

Sandy Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Community Services and Environment Committee of Sandy Town Council held in the Council Chamber at 10, Cambridge Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire on Monday 8 December 2014 commencing at 7.30 pm

Present: Cllrs N Aldis (Chairman), J Ali, C Butterfield, T Cole, C Osborne, M Runchman, M Scott, P Sharman R Smith and S Sutton

Absent: None

In Attendance: Cllr D Sharman. Five members of the public, S Foster (as Clerk)

1 Apologies for absence (036-14/15)

All members of the Committee were present.

Action

2 Declarations of interest (037-14/15)

- i) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests - None
- ii) Non-disclosable Interests – Cllr Cole drew attention to the fact that her daughter delivers copies of the Bulletin. This interest was relevant to agenda item 7. Cllr Aldis drew attention to his role as a member of the Board of Aragon Housing. This interest was relevant to agenda item 5.

3 Minutes of previous meeting (038-14/15)

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the Community Services and Environment Committee held on Monday 4 August 2014 as a correct record of proceedings.

Admin

4 Public Participation Session (039-14/15)

A member of the public said that agenda item 9 did not mention a possible footpath for New Road as a potential project for match funding. He asked that this be added to the agenda for a forthcoming meeting between Alistair Burt MP, CBC, Town Council and residents regarding roads in the area. This is not a Town Council meeting but Cllr Aldis undertook to approach CBC about the matter.

Cllr Aldis

A second member of the public spoke about agenda item 6ii regarding alleged damage to gravestones. He criticised the length of time it had taken to resolve this matter and what he perceived to be lack of leadership by Council Members. He drew Members attention to an e-mail which had been received by the Town Council and which had been circulated to members on 3

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December 2014. He stated that he felt that the Town Council had a duty of care towards the gravestones in the Cemetery and asked that one memorial be cleaned in order to eradicate marks left by the strimmer.

5 **Potential Rural Exception Site (040-14/15)**

Mr J Boswell from the Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity told members that BRCC had been commissioned to carry out a housing needs survey in Beeston to see if there is an affordable housing need. The survey will ask if residents are intending to look for housing in the next two years and will identify income levels. If a need is identified a Rural Exception Site would normally be sought with a usual capacity of up to ten dwellings. In this case a site for housing has already been identified if there is a need – the potential community orchard site.

The survey is being limited to Beeston because the whole parish of Sandy would be too large to be considered as a rural exception site.

Members raised a number of concerns, that there may be access issues across the Village Green, possible danger of flooding and previous problems in obtaining permission to build housing on the site. The plan runs contrary to talks between Central Bedfordshire Council and Town Council regarding the establishment of a community orchard. It was **RESOLVED** to write to Central Bedfordshire Council welcoming the survey but raising concern that the Town Council had not been consulted about the plan, considering that discussions had been taking place about using the site as a community orchard.

Town Clerk

6 **Cemetery Complaints (041-14/15)**

i) **Complaint about mole activity and cemetery maintenance**

Members considered the correspondence received from one member of the public. It was felt that the Council staff had taken prompt, appropriate action to eradicate as many moles as possible but that it was a perennial problem. There was no evidence that subsidence was being caused around gravestones by mole activity, the cemetery soil is prone to natural settlement. It was **RESOLVED** to write to the complainant and inform them that the situation would continue to be monitored in the forthcoming months.

Town Clerk

ii) **Complaint about alleged damage to gravestones**

Members addressed the concerns expressed by the complainant that the length of time taken to resolve this issue was

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unacceptable. The matter was originally to be considered by the Complaints Committee, which for various reasons was delayed in meeting. The Clerk then sought advice and was informed that the matter should be dealt with by this Committee. It was reiterated that the gravestones were not damaged, there were marks in the grime on the stones. This was purely accidental in the course of maintenance activity. It was **RESOLVED** that one gravestone should be cleaned at a cost of £95 by Wrighton and Barker, Memorial Masons. This is undertaken without prejudice and in no way sets a precedent for further claims on the Town Council.

Town Clerk

7 **Communications Strategy (042-14/15)**

- i) Mr Quince from Rosetta publishing gave a short presentation on the publication. There are six other similar magazines in the surrounding area and a number of Council's use them to disseminate information. He said that the Biggleswade and Sandy issue contained a considerable amount of community content. A total of 4,880 copies were delivered to households in Sandy, plus extras delivered to the library, Council offices, TIC and library. There were plans to increase the cost of advertising in the magazine by 8% but if a decision was made before 1st December the cost would be held at its current rate of £238 per issue for the next twelve months. Biggleswade Town Council pays a premium for the inside front cover place it occupies. It was **RESOLVED** to renew the contract before the end of December 2014 at a cost of £238 and to enquire as to the cost and availability of a back page entry.

Town Clerk

- ii) The Clerk's report on the requirements in the new Quality Council scheme was noted and it was **RESOLVED** to consider the matter further when a full briefing on the new scheme was received.

8 **Provision of Public Access Defibrillator (043-14/15)**

Members discussed the most suitable site for the placement of the defibrillator. It was decided that a town centre point would be preferable and if Sandy was later allocated further machines they could be located at the sports centres. It was **RESOLVED** that the unit should be installed on the library building and that the Clerk should liaise with Central Bedfordshire Council regarding this. It was also **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND** that the costs detailed in the report - £150 for training and £126 per annum for service support should be agreed. It was noted that further costs for logos, installation, signage and Maintenance would be needed and it was requested that these costs be given in due course.

Town Clerk

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9 Rural Transport Match Fund (044-14/15)

A number of possible projects for matched funding were discussed. These included a pedestrian crossing on Sunderland Road, a footpath at New Road and one in Orchard Road. However it was felt that these projects would be too expensive especially in view of the probability that CBC would once again refuse to pass any of the Council Tax Support Grant it will receive from Central Government. It was **RESOLVED** not to apply for matched funding under this scheme at present. It was also resolved to explore the costs involved in providing a footway in Orchard Road.

Town Clerk

10 Sandy Cricket Club Licence (045-14/15)

RESOLVED to note an update report with regard to negotiation of a licence for use of Jenkins Pavilion and the cricket square and outfield at Sunderland Road Recreation Ground by Sandy Cricket Club. This item would be carried forward to a future agenda.

11 Christmas Lights (046-14/15)

Cllr Runchman gave a report on the event (copy attached).

RESOLVED to give a vote of thanks to Cllr Runchman for her hard work in making the event the success it was.

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Christmas Lights Switch On event – 2014

Despite several set-backs the Christmas Lights switch on event was a great success.

The office staff worked really hard on this event despite their very heavy workloads – which has resulted in a considerable backlog for them. The outdoor staff also worked hard on the event before and on the day. Richard Gilbert stepped up to the role of H & S officer on the day.

Sandy Scouts and Air Cadets gave us invaluable support to set up and dismantle the site and the Scouts provided lighting and refreshments too.

Our gazebo stalls were sold out in a couple of weeks and we had to turn people away – partly to ensure we had a good variety of sellers and because we had no room for any more. All the stallholders turned up on the day and many were very complimentary about the whole event.

The entertainment, santa's grotto, mulled wine and raffles were again very popular with the community.

We had excellent support from volunteers – thank you letters have been sent but if you know of anyone that we have forgotten please let us know. Local businesses were very generous with donations of their services, raffle prizes and money.

Once again the weather was kind to us and we estimate there were more visitors this year than last year. The changes to the layout of the activities in the market square eased congestion and made the day more manageable and enjoyable.

St Johns' Ambulance only had 1 minor incident to deal with and were very happy with their location at the event. We didn't have any 'lost children'.

Feedback from the community has been very positive.

The figures have yet to be finalised and will be reported back to Council in January. The Clerk is also planning an agenda item for Town Council in January to discuss the arrangements for this event in 2015.

Cllr Marion Runchman