

SANDBACH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Sandbach Town Council held on 18 December 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
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

Councillors: J Iddon
E A Lea

2. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

He had made 18 visits in the period since the last meeting. He had enjoyed an excellent performance of Hamlet at Sandbach School and had attended the 25th anniversary lunch of Sandbach History Society. He had seen off and had welcomed back the Foden Richardson Brass Band on their successful tour to America. Members of the Band had told him how much they appreciated and had enjoyed the reception held in the Council Chamber. He had taken part in the British Legion Remembrance Parade. He had been guest of Sandbach Voices at another excellent concert. He had represented the Council at the induction of Reverend Janet Bacon and the formal acceptance of the new Wheelock War Memorial floodlighting sponsored by the Town Council.

He had visited "Streets Ahead", an organisation that uses a mobile bus to make contact with young people.

He had attended the Poppy Ball and had enjoyed renewing friendships with old soldiers.

He had been involved in the new Christmas Lights Festival. It was a pleasure to see the children's faces when Father Christmas arrived.

He had planted an oak tree to celebrate Sandbach's recent success in the Civic Pride competition.

He had attended the Police Carol Service at St Mary's Church, Astbury.

The Methodist Old Peoples' evening at Sandbach Heath had been a great success.

The previous night he had been with the Talking Newspaper, making a contribution to the Christmas edition. They had thanked him for the Town Council's donation of £1,000 and informed him that they planned to move to the Termax building in Wheelock early in the New Year.

3. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 16 OCTOBER 2003

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

4. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAYS 23 OCTOBER, 20 NOVEMBER AND 4 DECEMBER 2003

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

5. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 6 NOVEMBER 2003

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

6. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 8 DECEMBER 2003

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

The Chairman adjourned the meeting to allow questions from members of the public.

3. Mr Sam Corcoran asked whether there were any plans for the youth of Sandbach similar to the organisations in Alsager and Middlewich. Cllr N T Price told Mr Corcoran of the activities of the Sandbach Youth Project and the work done by its Chairman Mr David Atkin.

The Chairman re-convened the meeting.

7. FIRE SERVICE

Divisional Officer Adrian Luty and Station Officer Tony Williams gave a presentation on the Integrated Risk Management Plan developed following the recent agreement within the Fire Service.

They sought members' opinion on their 5 strategic objectives, viz.

- 1 Reduce the incidence of fire, reduce the loss of life and reduce the number and severity of injuries and consequential loss from fires and other emergencies.
 - 1.1 Undertake more work within the community to reduce deaths, injuries and consequential loss from fires and other emergencies.
 - 1.2 Greater involvement in partnerships with others to enable the delivery of enhanced community safety.

- 2 Improve the existing response and prevention standards through an integrated risk management approach (prevention, protection, emergency response and corporate governance). We will develop a series of “Cheshire Standards” applicable to our new role in wider community safety.
 - 2.1 Develop and introduce a series of “Cheshire Standards” in prevention, protection, emergency response and support services with associated performance output measures.
- 3 Develop the organisation and improve performance management.
 - 3.1 Provide a better service to the public through enhanced use of performance management.
 - 3.2 Restructure the organisation to mirror more closely the new roles identified by the government in its White Paper.
 - 3.3 In accordance with our human resource strategy and organisational values, develop our workforce to ensure competency in the new roles, encourage greater diversity and equality of opportunity and provide safe systems of work.
 - 3.4 Provide a code of Corporate Governance for the Authority promoting an open, inclusive and accountable organisation.
- 4 Safeguard the environment and protect our heritage (both built and natural).
 - 4.1 Safeguard the environment and protect our heritage by improving the capability to deal with incidents involving hazardous materials, revising our operational tactics, gathering operational intelligence, improving command & incident management and working with local businesses to assist them comply with the relevant legislation. We will also develop the relationship between public safety and the Building Regulations. All of these changes are designed to lessen the impact of fires and other emergencies on the community.
 - 4.2 Enhance our opportunities to use e-services and knowledge management to connect with our communities through partnership working with bodies such as the Cheshire and Warrington Information Consortium (CWIC), the North West E-government Group, the North West Node and the Public Health Observatory.
- 5 Provide added Value for Money (VFM) through new working practices and enhanced regional working and collaboration.
 - 5.1 Meet with government’s expectations of a service in providing best value for the communities of Cheshire.
 - 5.2 Provide added Value for Money through enhanced regional working.

At the end of the evening they distributed questionnaires for individuals to complete and return.

The Chairman thanked the fire officers for their informative presentation.

8. REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

8.1 Governing Bodies of Primary Schools

Notice was given that nominated replacements for the positions as governors at Sandbach County Primary School and Elworth C of E Schools were required.

RESOLVED that nominations would be made and selected at the next Town Council meeting.

8.2 Sandbach Partnership

Cllr Mrs M E Smith, the Town Council representative on the Sandbach Partnership read the following report.

“Unfortunately, Helen Beech cannot attend this evenings meeting due to personal reasons, however, I have had an opportunity to sit with Helen and discuss some of the Town Councils concerns.

Helen, feels the town council has a different idea of what the Partnership has been actually set up to do, and believes this misconception stems from a point prior to her engagement earlier this year. She has however, said that it is very important that we do have a clear idea of her role and the role of the Partnership; therefore if it is required she will be happy to attend the next town council meeting.

She has however asked I recap over certain points:

The Partnership has been set up in order that the local people and businesses can have their say in what they think is required for the town. Then if practicable this information is used by working groups to develop those ideas in to a more cohesive set of plans that can be used as part of a bid for funding.

Some of the ideas suggested and anticipated are beyond the remit of voluntary groups and the individuals providing those ideas, and can only be completed by others. Some of the ideas are beyond the budgets of the town, borough or county councils, and will require considerable funding.

The Partnership has held its public meetings and invited those who wanted to, to contribute ideas. These ideas are currently being worked upon by working groups, who will have a set of proposals by February; these will be then used to obtain funding. The Partnership intends to try to get funding for the majority of the proposals as part of one overall application. Whilst this has many benefits in regard to flexibility the process can be more drawn out.

Helen’s role to project manage these proposals has been hindered by a number of factors.

- The fact that the ideas have to be developed by working groups made up of volunteers has meant that the pace so far has been set by the volunteers.
- The support of the role of the Project Manager has not been adequate, in that other towns have had both administrative support and greater funding, and this has meant Sandbach is falling behind some other areas.
- The lack of previous experience of this type of funding in Sandbach has also meant that everyone involved needs educating in the process and that there is little existing knowledge to draw upon.

Our role is to assist the Partnership with those projects that fall within the Town Council’s remit. The working parties will have a number of

proposals that we are able to deal with, and working in partnership with Sandbach Partnership we will need to bring those projects to fruition.”

Cllr N T Price said he was liaising with County Officers on similar partnerships throughout the County. Economic regeneration type projects were essential for money to be released by the Development agency. Money had been raised to help the Literary Institution project. The Youth Project was on the Sandbach Partnership project list.

RESOLVED that Helen Beech is invited to the first available meeting and that Councillors prepare specific questions in advance to ensure that she addresses the Council’s concerns.

Cllr Mrs Smith left the meeting at this point.

9. POLICE CONSTABLE SUB-COMMITTEE

10. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE POLICE CONSTABLE SUB-COMMITTEE

It was agreed that items 9 and 10 would be deferred to a future meeting after the sub-committee had negotiated an agreement and members had had the opportunity to study its contents.

11. LATHAM MEMORIAL SUB-COMMITTEE

Cllr Mrs Price said that progress had been held up by difficulties in obtaining cost information. The Clerk reported that following the public consultation exercise in the press he had had a number of replies that supported each of the two proposed locations.

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 November be approved and signed by the Chairman.

12. QUALITY COUNCIL SUB-COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 November be approved and signed by the Chairman.

13. MATTERS ARISING FROM FINANCE MEETING ON 6 NOVEMBER

13.1 Precept for 2004/5

The Finance Committee had recommended a precept of £82,400 which is an increase of 3.2% on 2003/4. Following the Chairman’s casting vote, by 8 votes to 7 it was

RESOLVED that the proposed precept was not accepted.

A compromise of no change was proposed and accepted with one vote against.

RESOLVED that the precept for 2004/5 should be £79,825.

13.2 Sandbach Talking Newspaper

RESOLVED that the grant of £1,000 is confirmed.

13.3 Sandbach C P School

RESOLVED that the grant of £1,250 is confirmed.

13.4 Membership of Association

RESOLVED that the Council budgets to join the Cheshire Association of Town and Parish Councils.

14. CORRESPONDENCE

14.1 Sandbach Rotary – Seats of Remembrance

They propose a scheme whereby Sandbach people could pay for seats of remembrance for loved ones with the entire organisation being done by Rotary. They seek the Town Council's approval for the scheme.

RESOLVED that the Town Council supports the scheme but that Rotary should be warned that great care must be taken over location.

14.2 Sandbach Rotary – Cheshire Railings

They seek the Town Council's support to persuade the Cheshire County Council to refurbish the Cheshire Railings.

RESOLVED that the Council writes to Cheshire County Council in support.

14.3 CCC – Rights of Way

A Report on the Rights of Way Improvement plan progress is attached.

RESOLVED that the report is received.

14.4 CBC - Reorganisation

The Clerk has received a copy of the six Cheshire District Councils' report to the Boundary Committee.

RESOLVED that the report is received.

14.5 CCC - Reorganisation

A letter and leaflet from the Cheshire County Council Chief Executive have already been distributed to members. A copy of their submission to the Boundary Committee has been received.

RESOLVED that the submission is received.

14.6 The Boundary Committee

They have sent copies of their draft recommendations report and their Overview report.

RESOLVED that the report is received.

14.7 Congleton Borough Council – Community Wardens

David Dingle writes in the attached letter to explain the difficulties of recruiting Community Wardens.

RESOLVED that the letter is received.

14.8 Congleton Borough Council - CCTV

Mr Tony Potts replied to questions raised at the last Council Meeting. Members were unhappy about the proposed solution to the camera noise problem.

RESOLVED that Mr Potts is asked to engage the Environmental Health Officer to check that the noise level is in fact too high and to take action accordingly.

14.9 Congleton Borough Council - CCTV

Mr Tony Potts reported the successful use of CCTV to counter anti-social behaviour.

RESOLVED that Mr Potts is congratulated on the incident.

14.10 Congleton Borough Council – Senior Fraud Investigator

He gave information on fraud investigation and requested the use of the Council's notice board.

RESOLVED that the letter is received and that the notice board is made available.

14.11 RoadChef - Litter

In their reply RoadChef had misunderstood the precise location of the problem.

RESOLVED that a further letter is written giving clarification.

14.12 Charlotte Peters Rock – Cranage Airfield

She had sent a letter of thanks.

RESOLVED that the letter is received.

14.13 CPRE – Quiet Lanes

Their letter sought support for blanket speed limits in the countryside.

RESOLVED that the letter is received.

14.14 CCC – Sandbach Library Extension

Their letter states that the proposed extension will be installed as soon as possible.

RESOLVED that the letter is received.

14.15 CCC – Annual Town & Parish Council Conference

The Council is invited to send two representatives to the conference to be held on 21 January at Northwich Memorial Hall.

RESOLVED that Councillors Darnes and Moran represent the Council.

14.16 CCC – Winter Gritting Routes

The Clerk has received a number of copies of the gritting guide for 2003/4.

RESOLVED that the guides are received.

14.17 DEFRA – Equine Issues

Their letter gave information from the Minister for the Horse.

RESOLVED that the letter is received.

14.18 Police Forum Questionnaire

They seek views on the current policing structure by 19 December.

RESOLVED that members reply on an individual basis.

14.19 Manchester Airport

They sent information about "Advice Days".

RESOLVED that the information is received.

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

15.1 338 – Cllr Sutton – Sandbach Town Hall

That following the contribution made by the Town Council to the renovation of the building the Council should be eligible for a number of free lettings per year.

RESOLVED that the Clerk write to CBC putting the case for twelve free lets per year.

15.2 339 – Cllr Mrs Price – George's Walk

That the Town Council write to Congleton Borough Council regarding the area encompassing George's Walk Sandbach which has not yet been adopted by them. It was agreed that the area was substandard with poor drains, inadequate lighting and unsightly walls and fences. No matter who owned the area all involved had a duty of care.

RESOLVED that the Clerk write to Joint Highways asking that efforts are made to adopt the area concerned.

15.3 340 – Cllr N Price - Sandbach Festival of Scotch Common.

He informed the Council that two meetings had taken place under his chairmanship investigating the possibility of holding a community event on the first weekend in September 2004. The event would commemorate the incident that took place in Sandbach when some of the retreating Scottish army passed through the Town after the Battle of Worcester in 1651. The Sealed Knot organisation is showing a great deal of interest and Cllr Price believed there would be considerable educational value in holding the event. The Town Council were invited to get involved. The next meeting of the organising group would be in January.

A member with experience of the Nantwich Civil War re-enactment warned that Health and Safety would be an issue and that the Nantwich event had suffered from drink induced anti-social behaviour.

RESOLVED that if the organising committee were to make a formal invitation to the Council for one of its members to join them, that request would be viewed favourably.

16. DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED: that the next meeting of the Sandbach Town Council will be held at 7.15pm on 5 February 2003 in the Council Chamber, Westfields.

The meeting closed at 9.45 pm.

J M Keeling
Chairman

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