

11.5 CBC Comprehensive Performance Assessment

The Clerk went to the presentation on 12 June at Congleton Town Hall. The Borough's self-assessment had concluded that they were too self-critical. The representatives from the parish and town councils were able to highlight a number of areas where improvement could be made.

The Clerk has a draft copy of the Self-assessment report which is also available on the Borough website.

RESOLVED: that the report is received.

11.6 Cheshire County Council – Equestrian Strategy

A letter had been received inviting comment. The consultation document is available from the Clerk.

RESOLVED: that the report is received.

11.7 CBC – Market Management

CBC accepted the Council's request for two members on the Market Management Committee.

RESOLVED: that the letter is received.

11.8 Action for Market Towns

A letter and a brochure had been received describing the benefits of membership for Town Partnerships, Town & Borough Councils and other organisations that are supporting activities in a single market town.

RESOLVED: that the letter is received.

11.9 APP Ltd – Sandbach Town Guide

The publisher has called for editorial material for a new Town Guide. As reported previously the Clerk had been told by APP Ltd that the contract for them to publish the bi-annual Guide could only be cancelled immediately after a given publishing. Members would like to see the content before publication.

RESOLVED: that the opinion of the CBC Legal Department is sought.

RESOLVED: that the current edition is progressed.

11.10 CBC – Crewe Road Schoolchildren's concern about litter

A reply had been received from the Chief Executive.

RESOLVED: that the letter is received.

11.11 CBC Review of Car Park Management

The Council's views on the management of CBC owned car parks are sought.

RESOLVED: that the subject should be an agenda item for discussion at the next meeting on 4 September.

11.12 CBC Bus Shelters Offer

The Council has been invited to suggest places where a new bus shelter is desirable.

The following locations were suggested.

The Top of the Hill on Newcastle Road, Any of the stops along Crewe Road and the Forge Field side of the canal bridge in Wheelock.

RESOLVED: that a reply is sent suggesting the above sites.

11.13 The Standards Board for England Training Video

A very useful video and booklet accompanied the attached letter. It was suggested that councillors take it in turns to view the material.

RESOLVED: that the training video is circulated.

11.14 Association of Larger Local Councils

They are holding a seminar in Oswestry on 25 July on "Partnerships and the Modern Local Council". Details are attached. Oswestry appears to be using partnerships the way Sandbach hopes to do.

RESOLVED: that the information is received.

11.15 Clerk of Hassall PC – Malkins Bank Contaminated Land Investigation

He suggested that since the pollution from the golf course crosses the Hassall Parish Boundary into Wheelock, Sandbach Town Council might wish to be represented on the Liaison Committee.

RESOLVED: that a letter is written stating that the Council would like to be represented by Cllr Darnes.

11.16 Forum of M6 Councils

Minutes of meetings held on 23 January and 4 April are attached.

RESOLVED: that minutes are received.

11.17 DEFRA – The Quality Parish Council Scheme

The Minister for Rural Affairs and Urban Quality of Life has sent a copy of the guidance to accompany the Quality Parish Council Scheme.

RESOLVED: that the information is received.

11.18 The Boundary Committee for England

The Committee has been directed to start reviews of the structure of local government in the two-tier areas of the North West. The Secretary of State has decided that there is sufficient interest in the North West to hold a referendum on elected regional assemblies. It is the Government's policy that there should be a single tier of local government below an elected regional assembly.

RESOLVED: that the subject should be an agenda item for discussion at the next meeting on 4 September.

11.19 CBC – Pedestrian Crossing, London Road, Elworth

A letter had been received from Mr David Dingle.

RESOLVED: that the letter is received and that the report is awaited.

11.20 Cheshire Local Authority Support Programme – Energy Issues Update

RESOLVED: that the information is received.

11.21 CVS – AGM

A representative of the Council is invited to attend the AGM at Sandbach Town Hall on Monday 28 July at 7pm.

RESOLVED: that the invitation is received.

[After the meeting Cllr Mrs G M Thomas agreed to be the Council's representative at the above AGM.]

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

12.1 328 - Cllr Scragg - Litter at Foundry Lane Footbridge, Elworth.

The Railtrack land adjacent to the footpath is strewn with unpleasant rubbish.

RESOLVED: that in the first instance a letter is written to Railtrack informing them of the situation and requesting that they clear the area.

12.2 329 - Cllr Moore - CCTV Cameras in Sandbach.

There had been an incident recently when youths had been playing football on the lower Park bowling green and two bus shelter windows on the Common had been smashed without the CCTV apparently observing either activity.

One member reported that Sandbach in Bloom personnel in action had been questioned as a result of being observed by the CCTV. His enquiries suggested that the Park camera was not on free search at night because of it being noisy. Members found this explanation unsatisfactory.

Members were very keen that the CCTV system should be successful and be seen to be successful. More publicity about its successes would be useful.

RESOLVED: that a letter is sent to Mr Potts at Alsager explaining the incident and inviting him to address the Council.

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 4 September 2003 in the Council Chamber, Westfields.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm.

J M Keeling
Chairman

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