

Sandy Town Council

Minutes of the meeting of Sandy Town Council held in the Council Chamber at 10 Cambridge Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire on Monday 18th September 2023 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs P N Aldis, S Baker, B Blackley, J Hewitt (Chair), R Lacey, A Lock, R Lock, C Osborne, M Pettitt, P Sharman, S Sutton and N Thompson.

Absent: Cllrs A Effiong, M Scott and Ward Councillor Pashby.

In attendance: Mrs N Sewell (Clerk), Ward Cllrs S Bell and S Ford and 4 members of the public.

Action

1 Apologies for Absence (98-2023/2024)

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Effiong and Scott and Ward Cllr Pashby.

2 Declaration of Interest and requests for dispensations (99-2023/2024)

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

3 Public Participation Session (100-2023/2024)

Four members of the public were present. Three members of the public attended to present on the Neighbourhood Plan Sandye Place Masterplan and were invited to speak during item 18.

One other member of the public spoke passionately about issues on Bedford Road. They stated that they had lived in the area for 7 years and in that time had seen a serious decline in the area. They outlined their concerns which included speeding, noise and partical pollution, antisocial behaviour and litter. They stated that there was never any law enforcement on the road and questioned why speed humps had been placed on St Neots Road and not there. They added that the road surface was also in a very bad state of repair.

Cllr Ford and Cllr Hewitt acknowledged their concerns and agreed that as the member of the public had so many questions to address that it would be best to meet separately to discuss the issues further.

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4 Minutes of Extra Ordinary Meeting of Town Council (101-2023/2024)

Received the minutes of the extra ordinary meeting of Sandy Town Council held on Monday 21st August 2023 at 6.30pm and **RESOLVED** to approve them as a correct record of proceedings.

5 Minutes of Committees and recommendations therein (102-2023/2024)

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 Development Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 7th August and 4th September 2023.
- ii. **RESOLVED** to receive and note the minutes of the Policy, Finance & Resources Committee meeting held on 4th September 2023. Suggested that next meeting be put back to 23rd October, due to the DCK visit. Also we encourage non members to attend these Autumn meetings as the Committee would be looking at budget setting.
- iii. **RESOLVED** to receive and note the minutes Community Services and Environment Committee on 21st August 2023.
- iv. **RESOLVED** to receive and note the minutes of the Grievance and Complaints Committee meeting held on 8th and 14th August 2023 and agree the following recommendations subject to the Clerk obtaining and sharing the requisite quotes for the works before any such works are commissioned:

1. Replacement Boundary Screen Fence

- The Council commissions a contractor to strengthen the fence using concrete posts as per the recommendations in the survey supplied by ATP, and that the same contractor also undertakes any snagging/tidying up of the fence as per specifications identified by the Council. Members believe that the fence is not stable and spending money to secure it now will save money in the long term.
- The Council asks the resident for specification of the gravel used on their driveway and procure enough gravel to rake over the areas effected by cement wash out spillage.

Town Clerk

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2. Septic Tank & Soakaway Damage

- The Council procure a like-for-like slab to replace the damaged slab on the Septic Tank in line with what has previously been agreed at the Policy & Finance Committee on 12th June 2023.
- The Council obtains quotes to undertake the works recommended to repair the damaged soakaway, as per the recommendations laid out in the ATP survey, and commission the successful contractor to replace the slab on to the septic tank, as outlined above, at the same time as working on the soakaway.
- All the above to be undertaken in liaison with the resident.

Town Clerk

3. Sale of Area Around Septic Tank

- Confirm to the resident that as per a decision made by the Policy & Finance Committee on 12th June 2023 the original agreement is no longer on offer and confirm that a new offer for transfer under nil consideration along with binding conditions that all legal costs, including an application for change of use, to be covered by the resident.
- In the event the residents do not wish to proceed with the transfer of the land the Council continue to surround the soakaway with Heras fencing until engineering works on the septic tank and soakaway are completed.
- The surrounding land will be maintained as non-amenity land.

Town Clerk

4. All Other Boundary Fences

- The Council has established that the old chain link fence removed from the Western boundary of the residents' property is the responsibility of the residents to maintain. In the event that the boundary line moves due to the land transfer, the western boundary of the residents' property will continue to come under the residents' responsibility to maintain.
- The Council will erect Heras fencing around the area between the residents' boundary and the Council's boundary, identified by a supplied plan, until such time as the transfer of land is agreed. After which time any permanent fencing/security measures would be the responsibility of the residents.

Town Clerk

5. Boundary Conifer Hedge

- The hedge is healthy and in line with condition 13 of the Town Council's Planning Application CB/15/01684/FULL so

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no further action on this matter will take place. The High Hedges Regulations & The Anti-Social Behaviour Act (2003) applies to hedges over two metres tall. The Town Council will request the residents undertake the necessary works to bring and maintain their boundary hedge in line with guidance set out in the above regulations.

6. Shared Boundary Privet Hedge.

- The Town Council Grounds team are specifically trained under National Pest Technicians Association, through City & Guilds, and hold licenses on the correct storage and use of pesticides and weedkiller and as such Members do not accept the allegation that any irresponsible weedkiller spraying took place. The Town Council therefore accepts no liability for reparation or permanent restoration. Members suggest a joint inspection of the party hedge be undertaken and a management strategy be agreed between both parties to ensure security and privacy are maintained going forward.

Town Clerk

7. Town Council's Outdoor Team.

- The area around the septic tank and soakaway will be cleared as detailed in minute (6-2023/2024) under item 3, 3rd bullet point.
- The Town Council Grounds team are specifically trained under National Pest Technicians Association, through City & Guilds, and hold licenses on the correct storage and use of pesticides and weedkiller and as such Members do not accept the allegation that any irresponsible weed-killer spraying took place.

Town Clerk

Item 18 was brought forward to be discussed as Members of the Steering Group were presenting to Council.

Cllr Lacey left the meeting at 20.37

6 **Clerk's Report (103-2023/2024)**

Members received a report from the Clerk regarding works and priorities for the Administrative team outlining the volume of queries handled by the team over the past month.

RESOLVED to note the report. Members asked for information on how long the report took to put together.

Town Clerk

7 **Reports from Central Bedfordshire (104-2023/2024)**

Cllr Bell spoke about the planning application 22/04957/FULL

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Land on the North West side of the road leading from Brook End to Beeston Green, Beeston. She reported that an appeal has been lodged, but that it would not show on CBC Planning portal until it has been allocated to an officer of the Planning Inspectorate. She added a lot was happening in the background which, for legal reasons, CBC could not currently disclose, but residents should be assured that a lack of information does not equate to a lack of action.

A discussion ensued in regard to the best, if any, way for Members to try to take this forward and it was agreed that this would be taken to the Beeston Working Group for further discussion and that Cllr Blackley would take this matter forward to that group.

Cllr Bell also spoke about planning application 23/02331/FULL Land at the rear of 3 New Road and said she had called it in due to its location and safety and pollution concerns. She added that the same location was also the subject of an enforcement notice regarding the barns at the rear being used as dwellings. In addition it was believed that a site further down the A1 may also be in breach of its planning conditions.

She also reported that she was looking into the piece of land opposite Tesco which was being considered for 32 dwellings. She had spoken to Tony Keevney about the site and he had informed her a fuller update would be available in a couple of weeks' time.

Following a question from Cllr Sutton in the previous meeting as to why the Library light was being left on, it was reported that that the light was on for security reasons. Members were told it was a low wattage LED and therefore costs to keep the light on were minimal.

Cllr Ford reported that he had spoken to Lee Newton at CBC about the allotment site in Beeston. Mr Newton had made some recommendations that Cllr Ford would forward to the Clerk. He gave a timeline for completion of the construction on site as winter 2024 and that work on the six houses would start the 2nd week of October.

Questions had been raised by members about the replacement of the safety barriers by the Co-operative Supermarket, which had been damaged in a car accident and Cllr Ford confirmed these would be sorted soon.

Beeston
Working
Group/Cllr
Blackley

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Cllr Ford mentioned the upcoming resurfacing works on Sunderland Road at the end of October and that notifications had gone out. The Clerk confirmed receipt of notices and that the road closures would be publicised through the Town Council's communications channels.

Town Clerk

Cllr Ford spoke about the various speeding issues across locations in Sandy. He added that without evidence, it will be difficult to justify the need for speed cameras/calming measures. He asked if STC would be able to publicise a Speedwatch initiative to allow evidence to be gathered. This would be supported by CBC Ward councillors. He added that CBC/Fire and Rescue Service/Bedfordshire Police would be running a joint speed awareness initiative toward the end of October.

Community Engagement Officer

Following a request to place a bench and remove dog bins from the triangle of land at Mill Lane/The Riddy – investigations had shown that the land is owned by Richard Banks. Cllr Ford had contacted Mr Banks who was happy for STC to go ahead and place an extra bench there. CBC's waste team would relocate the dog bin.

An update on the works at Sandy Secondary School was given which stated the school had a small delay on reopening from the summer break by one additional day, which was needed to install the new gas pipe and resurface the road. In addition, windows and roofs had all been replaced over the holiday. Good progress was being made and regular meetings were taking place between CBC and Karen Hayward the Executive Principal of the school.

8 **Confidential Information (105-2023/2024)**

Members received a report from the Clerk outlining NALC's legal advice regarding the handling of confidential items and non-committee members.

RESOLVED to agree the recommendation and for Standing Orders to be amended as below:

Confidential Items

All non-committee members are exempt from viewing confidential information and items relating to committee matters. The only exception to this would be through a written request to the Clerk demonstrating a specific 'need to know' in order for them to perform their duties as a councillor.

The need to know point in LTN 1 applies not just to documents

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but also to information. If the public are excluded from a committee meeting then there is information that people outside the membership of that committee should not know unless they have a specific need to know it. So, if a councillor who is a non-member of the committee can show a specific need to know in order to perform their duties then they can stay otherwise they would have to leave with the public. The need to know must be real and specific and not just because they are a councillor.

The need to know has to be specific and real, not just a desire to know or a need for the information for some non-council matter. If they do not have a need to know then they can only attend a meeting on the same terms as a member of the public.

9 IT support renewal (106-2023/2024)

Members received a report from the Clerk containing three quotes for the IT and Telephony support.

RESOLVED to agree the recommendation to migrate the Town Council's IT system to a Cloud-based system with Company C undertaking the work and continuing their IT and Telephony services with the Council. It was also agreed that Microshade be commissioned to host Rialtas as a server-based system was preferred for this financial package.

10 Defibrillator at Middleham Close (107-2023/2024)

Members received a report from the Clerk regarding an offer from a resident to pay towards a public access defibrillator for the town and the extra ongoing costs that would need to be met by the Council if they accepted the resident's offer.

RESOLVED agree to accept the resident's offer but to note they will only pay for the delivery, electric and installation of the equipment. The Clerk would ensure that the equipment was insured under the Council's current policy, as with all the Council's other assets. The Council would also need to ensure that the equipment remained a Town Council asset so it could re-locate the equipment if the resident moved and the new proprietor did not wish to continue to host it.

11 Lamppost Guard (108-2023/2024)

Members were asked to consider a resident's request to place a light baffle on a lamppost in Stratford Road at a cost of £50.00 + VAT. The resident had reported light pollution on their drive, front garden, the front of their house and ground floor bedroom.

RESOLVED agreed to pay for light baffle and ask the Council's contractor to undertake the works.

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12 East West Rail (109-2023/2024)

Members received an invitation from Tempsford Parish Council to attend a meeting on 28th September at the Stuart Memorial Hall in Tempsford to discuss a joint response to the recently announced EWR proposed route and station at Tempsford.

RESOLVED for representation from STC to attend the meeting to listen to what is being said and confirm that at this point STC does not currently have an official stance on the matter.

13 Winter Maintenance (110-2023/2024)

Members received a report from the Deputy Clerk regarding the winter maintenance programme's salt spreading recommendations.

RESOLVED agree recommendations on report to grit the following areas:

- High Street passing St Swithuns' Church and St Swithuns' Primary School.
- The High Street Carpark
- Market Square, the Library and the footways outside the main business premises on the High Street.

The programme would be reviewed in June 2024.

14 Jenkins Pavilion Heads of Terms (111-2023/2024)

Members received the draft Heads of Terms that will inform the lease between Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) and Sandy Town Council regarding the tenancy of the Jenkins Pavilion at Sunderland Road. CBC has started works to develop and extend the building.

RESOLVED agree the Heads of Terms in principle and request that the following amendment be made to the break clause and permitted use (denoted by italics):

12. Break: There is to be a Tenant break on 31 March 2034 subject to 24 months prior written notice and on subsequent *ten-year anniversaries* effective on 31 March 2035 on given 24 months' prior written notice.

14. Permitted use: As a *community* and leisure centre, and for the provision of sports facilities available to the local community.

15 Request to install a standpipe on the side of the Scout Hut Building in Berwick Way (112-2023/2024)

Members were asked to consider a request from Mr Harris of Harris's Fair to install a locked standpipe on the side of the Scout Hut building at Berwick Way.

RESOLVED to agree in principle to install a standpipe but to

Deputy
Clerk

Deputy

Sandy Town Council

Clerk

contact the Scouts to ask for their agreement first. Questions were raised regarding the possibility of having a separate metered supply. STC would also need to create a clear agreement on how water would be transported across the road.

16 **Action plan (113-2023/2024)**

Members received an updated Full Council Action Plan for 2023/24.

RESOLVED to note report.

17 **Report from Cemetery Working Group (114-2023/2024)**

Members considered the minutes of the Cemetery Working Group meeting held on 5th September 2023 and the costs for the next phase of the project from CDS. In addition an updated layout plan was considered.

RESOLVED to note the minutes, agree the proposed design and to commission CDS to undertake the next phase of the project.

Concerns were raised by Cllr Osborne regarding budgets for spend as no allowance was currently provision for a number of matters where spend was being allocated. Members were advised that come budget setting extra spending and rising costs would need to be more closely considered and provisioned for.

Members voted to suspend Standing Order 3x to allow the meeting to continue to progress longer than 2.5 hours but that business would finish no later than 22.30. (115-2023/2024)

18 **Neighbourhood Plan Sandye Place Masterplan (116-2023/2024)**

Members received a presentation from the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, which outlined an aspirational plan for Sandye Place, which has been designed from feedback through public consultation.

RESOLVED to agree the Masterplan in principle and to use the plan as a basis for ongoing discussions with CBC.

19 **Mayor's Charity Account (117-2023/2024)**

Members received a verbal report from the Clerk outlining some issues that STC had encountered with Barclays over the Mayor's Charity Account which had led to the account being closed.

RESOLVED to open a new account and call it The Mayor of Sandy's Community account.

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20 Correspondence (118-2023/2024)

Members received a list of correspondence that had been circulated separately to Members prior to the meeting.

RESOLVED to note the list.

It was also agreed that a nomination of Cllr Pettitt for the BATPC County Committee Elections be submitted.

21 Mayoral Engagements (119-2023/2024)

Members received a report showing the Mayor and Deputy Mayor's Engagements since the last meeting of Full Council on 7th August 2023.

RESOLVED to note the report.

24 Press releases (120-2023/2024)

RESOLVED to submit press releases on the following subjects:

- Skate Jam Round Up
- Call for new Members (Co-Option in October)
- Publicise the up coming Christmas Lights Switch on Event
- Welcome to New Businesses setting up in Town.

25 Chairman's Items (121-2023/2024)

- Cllr Ford had asked if overflow parking for three events to be held on Saturday 23rd September at Sunderland Road could take place at the Berwick end of the recreation ground. It was agreed that parking could take place as long as a ground damage deposit was received. A recommendation to draw up a policy to deal with future requests was made.
- Members were asked to note extra costs being incurred for the fabrication of new Welcome Signs for the town, which had increased from the original quote of £4,000 to £4,816.

Date of next meeting (122-2023/2024)

Full Council 30th October 2023

The meeting closed at 22:18