

Sandy Town Council

Minutes of the meeting of Sandy Town Council held virtually via Zoom on Monday 18th January 2021 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs P N Aldis, P Blaine, A Gibson, J Hewitt, A M Hill, W Jackson, T Knagg, R Lock, C Osborne, S Paterson, M Pettitt (Chair), P Sharman, and S Sutton

Absent: Cllrs M Scott, N Thompson and CBC Cllr S Ford

In attendance: CBC Cllrs C Maudlin and T Stock, Mr C Robson (Clerk), Mrs C Baker-Smith (Admin Team Leader)

Action

1 **Apologies for Absence (93-2020/2021)**

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Scott and CBC Cllr S Ford.

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Cllr Pettitt expressed Members condolences to Cllr Osborne on the recent loss of his mother-in-law.

2 **Declaration of Interest and requests for dispensations (94-2020/21)**

- i) *Disclosable Pecuniary Interests* – None
- ii) *Non-Pecuniary Interests* – None
- iii) *Dispensations* – None

3 **Public Participation Session (95-2020/21)**

A Member raised a question on behalf of a member of the public asking why there were currently no vaccination centres in Sandy?

CBC Cllr Stock informed Members that Central Beds Council were not happy that there were no vaccination centres in central Beds and had raised this with NHS England. The town's GP Surgeries come under the Ivel Valley Group and they are awaiting supplies of vaccine and training for those who will administer it. A Member said that Allison House and Park House care homes should start vaccinating residents in the next two weeks.

A Member asked what procedures the Town Council undertakes to prevent modern day slavery? The Clerk stated that there are in place Standing and Financial orders which the council follow to safeguard against it.

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4 Minutes of previous Town Council Meeting (96-2020/21)

RESOLVED to:

Receive the minutes of the meeting of Sandy Town Council held on Monday 14th December 2020 and to approve them as a correct record of proceedings.

5 Minutes of Committees and Recommendations therein (97-2020/21)

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:

- i) **RESOLVED** to receive and note the minutes of the Community, Services and Environment Committee held on 21st December 2020.

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** that a Skatepark Working Group is set up to develop the proposed skatepark project. That this group reports back to the Community Services & Environment Committee.

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the following Members would be on the working group: Cllrs Aldis, Hewitt, Knagg, Lock and Paterson.

- ii) **RESOLVED** to receive and note the minutes of the Development Scrutiny Committee held on 4th January 2021.
- iii) **RESOLVED** to receive and note the minutes of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee held on 4th January 2021.

RESOLVED to defer the recommendation on the 2021/22 budget to Item 8. The Clerk informed Members that a member of the public had queried the budget recommendation within the Policy, Finance and Resources minutes since it does not specify the precept increase/decrease amount. The Chairman of the Committee confirmed that the detailed budget information to which the recommendation referred was included in the PFR agenda and the budget summary was included in this Full Council agenda. Minutes of the Full Council meeting fully set out the resolved precept and budget figures.

- iv) **RESOLVED** to receive and note the minutes of the Human Resources Committee held on the 11th January 2021.

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6 Reports from Central Bedfordshire Councillors (98-2020/21)

Members received verbal reports from the Central Bedfordshire Councillors.

Cllr Stock reported that Sandy had the highest number of COVID infections in the week ending 10 January 2021, and urged residents to obey the rules. She said there were two COVID stewards in Sandy on duty from 9am to 9pm daily, there to support and advise residents. They did not have any enforcement power but were able to report incidents to Central Beds Council and the Police for possible enforcement action. She said she would send the COVID age breakdowns to the Clerk. She also said that the Community Safety Team are having weekly drop-ins for town and parish councils and she would send the information to the Clerk.

Cllr
Stock

The Transport Management Team meeting will be on the 26 January 2021 at 10am where the subject of the proposed new zebra crossing in the High Street will be on the agenda and Members should email Maria Brooks if they would like to attend.

She said the 'Fix my Street' app is now available on the CBC website to enable online reporting of a wide range of highways related issues.

The Sandy Re-Generation Meeting will be held virtually on the 11 February 2021 at 10.30am to update on works carried in the Winchester Road area.

Cllr Maudlin said that Mark Conway of CBC was looking at flooding issues in Sandy, and that both Sandy and Blunham have hydrobags if needed. Sandy Town Council also holds hydrobags.

A Member wished to congratulate Cllr Stock on keeping her seat on the executive and having acquired the leisure portfolio. He also mentioned he had been informed that the Garden Bin Scheme had been stopped by CBC. CBC Cllrs responded saying this was probably because the garden bag waste was stopped during the winter months and the Garden Bin Scheme would probably start again in March when the waste collection was re-started.

7 Local Government Boundary Commission for England (99-2020/21)

Members received and noted the Boundary Commission's final recommendations for future electoral arrangements for Central Bedfordshire Council.

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8 2021/22 Budget and Precept (100–2020/21)

The Chairman of the Policy, Finance and Resources committee presented the committee's 2021/22 budget and precept recommendation. The summary sheet contained in Appendix II included the committee's recommendation, showing an overall budget increase of £4,588 resulting in an annual Band D equivalent precept of £149.24. The Chairman of Policy, Finance and Resources commented that in his view the budget was probably the most important decision the Council makes annually and the process of agreeing a 2021/22 budget had begun in October 2020. The majority of Councillors had been involved in the process, attending at least one of the previous Policy, Finance and Resources committee meetings at which the budget was reviewed and amended. At the last meeting of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee, Members went through the budget in detail taking into account the agreed changes to the Scale of Charges. There have been no changes to the budget which was presented to the Policy, Finance and Resources committee on 4th January 2021.

It was proposed, seconded, and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the proposed budget be approved resulting in a precept request of £599,356. This is an increase of £4,588 (0.77%) on the annual budget which equates to a 0.55% increase or £0.81 per Band D equivalent per annum, and the underspend in 2020/21 revenue be transferred to the rolling capital fund.

9 Cemetery Chapel (101–2020/21)

Members received and noted a report on the re-use of the cemetery chapel. The Clerk said a further report would be forthcoming in six months' time to review how the Chapel has operated in the interim.

10 Neighbourhood Development Plan (102-2020/21)

Members received and noted a report from the Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group.

Cllr Gibson said that after the next meeting on the 21st January an action plan would be prepared. CBC Cllr Maudlin and the Clerk will be attending the next Steering Group meeting along with CBC's Neighbourhood Plan Officer.

11 Action List (103-2020/21)

Members received and noted the action list.

Councillor Street Audit: Cllr Pettitt thanked Members for the seven reports so far received and he was anticipating at least a further

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two. He added that these reports contained around 200 issues including highways, potholes, footpaths and verges.

Items from the reports received so far and relating to tree planting opportunities on amenity and other land had been passed to the Clerk on 11 January for input to the Environmental Working Group.

Cllr Pettitt said he hoped the spreadsheets he is in the process of compiling, would eventually go on the council's website but would be a 12-month exercise. In the meantime, Cllr Pettitt undertook to keep all Members informed of progress.

A Member said that reported potholes in Western Way had already been marked for repair by highways. It was also noted that some larger roads are in need of major re-surfacing work.

Cllr Stock asked for the list to be sent to her which Cllr Pettitt agreed to ensure would happen in due course.

12 Leisure Services (104-2020/21)

The Clerk reported that together with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, respectively Chairman and Secretary of the SSLA, met with officers from CBC as part of the ongoing dialogue on leisure in Sandy. They had received assurances that ongoing interim work which followed the Council's previous meeting with CBC, is drawing to a conclusion. Elements of the leisure offer have interdependencies with the proposed Sandy Secondary School transformation project, which was the subject of the recent public consultation.

CBC is continuing to undertake their required internal processes regarding the future leisure offer and as soon as these are completed, CBC will return to STC with an update, detailing the next steps in the process, which will include detailed consultation with STC.

Positive progress continues to be made with the renewal of the SSLA lease for the car park and a new Community Use Agreements (CUA) for the shared school facilities. The importance of completing the SSLA lease and ensuring it provides the security the SSLA needs, while also flexibility for any future leisure related needs is understood by CBC, and a Heads of Terms will be issued very soon to the SSLA.

CBC Cllr Stock informed the meeting that as a result of a CBC restructure, Cllr Richard Wenham is now the Leader of CBC and

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there are now eight Executive Members. Cllr Stock would have Leisure Services added to her portfolio, as well as Well-Being and Countryside Access. She hoped that this would now help with communication between the Town Council and CBC on leisure services.

A Member said that hopefully this would lead closer to convening a meeting with CBC and the Town Council regarding leisure services in the town.

13 Correspondence (105-2020/21)

(i) Members received and considered the communication received from CBC's Partnership Community and Engagement Team on a Community Right to Bid application for The Queen's Head, 2-3 Cambridge Road, Sandy SG19 1JE.

(ii) Members received, considered and noted a communication received from CBC's Partnership Community and Engagement Team on a Community Right to Bid application for The King's Arms, 27 London Road, Sandy SG19 1HA.

A Member advised that the King's Arms now has the only petanque court in Sandy which is used by those other public houses which have a petanque team. Any support for the bids should include this information.

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** to support both bids.

(iii) Members received, considered and noted an open letter from the National Association of Local Councils.

A Member commented that the letter was good and raised some valid points and ideas. It was suggested that the local MP should be invited to all events as outlined in the letter to help our engagement. The Clerk confirmed that the MP is already invited to the Civic Service, Remembrance Day, Christmas Lights and the Mayor's Carol Service but the events group can ensure invites are issued to any other events the council is directly involved in.

Members noted the reference to building dementia-free communities and the Clerk is to liaise with Cllr Stock and Sarah Hughes to gather information regarding CBC's Dementia Friends campaign.

Members considered means by which public engagement, highlighted within the letter can best be widened. A Member felt

Town
Clerk

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that various previous lines of communication have gradually ceased to exist, for example the annual Council Newsletter, primarily intended to announce The Annual Parish Meeting and which was delivered by councillors to the residents of Sandy. A Member suggested that on the whole people did not read paper communications now and the focus is online communication, which is more environmentally friendly. Another Member said that community engagement was important, that the councillor surgeries at the Community Stand had been well attended and the Neighbourhood Plan will require a large amount of public engagement which will help form ideas regarding the best way to communicate with residents.

14 Consultations (106-2020/21)

Members considered whether the Council wished to submit a formal response to the CBC Budget 2021/22 consultation. A Member commented that they had been through CBC's budget and personally felt it was hard to disagree with.

It was commented that the largest proportion of the budget is spent on specialist services, but that the burden of increasing social care costs cannot continually be placed on Local Authorities to solve via their precept. A national approach should come forward.

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** that Members respond individually to the CBC Budget 2021/22 consultation.

A Member queried whether this might be an opportunity to raise ongoing concerns about pollution and the A1. After discussion, Cllr Stock suggested a Zoom meeting with Richard Fuller MP for Members to put their queries to him to take back to government.

15 Rural Market Town Group (107-2020/21)

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Hewitt to be the council's representative on the Rural Market Town Group.

16 Reports from Councillors on Outside Bodies (108-2020/21)

i) Members received and noted the report from Cllr Hill on behalf of the Sandy Sports and Leisure Association (SSLA).

ii) Members received and noted the report from Cllr Hill on behalf of the Sandy Twinning Association.

Cllr Hill advised that an AGM was held virtually on Wednesday 13 January. 2022 marks the 40th anniversary of Sandy's link with

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Malaunay. Also, it was hoped that the summer schools in France and Poland would be re-instated in 2022.

iii) Members received and noted the report from Cllr Hill on the Talk of the Town minibus (TOTT). A Member said that the minibus had been used by Ivel Sprinter when their bus was off the road.

17 News Release (109-2020/21)

It was agreed to issue news releases on the following matters:

- Setting 2021/22 Budget and Precept
- COVID-19 update

18 Chairman's Items (110-2020/21)

The Chair informed Members that a letter of condolence had been sent from the Town Council to Firefighter Chris Page's family. His funeral would be held on the 25th January at Bedford Crematorium.

19 Date of Next Meeting (111-2020/21)

Monday 1st March 2021.

Admin