

Sandy Town Council

Minutes of the meeting of Sandy Town Council held in the Council Chamber at 10 Cambridge Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire on Monday 17 September 2018 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs P N Aldis, P Blaine, A M Hill, W Jackson, T Knagg, G Leach, M Pettitt (Deputy Mayor), P Sharman and J Sparrow

Absent: Cllrs T Cole, C Osborne, M Scott (Mayor), S Sutton, N Thompson and CBC Cllr P Smith

In attendance: Mr C Robson (Clerk), Cllrs T Stock (CBC) C Maudlin (CBC), and 3 members of the public

Action

The Chairman asked that Members stand in a moments silence to the late Councillor D Sharman as this marked the first meeting of Full Council since his passing. The Chairman was proud to have known and worked with David and was sure that Members would agree that David was a kind and modest man.

1 Apologies for Absence (75-2018/2019)

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs T Cole, C Osborne, M Scott, S Sutton, N Thompson, and CBC Cllr P Smith.

Admin

2 Declaration of Interest and requests for dispensations (76-2018/2019)

- i) *Disclosable Pecuniary Interests* - None
- ii) *Non Pecuniary Interests* – Cllrs Aldis, Leach and Sharman declared an interest in agenda item 5 as members of the FOSCL. It was noted that all three Councillors represented the Council on the group and dispensation was granted to vote on recommended resolutions in agenda item 5.
- iii) *Dispensations* – None

3 Public Participation Session (77-2018/2019)

No members of the public spoke at the meeting and no questions had been received prior to the meeting.

One Member of the public had expressed interest in a subject which was linked to agenda item 10. The Chairman stated that he hoped their queries could be addressed during discussion on this item.

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4 Minutes of previous Town Council Meetings (78-2018/2019)

RESOLVED to receive the Minutes of the Meeting of Sandy Town Council held on Monday 6 August 2018 and to approve them as a correct record of proceedings.

5 Minutes of Committees and Recommendations therein (79-2018/2019)

To receive and note the minutes of the meetings of the following committees and sub-committees and (if applicable) to approve recommendations therein which do not arise elsewhere:

RESOLVED to receive and note the minutes of the Development Scrutiny Committee meetings held on 13 August 2018 and 3 September 2018.

RESOLVED to receive and note the minutes of the Policy Finance & Resources Committee held on 3 September 2018.

RESOLVED to approve the recommendation that the Council approve the Friends of Sandy Christmas Lights Constitution subject to the agreed changes and review by the Local Council Public Advisory Service.

RESOLVED to approve the recommendation that the Council agree that the FOSCL sets up its own bank account as an independent body.

RESOLVED to approve the recommendation that the Council approves the division in costs between the Council and FOSCL subject to mulled wine expenditure and income falling to the Council for the 2018 event.

RESOLVED to approve the recommendation that the Council continues to fund the 2018 event from its event budget line and that those costs for which the FOSCL are now responsible will be taken from earmarked reserves set aside to support the event.

RESOLVED to approve the recommendation that any remaining earmarked reserves held after the 2018 event be donated to the FOSCL.

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RESOLVED to approve the recommendation that an event review report come back to Council following the AGM in January 2019.

6 Financial Matters (80-2018/2019)

- i) **RESOLVED** to note a balance sheet and detailed financial report showing income and expenditure against the revenue budget for the year to 31 August 2018 (previously circulated and scrutinised at a meeting of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee on 3 September 2018).
- ii) **RESOLVED** to note a budget overview report (previously circulated and scrutinised at a meeting of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee on 3 September 2018).
- iii) **RESOLVED** to note a list of payments made since the last Town Council meeting (previously circulated and scrutinised at a meeting of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee on 4 June 2018).

7 Reports from Central Bedfordshire Councillors (81-2018/2019)

Members received reports from Sandy's Central Bedfordshire Councillors and noted Central Bedfordshire Council's briefing notes which had already been received.

It was noted that the CBC consultation on leisure centre use had now closed. If any Member still wished to submit a response it was agreed that it be worth trying to do so.

CBC Ward Councillors had met with Highways officers to discuss a number of issues which had been raised by STC, SG19 and CBC Councillors. A written update on improvement works for Sandy was circulated to Members. The Chairman stated many of the works to be carried out were welcomed and asked whether there was a timescale in place for the installation of a dropped kerb at the disabled bay outside the library. CBC Cllrs advised that there was no time scale at present, but the area technician was looking into it.

It was noted that a dangerous 'New Road Layout' sign on New Road was to be removed.

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A path along New Road does not seem likely to happen any time soon but the matter will continue to be pursued. The bridge that will need to be crossed is not wide enough for a pavement which meets regulations.

A Councillor commented that it was good to see patching work would be carried out on Station Road and that he hoped the works would be sensible and durable. The entrance road to the station itself is also in need of repair. CBC Cllrs stated that repair works would be patching of areas, rather than just filling of potholes.

A Member noted that pavements at Dapifer Drive needed looking at as tree roots had displaced paving slabs.

Members expressed disappointment that there would be no action taken on parking issues at Swan Lane. CBC Cllrs will speak with police again to see if any action can be taken over inappropriately parked cars. However, they have previously been told that no law was being broken. A Member stated that some residents had expressed support for double yellow lines and it was a shame this could not be pursued. It was commented that yellow lines may have a knock-on effect of moving problems further up the road.

A Member queried painting work to the Station Road roundabout. CBC Cllrs confirmed work was due to start on 22nd October and they would continue to push for it.

CBC Cllr Stock informed Members that the next Town and Parish Conference would be on 8th November 2018.

CBC Cllr Maudlin informed Members that work was progressing on the creation of the Greensands Country project. A logo has been made available which can be used by towns and businesses to show their place within Greensands Country. The purpose is to create a destination area which Sandy is a part of. A Charter can be signed up to on the BRCC website. It is also the intention to create an interactive website that visitors to the area can use.

A Member raised concerns over the level of ragwort on RSPB land.

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RESOLVED that the Clerk write to the RSPB to raise concerns over the level of ragwort growth and ask whether steps can be taken to reduce this.

Clerk

CBC Cllrs informed Members they had issued leaflets on improvements to the Winchester Road area and had received good feedback. Work will focus on improving parking. CBC Cllrs will push the project forward with officers.

CBC Cllr Stock informed Members that she was hoping to have a meeting in October on the proposed Community Board. CBC Cllr Stock informed Members that she had been speaking with businesses to look at setting up a Town Regeneration Forum. The purpose of the forum would be to look at ways the town could increase its footfall and get businesses working together.

8 Sandye Place Academy (82-2018/2019)

- i) Members noted and considered a joint statement from Central Bedfordshire Council and Sandye Place Academy.
- ii) Members received correspondence from the Chairman of Sandy Carnival Committee.
- iii) Members received correspondence received from the Chairman of the Sandy and District Horticultural Association.

The Chairman informed Members that SPA had now confirmed the booking for the 2019 Carnival. The Chairman hoped that this would be the case for the Sandy Show as well.

The Chairman informed Members that the Clerk had sent a letter to Sandye Place Trustees asking whether they would be willing to meet with representatives of Town Council to discuss the future of Sandye Place and allow the Council to get a greater understanding of the procedures involved in making decisions on the future of the facility. The Mayor and Deputy had felt that time was of the essence in making contact with the trustees.

A Member stated that Sandy Town Council needs to state its regret at the closing of the school. It is sad that it has reached this stage as the school offered a smooth transition and was considered a good option by many parents. Organisations

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should work together to ensure the building isn't left to deteriorate. The buildings and land could meet numerous goals set out in the Council's Community Plan.

A Member commented that the wider issues must be considered. SPA was purpose built in the 1970's as a community facility, and this was the case throughout Bedfordshire. Community facilities are therefore a key part of the building. Facilities have not increased over the years and removing these facilities changes the entire framework for the whole community. The DfE have not made it clear what they will wish to do with the site and it is important they make an informed decision which is not made in isolation.

The Chairman stated that at the recent meeting with Alistair Burt MP, Alistair had indicated he would approach the DfE to seek clarity on their understanding of their responsibilities for Sandye Place and assurance that they will work with local groups. We must do what we can as a community to safeguard this invaluable asset.

CBC Cllr Stock informed Members that the Pinnacle Trust were working closely with those at SPA and that the Trustees would be happy to meet with Councillors. The difficulty is that decisions come down to the DfE, not CBC or SPA Trustees. All parties agree that the facility needs to be kept open and something must be done with it. A covenant means the facility must be used for educational purposes for 10 years. CBC officers are currently assessing the area's needs to see what suitable use could be brought forward.

Trustees of SPA are in close contact with the DfE and all parties are pushing to make sure the site is used and not left to deteriorate.

A Member echoed comments that a large number of items in the Community Plan could be addressed by utilising Sandye Place. Whatever is done on the site there must be a clear understanding of its total implications.

A member commented that much of the information we have is second hand and the Clerk must understand in detail where legal decisions can be made and who is making those decisions. If we can't find out these details then we must be told.

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It was Proposed, Seconded and **Resolved** that;

- Sandy Town Council regrets the closure of Sandye Place Academy after becoming inviable following the re-organisation of the education system in Sandy.
- That it works with Sandye Place Trustees, Central Bedfordshire Council representatives and community groups to ensure that the site remains available for planned community activities for the whole of the academic year to the end of August 2019.
- That the Council seeks to explore alternative uses for the site beyond the closure of the School which will most benefit the wider community.

Members endorsed the steps already taken to contact SPA trustees and hoped that a meeting could be set up soon.

9 **Action List (83-2018/2019)**

Members noted the action list. The Clerk informed Members that there was still no more news on a route for the East West Rail Link and that Alistair Burt had not been able to provide any more information at a meeting with STC representatives. An announcement is not expected before the end of the year.

A Member reiterated that he felt it was important that the Council make it clear to the MP that Sandy is a sizable community and its interests must be considered. It was felt that the interests of the town were not being pursued as effectively as other areas.

10 **Community Plan (84-2018/2019)**

Members received and considered an amended Community Plan. The Chairman noted that a lot of work had gone into the document and thanked the working group and its Chairman, Cllr Blaine for their efforts.

It was Proposed, Seconded and **RESOLVED** that the Council adopt the Community Plan document.

Admin

The Clerk informed Members that the office would now draw up a suggested plan to start addressing points raised in the Community Plan.

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Members discussed concerns over vacant shops and ways in which the Council could look to help address the problem, including liaising with landlords, encourage short term lets and making the centre of the town more attractive.

The Chairman noted that a Member of public was particularly interested in the issue of vacant units and if they had any questions or feedback, this could be sent through to the Clerk.

11 Councillor Meeting with Alistair Burt MP (85-2018/2019)

Members received feedback from a recent meeting between STC representatives and Alistair Burt MP. The Chairman informed Members that Alistair had only been able to stay for 45 minutes due to other commitments. Therefore, given that Sandye Place Academy took up some of the discussion, time was short to discuss other matters.

The Clerk informed Members that Alistair had confirmed that as far as he was aware, no decisions on the route of the East West Rail Link had been taken and that no more information was available. There is still no time frame for an announcement on a decision, but it is hoped that a decision on the route will be made by the end of the year.

The Clerk informed a Member from SG19 who was present in the public gallery, that he had passed on notes from SG19 to the MP.

Mr Burt had informed Council representatives that he wished to hold another meeting with the DfT later in the year, similar to the meeting held in May. However, he would stress that decisions must be made prior to this meeting so detailed discussions could be had.

12 Election of Council Representatives (86-2018/2019)

Members were elected to represent the Council in the following groups until the end of the Council year:

Sandy Green Wheel – Cllr P Sharman

The Riddy and Pinnacle Management Group – Cllr S Sutton

Friends of Sandy Christmas Lights Trustee – Cllr N Aldis

Admin

13 Election of Committee Member to the Grievance Committee (87-2018/2019)

Cllr T Knagg was elected to replace the late Cllr D Sharman on the Grievance Committee.

Admin

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14 **Anglian Water Increases (88-2018/2019)**

Members considered an article suggesting Anglian Water would be increasing rates above inflation for homes served in the east of England. Members agreed that the financial burden of infrastructure for new developments should not be placed on residents and that the developments themselves should pay for the costs associated with bringing in new infrastructure to support those developments.

RESOLVED to write to the Chief Executive Officer of Anglian Water to express the Council's objection to the charges which will be inflicted on residents to fund water infrastructure for new developments.

Clerk

15 **Councillor Surgeries (89-2018/2019)**

Members received and considered a summary of surgeries carried out over the last 5 months, including information on complaints/issues received. The Clerk informed Members that one more surgery was scheduled for 10th November. Cllr Aldis would be present at the surgery along with the Sandy Historical Research Group, who would be holding a historical display.

A Member stated that although attendance has been low, it is important that Councillors are available to listen to residents if they are needed.

It was proposed and seconded that surgeries continue on a bi-monthly basis in the same format and location as currently used.

RESOLVED that the Council continue to hold bi-monthly Councillor surgeries in the Council Chamber on Saturday mornings from 10am to 12pm and that the matter be reviewed in a further 6 months.

16 **Crime and Policing (90-2018/2019)**

i) Members received and noted recent CCTV incidents.

The Chairman reminded Members that the overall issue of CCTV provision in the town, including cost and efficiency was to be discussed at the next Community Services and Environment meeting.

A Member stated that the Co-op had suffered from repetitive break-ins and the police should be questioned on what action was been taken to tackle this.

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RESOLVED that the Clerk write to Bedfordshire Police Chief Constable asking what action the police are taking to tackle repeated break-ins at the Co-op in Sandy. A copy of the letter is to be sent to the PCC.

Clerk

- ii) Members received and noted the most recent crime statistics for Sandy. The Clerk explained that the police had changed systems and as a result the data provided excluded addresses. Members pointed out that without locations it was hard to draw anything from the figures provided. It was agreed that Members would bring the matter to the PCC's attention at a meeting on 29th October 2018 and ask for more detailed information to support the statistics.
- iii) Members noted that the Bedfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner will be holding a public surgery in the Town Council Chamber on 29th October 2018. This will be followed by a meeting with Councillors at 6.30 pm. The Clerk was awaiting more details on how the public surgery will be arranged.

A CBC Member asked whether the police would be advertising the surgery, as the previously arranged meeting which was cancelled had not been advertised at all. The Clerk stated that the police should be advertising the surgery, but that the Council would ensure it promoted it through social media and the press.

Admin

17 Reports from Representatives (91-2018/2019)

Members received and noted a report from Cllr Sutton on the ATC Civilian Committee AGM.

18 Representation/Conference Attendance (92-2018/2019)

Members considered whether the Town Council wishes to send representation to the Bedfordshire Association of Town and Parish Councils' Annual General Meeting on 18th October 2018.

Cllr Aldis and Blaine sit on the Association and will be in attendance at the AGM. The Council are invited to send three Members with voting rights.

The Chairman - Deputy Mayor of Sandy stated he is unable to make the AGM but confirmed Cllr Scott, Mayor of Sandy had

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expressed a wish to attend. Councillor Jackson indicated he would also attend on behalf of the Council.

The Clerk would ask all Members not present if they would like to attend as the third voting Member.

Clerk

19 News Release (93-2018/2019)

- Adoption of Community Plan
- Success of Lamp Post Poppies
- Working with partners to ensure Sandye Place remains a community facility

Admin

20 Chairman's Items (94-2018/2019)

The Chairman informed Members that he had attended the Bedfordshire Fire Service awards evening held in Luton, which was a very moving evening which showcased some wonderful and brave work which is done in our county.

It was agreed that a letter of congratulations be sent to Sandy's award recipients and with thanks to the fire service for all they do being reiterated - especially in light of the recent house fire in Sandy.

Clerk

As Deputy Mayor, the Chairman had the honour of opening the Sandy Green Wheel on Sunday 16th September. There were about 60 people present for the event and for the walks which followed. Thanks were given to the Sandy Guild for their support in providing refreshments and assisting the Clerk with the setting-up of the site.

21 Date of Next Meeting (95-2018/2019) Monday 29 October 2018