

Sandy Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of Sandy Town Council held at the Jenkins Pavilion, off Medusa Way, Sandy, Bedfordshire on Monday 2 December 2013 commencing at 8 pm

Present: Cllrs N Aldis, C Butterfield, W Jackson, C Osborne, M Pettitt, M Runchman, M Scott, D Sharman, R Smith, S Sutton (Town Mayor) and G White.

Absent: Cllrs J Ali, K Lynch, A Maycock and S Walsh

In attendance: Central Bedfordshire Cllr Sheppard, PCSO Ann Jeeves, Town Clerk and one member of the public

1 Apologies for Absence (88-2013/14)

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Ali, Lynch, Maycock and Walsh.

2 Declarations of Interest (89-2013/14)

There were none.

3 Previous Minutes (90 -2013/14)

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of a meeting of Sandy Town Council held at 7.30 pm on 21 October 2013 as a correct record of proceedings.

4 Land behind Lime Avenue/Ash Close (91 -2013/14)

RESOLVED to deal with agenda item 8 concerning requests from residents to acquire additional land to the rear of Ash Close as the next item of business since one of the residents was present.

A resident of Ash Close, Mr Elstone, addressed the council and expressed his disappointment and concern that he had not yet been able to secure transfer of land behind his property which he hoped to add to his existing garden space. The council having previously agreed in principle that this land should be leased or transferred to him.

A short report concerning previous council decisions on the disposal of land to the rear of houses in Lime Avenue and Ash Close had been circulated in advance of the meeting together with a quotation from the District Valuation Service. Cllr Pettitt outlined the history of the matter which dated back to early January 2012. The Town Clerk confirmed to the meeting that the council had made two

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potentially conflicting decisions regarding the future of this land and unfortunately this had not been picked up and resolved earlier. (A resolution of PP&OS Committee on 9.1.2012 had specified that the committee agreed in principle to sell or lease the land provided that there were no legal costs to the Council and subject to other conditions, whilst a resolution of Town Council on 17.06.2013 indicated that no action would be taken until a valuation of the land had been obtained from the District Valuation Service.) The Town Clerk apologised on behalf of the council for this error.

Members discussed the potential value of the land and issues which had previously caused concern such as access to any land-locked areas.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk would be instructed to establish whether there were any legal obstacles to transferring the land as originally specified in the minutes of meeting of 9 January 2012 with a view to achieving an expedited transfer of the land to the residents concerned. The Town Council would not bear any legal costs for the transfer but agreed that the value of the land was limited and it would not seek a valuation of the land from the DVS at this stage.

(Mr Elstone left the meeting.)

5 Public Open Session (92 -2013/14)

Cllr Osborne asked the Town Council whether it would support – through the relevant authorities – the retention of the bus service (even on a reduced scale) serving the Engayne Avenue estate. He considered this service was a vital link for many elderly and disabled residents who live in this area and this view was unanimously supported by members. The Town Council took the position that retention of the service in the area was extremely important. It was noted that Cllr Lynch (who had stated he was not acting in his capacity as a Town Councillor) had begun a public campaign and arranged a public meeting to be held on 7 December 2013 to protest against a new route which had been put out for public consultation. The two Central Bedfordshire Ward members present noted that the new route proposed by Stagecoach was not yet agreed and Central Bedfordshire Council was also working with Stagecoach to elicit and express local opinion and to secure an alternative route.

Cllr Pettitt expressed his concern that Cllr Lynch had apparently given an interview to the Biggleswade Chronicle in which he had

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accused his fellow members of council of lying deliberately about the number of No Cold Calling Zone signs in Sandy. This had been reported in the paper. The words quoted in the article were "I am not running the council down but they have told a deliberate lie." The comment referred to business transacted at a meeting at which Cllr Lynch had not been present when members had allegedly said that there were several No Cold Calling Zone signs in the town already. Cllr Pettitt had contacted Cllr Lynch to ask him whether he included Cllr Pettitt in this statement and to ask Cllr Lynch for a written apology and a retraction of the statement. Cllr Pettitt advised that Cllr Lynch had contacted him by telephone to say that he did not include Cllr Pettitt in the statement but he declined to make an apology or issue a public retraction nor did he say that he had been misquoted by the newspaper. Cllr Pettitt was concerned that both his and the council's good name had been brought into disrepute and he asked the council if it would resolve to a complaint to the Monitoring Officer of Central Bedfordshire Council on the grounds that Cllr Lynch had breached Sandy Town Council's code of conduct by this behaviour. Members discussed the matter in some detail and reference was made to a previous alleged breach of the code of conduct by Cllr Lynch which had already been reported to the Monitoring Officer on 5 November 2013 by the Town Mayor.

RESOLVED to request the Town Clerk to write to the Monitoring Officer of Central Bedfordshire Council on behalf of Sandy Town Council to ask that this alleged breach of the code of conduct by Cllr Lynch be investigated.

6 Police Report (93 -2013/14)

A report from PCSO Ann Jeeves on policing in Sandy was circulated and discussed and PCSO Jeeves answered questions about recent crime figures, criminal damage and anti-social behaviour in different parts of the town. Members thanked PCSO Jeeves for her detailed and helpful reports which had been appreciated throughout the year.

RESOLVED to note the report from PCSO Jeeves. Sandy.

7 Minutes of Committees and Sub-committees and recommendations (94 -2013/14)

RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the following committees and sub-committees.

- i) Development Scrutiny Committee on 4 November 2013
- ii) Community Services and Environment Committee on 4 November 2013

8 Community Orchard at Beeston (C39/2013-14)

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RESOLVED to approve a recommendation to Town Council that a minimum sum of £1,000 to meet the planning/legal fees of the project is included in the 2014/15 budget and that officers are authorised to continue work on this project.

12 The Riddy and The Pinnacle (C43/2013-14)

RESOLVED to approve a recommendation to Town Council that the Riddy Management agreement should be continued at a cost of £6,039.15 plus a £500 contingency amount for 2014/15 and that the sum of £6,539.15 together with the sum of £3,200 in relation to the Pinnacle be included in the estimates for 2014/15 for the purpose of managing these assets.

- iii) Policy Finance and Resources Committee on 25 November 2013 (it was agreed to leave the recommendations from these minutes for further consideration during item 9).

(CBC Cllr Sheppard left the meeting.)

8 Staff Matters (95 -2013/14)

RESOLVED that *members of the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the next three items of business on this agenda on the grounds that the items involved the likely disclosure of confidential personal information as defined as exempt information in Part 1 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972 (personal and confidential data).*

The Town Clerk reported that several recent HR matters had highlighted the fact that the change from an HR Committee with delegated powers to an HR Advisory group with no delegated powers required election of HR disciplinary or grievance panels by Town Council on each occasion that a panel was needed.

RESOLVED to refer the terms of reference of the HR Advisory Group back to the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee for further consideration/amendment prior to the annual meeting of the council.

- i) Two formal complaints (one from a member of staff and one from a member of the public) against a member of staff were reported to the council. Both complaints fell into the category of a complaint against the conduct of an individual and the meeting was advised that the correct procedure required the election of panels with delegated powers to investigate and determine the complaints and report back to council.

RESOLVED to elect Cllrs Walsh, Runchman and Aldis to act as a grievance panel with delegated powers to investigate and

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determine the complaint by a member of the staff team against another member of the staff team on behalf of Sandy Town Council and to report the outcome to the next appropriate meeting.

RESOLVED to elect Cllrs Jackson, Osborne and Pettitt to act as a disciplinary panel with delegated powers to investigate and determine the complaint by a member of the public against an individual member of the staff team on behalf of Sandy Town Council and to report the outcome to the next appropriate meeting.

- ii) The Town Clerk reported on the long term absence of a member of Sandy Town Council staff and the need to determine the future employment of the staff member.

RESOLVED to elect Cllrs Sutton, Butterfield and Sharman as a panel with delegated powers to consider a medical capability report and determine any appropriate action to be taken to determine the future employment of the staff member.

- iii) Cllr Jackson drew attention to his interest in this matter due to the employment of his son-in-law as Deputy Clerk.

Members discussed a confidential report and recommendations regarding a staff restructure of Sandy Town Council which had been put forward for consideration by the HR Advisory Group of the Town Council. Members of the working group which had been tasked with reviewing the staff structure put forward the rationale for the proposed restructure. A range of opinion was expressed by members.

RESOLVED to approve the implementation of the new structure and to instruct the Clerk and the HR Advisory Group to proceed with the next steps with the support of Ellis Whittam the council's specialist HR advisors.

9 Financial Matters (96 -2013/14)

9.i RESOLVED to note a list of payments approved for October 2013.

9.ii RESOLVED to note a report of income and expenditure against budget for the financial year to date.

9.iii RESOLVED to note a request for financial support from Bedfordshire Police Partnership Trust and to take no further action.

9.iv RESOLVED to request clarification of the opportunity to purchase ill-health liability insurance through Legal and General to mitigate the risk of making additional contributions to the LGPS Fund and to consider the matter further at a later date.

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(Cllr Smith left the meeting.)

9.v Budget for financial year 2014/15 (97 -2013/14)

The Chairman of the Policy Finance and Resources Committee reminded members of the recommendations to council included in the minutes of the meeting of that committee held on 25.11.2013. A revised draft of the budget including all the changes agreed to the first draft at that meeting had been circulated before the meeting Cllr Osborne reminded members that even with these changes the budget showed a deficit of £3,793 and did not include any provision for a contribution to reserves, any additional capital spending and any contingency funds for the year 2014/15. Members were invited to make any additional financial proposals for consideration/research prior to the meeting of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee on 6 January 2014 either to the Chairman of the committee or to the Town Clerk. The budget was again discussed in detail.

First Draft of Revenue Budget (55-2013/2014)

RESOLVED to approve the recommendation to Town Council that it explored the possibility of withdrawing from its current contract for CCTV surveillance (which if followed up would entail giving 6 months' notice to CBC) and to write to Bedfordshire Police, the Police and Crime Commissioner and Alistair Burt MP to seek their views about CCTV provision at the same time a news release would be issued asking for the views of the public.

RESOLVED to approve the recommendation to Town Council that that a minimum of 5% of the annual precept should be set aside for capital projects and earmarked as such in the general reserve.

10 Polling District Review (99 -2013/14)

Correspondence from Central Bedfordshire Council on a Polling District Review to be undertaken over a 16 month period beginning on 21 October 2013 was discussed. There were no suggestions that the existing polling district boundaries should be amended.

RESOLVED to recommend to Central Bedfordshire Council that consideration was given to using Beeston Methodist Church, The Baulk instead of a portakabin on the forecourt at 21 Orchard Road, Beeston for polling districts SAN2, SAN3 and SAN4. This was because of problems with congestion and traffic in the vicinity of Orchard Road and the A1. The Clerk was also asked to advise CBC that Sandy Baptist Church Hall, Jenkins Pavilion and the Village Hall were also potential locations for the future should alternative polling stations be needed.

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11 Councillor Surgeries (100 -2013/14)

Members discussed arrangements for future councillor surgeries commencing in January 2014. It was noted that attendance at surgeries in the library was not high. Cllr Aldis advised that he would be holding his CBC surgeries at a local chemist shop and was happy to share surgeries with STC.

RESOLVED to pursue the option of shared councillor surgeries with CBC members to be held in the chemist.

12 Calendar of Meetings (101 -2013/14)

A draft calendar of council meetings planned for the year beginning 1 April 2014 was discussed and amended as shown below.

2014	
Mon 19.05.14	Town Council [2]
Mon 26.05.14	Bank Holiday
Mon 02.06.14	Development Scrutiny Policy, Finance & Resources
Mon 09.06.14	
Mon 16.06.14	Human Resources
Mon 23.06.14	Development Scrutiny Community Services & Environment
Mon 30.06.14	Town Council [3]
Mon 07.07.14	
Mon 14.07.14	Development Scrutiny Policy, Finance & Resources
Mon 21.07.14	
Mon 28.07.14	
Mon 04.08.14	Development Scrutiny Community Services & Environment
Mon 11.08.14	Town Council [4]
Mon 18.08.14	
Mon 25.08.14	Bank Holiday
Mon 01.09.14	Development Scrutiny Policy, Finance & Resources
Mon 08.09.14	
Mon 15.09.14	Human Resources
Mon 22.09.14	Town Council [5]
Mon 29.09.14	Development Scrutiny Community Services & Environment
Mon 06.10.14	
Mon 13.10.14	
Mon 20.10.14	Development Scrutiny Policy, Finance & Resources
Mon 27.10.14	
Mon 03.11.14	Town Council [6]
Mon 10.11.14	Development Scrutiny Community Services & Environment
Mon 17.11.14	Human Resources
Mon 24.11.14	Development Scrutiny Policy, Finance & Resources

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Mon 01.12.14		
Mon 08.12.14		
Mon 15.12.14	Development Scrutiny	Town Council (Estimates) [7]
Mon 22.12.14	Community Services & Environment	
Mon 29.12.14		
2015		
Mon 05.01.15	Development Scrutiny	Policy, Finance & Resources
Mon 12.01.15		
Mon 19.01.15	Town Council (Precept) [8]	
Mon 26.01.15	Development Scrutiny	Community Services & Environment
Mon 02.02.15		
Mon 09.02.15		
Mon 16.02.15	Development Scrutiny	Policy, Finance & Resources
Mon 23.02.15		
Mon 02.03.15	Town Council [9]	
Mon 09.03.15	Development Scrutiny	Community Services & Environment
Mon 16.03.15	Human Resources	
Mon 23.03.15		
Mon 30.03.15	Development Scrutiny	Policy, Finance & Resources
Mon 06.04.15	Bank Holiday	
Mon 13.04.15	Town Council [1]	
Mon 20.04.15	Development Scrutiny	Community Services & Environment
Mon 27.04.15		
Mon 04.05.15	Bank Holiday	
Mon 11.05.15	Development Scrutiny	Policy, Finance & Resources
Mon 18.05.15	Town Council (Annual Meeting) [2]	
Mon 25.05.15	Bank Holiday	

RESOLVED to confirm the amended draft calendar subject to final approval at the Annual Meeting of the council. It was thought likely that the town council elections would be held at the same time as the next general election on 7 or 14 May 2015.

(Cllr White left the meeting.)

13 Mayoral Communications (102 -2013/14)

RESOLVED to note the list of the Mayor's and Deputy Mayor's engagements this had been circulated before the meeting.

The Mayor drew attention to the success of the visit of the civic delegation from Poland and the trip to see 47 Polish graves in St Neots. It was hoped that further research could be conducted to find out more about these burials. The Mayor's page on the website had been updated with recent events including the

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Christmas Lights switch on which had taken place the day before. The Mayor congratulated and thanked all those organisations and individuals involved in the event which had been a true celebration of and by the Sandy community noting that the High Sheriff of Bedfordshire and various visiting dignitaries had also enjoyed participating in the event.

The Mayor also drew attention to the formal closure of the Sandy allotments on 30 November 2013 and expressed the Council's continued desire to secure a new allotment site.

14 Reports from Representatives (103 -2013/14)

- i) There was no formal report from the Ward Councillors of Central Bedfordshire Council although Cllr Aldis was thanked for his motion at Council in which he had asked CBC to pass on Council Tax funding support from Central Government to local parishes. The motion had not been carried.
- ii) There were no reports from Town Council representatives on external bodies.

15 News Release (104 -2013/14)

See item 9.v CCTV provision in Sandy. The Clerk was authorised to issue an appropriate news release in consultation with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.