

Sandy Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee of Sandy Town Council which was held in the Council Chamber at 10 Cambridge Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire on Monday 16th January 2023 commencing at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllrs N Aldis, J Hewitt, R Lacey, A Lock, R Lock, C Osborne (Chair), M Pettitt, M Scott and P Sharman

Absent: P Blaine

In attendance: Mrs N Sewell (Clerk)

	<i>Actions</i>
<p>1 Apologies for absence (93-2022/23) Apologies had been received from Cllr P Blaine who had been admitted to hospital the previous weekend. The Chair extended Members best wishes to Cllr Blaine and hope for a speedy recovery.</p>	Admin
<p>2 Declarations of interest (94 -2022/23) i) Disclosable Pecuniary Interest – none ii) Non-disclosable Pecuniary Interest – none iii) Dispensations – none</p>	
<p>3 Minutes of previous meeting (95 – 2022/23) RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the meeting of Policy, Finance and Resources Committee held on Monday 12th December 2022 and to approve them as a correct record of proceedings with the following amendment, that apologies had been received for Cllr R Lacey.</p>	Town Clerk
<p>4 Public Participation Session (96 -2022/23) No members of the public were present.</p>	
<p>5 Financial Reports (97-2022/23) i) Members considered the balance sheet and detailed financial report showing income and expenditure against the revenue budget ending 31st December 2022. The Chairman took Members through the report page by page. RESOLVED to note the report. ii) Members received and considered a budget report from the Town Clerk. RESOLVED to note the report. iii) Members scrutinised a schedule of payments for December. RESOLVED to approve the list of payments for December 2022.</p>	

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iv) Bank reconciliations and statements.

RESOLVED that the Chair of Policy, Finance and Resources check and approve the bank reconciliations and statements.

The Chair moved for Members to review items 7, 8, 9 and 10 before reviewing item 6 and the 2023/24 budget to enable any necessary amendments or additions to be made following decisions.

6 2023/24 Draft Budget and Precept (98-2022/23)

i) Members received a 2023/24 draft budget update report from the Town Clerk. This included changes to the last version of the budget as recommended and agreed by Members. The Chairman took Councillors through each budget line on the report.

ii) Members considered the latest draft 2023/24 budget and precept by cost centre documents.

It was RESOLVED that the 2023/24 budget and precept as set out in the papers submitted to the committee be **recommended** to the Full Council for approval. The proposed budget will require an increase in the budget of £5,339.00 resulting in a total precept of £633,459 – an increase of 0.85%. It was noted that CBC has advised the Town Council that its tax base was reduced by 0.22%. This will result in a Precept per Band D Equivalent of £156.53, which will be a £1.67 (1.08%) increase per Band D Equivalent for the financial year 2023/24 (or 3.2p per week).

A query was raised by one Member stating that some residents might query the amount held in general reserves. The Chair advised Members that it was recommended that 3 months net expenditure be held in reserves. He added that a lot of the costs from Rolling Capital would be spent as projects were completed.

He added that it had been agreed in previous years that the Council would take up a proportion of the EMR on Fallowfield from the Developer each year, placing £7,500 in the fund each year. He added that the Council had borrowed money from this fund to pay towards the Cemetery.

Chair

Town Clerk

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7 Maintenance Equipment Purchase Request – Sandy Bowls Club (99-2022/23)

Members received a request from Sandy Bowls Club for funds to purchase a bowling green iron at a cost of circa £6,200.00 plus £3,500 optional extras. A representative of the Bowls Club had been invited to the meeting but had sent apologies.

It was RESOLVED not to support the proposal to buy this piece of equipment as in the current difficult economic climate, when the Council was seeking to keep expenses low, Members felt that it could not justify such a large spend on a piece of equipment that would benefit only relatively few of its residents. Members suggested the Bowls Club look to raise funds from other sources towards payments, including seeking grant funding from other bodies and raising funds through sponsorship. Members stated there was nothing in the lease that prevented the club from placing sponsorship boards around the green for this purpose. It was also suggested that Sandy Bowls Club explore the possibility of equipment sharing with the Conservative Club's Bowls Club for those pieces only needed on occasion. Other suggestions were to look to see if hire of equipment were possible.

Town Clerk

8 Cemetery (100-2022/23)

Members received and noted a report from the Outdoor Team Leader requesting the purchase of two battery powered cordless mowers for the Cemetery on the grounds of Health & Safety.

It was RESOLVED to purchase two mowers as set out in the report both for health and safety reasons and to underpin the Council's commitment to a greener infrastructure. The Clerk was requested to seek further discounted rates before purchase.

Town Clerk

9 Lamp Column Upgrades (101-2022/23)

Members received a report from the Town Clerk containing recommendations from the Christmas Lights Contractors regarding upgrades needed to Lamppost Columns to bring the timers up to spec.

It was RESOLVED to make the recommended upgrades and that funds should be taken from the 2022/23 budget for Street Lights.

Town Clerk

10 Grounds Team Audit (102-2022/23)

Members received a report from the Outdoor Team Leader and Deputy Clerk with an Open Spaces Audit outlining recommended repairs and replacements for equipment and their associated costs.

It was RESOLVED that the following expenditure could be spent to undertake the work highlighted:

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- 2 x new anti-vandalism benches be installed at Sunderland Road at a cost of £1,170 inc carriage
- Replacement picnic bench tabletop with wheelchair access at Bedford Road at a cost of £500.00
- 2 new benches to be installed at Beeston Green at a cost of £1,170
- Replacement matting for swings at Fallowfield Park plus re-soiling and grass seeding of the area at a cost of £450.00
- It was agreed that the replacement of a gate and fencing at The Limes should take place in principle but a request was made to obtain quotes for equipment of a more robust material than wood and to look to replace dead hedging instead of installing a fence. Costs to be brought back to PF&R.
- Welding of the slide to be undertaken at Bedford Road at a cost of £350
- Replacement of accessible swing at Bedford Road at a cost of £75.00
- Replacement of basketball hoops at Bedford Road at a cost of £70.00
- Any arboricultural work to go ahead if costs fall within the allocated budget for this.
- Request costs for postcrete repairs on pathways at Sunderland Road and Fallowfield be brought back to PF&R
- Purchase 10 tonne of topsoil to repair pitch at Bedford Road at a cost of £400.00
- Vehicle works - request a report is made to PF&R once details of the condition of both diesel vehicles can be supplied to the committee for consideration and a decision on which of the vehicles it would be best to keep.
- Replace the gate and post at the rear of the cemetery at a cost of £300, to come from Cemetery Maintenance budget
- Replacement and re-alignment of five barred access gate to the Pinnacle at a cost of £550. The Clerk to engage BRCC volunteers for help with installation. Use funds from Pinnacle maintenance budget.
- Replace boot cleaner at Bedford Road at a cost of £300.00, budget to come from revenue.
- Replacement noticeboard in the town centre by Alders with magnetic backboard and holding pins at a cost of £1,300, funds to come from Capital.

All costs to come out of relevant budget line where there is an underspend in 2022/23 unless otherwise outlined above.

11 Meeting dates for 2023/24 (103-2022/23)

Members received a revised calendar of dates for Council and Committee meetings taking place in 2023/24.

It was RESOLVED that having undertaken one amendment to move a meeting of the Development Scrutiny and Human Resources Committees

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from Monday 4th December to Monday 27th November to ensure no clashes with a post-Christmas Lights Switch on Event, the calendar of meetings be recommended for agreement at Full Council on 23rd January 2023.

12 Chairmans Items (104-2022/23)

There were none

13 Date of Next Meeting

20th February 2023

Meeting closed at 20.50