

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 20th November 2017 commencing at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs N Aldis, T Cole, M Hill, T Knagg, C Osborne, M Scott, J Sparrow, (Vice Chair), N Thompson

Absent: Cllrs G Leach, S Sutton and Cllr C Maudlin (CBC)

In Attendance: Cllrs M Pettitt, P Sharman and Mr C Robson (Clerk)

Action

1 Apologies for absence (51-2017/18)

Cllrs G Leach and S Sutton. The committee sent their best wishes to Cllr Sutton, who was currently unwell.

2 Declarations of interest (52-2017/18)

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

For the purpose of transparency Cllr T Cole wished to declare that as well as being a Fallowfield resident she also owned a dog and was a user of the Fallowfield Recreation ground which was to be discussed as part of agenda item 7.

3 Minutes of previous meeting (53-2017/18)

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the Community Services and Environment Committee held on Monday 16th October 2017 as a correct record of proceedings.

4 Public Participation Session (54-2017/18)

No members of the public were present. The Clerk informed Members that several emails had been received in relation to agenda item 7 and that copies of these emails were available to the committee.

5 Action list (55-2017/18)

Bus Shelter in Fallowfield: The shelter was now installed and Real Time information was due to be working within a week.

Town Clerk

Beeston Green Orchard/Allotments: An outline application for the affordable housing at Beeston Green had been approved by CBC and the Beeston Green Working Group would need to consider the

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next stage of the Village Green Management Plan.

Parking Restrictions: Following a restructure a new officer was responsible for parking strategy and safety at CBC and had advised that results of the parking survey had been received. CBC's Executive are considering a proposed new parking strategy and once approved greater discussion can be had on the results of the survey and its implications for Sandy.

Community Plan: Following a meeting of the Community Plan Working Group the Clerk and office were progressing with the writing of the plan. Another meeting was scheduled for 11 December 2017.

Rural Match Fund: The Clerk informed the committee that CBC had not been able to provide any specific examples of schemes funded under the Rural Match Fund and advised that it was difficult to give example costs for work as it was dependent on a variety of factors. If an application were to be put forward to the scheme an engineer would need to complete a site review to consider the possibilities and whether CBC would progress the matter.

A Councillor informed the committee that he had been approached by a member of the public about the lack of a dropped kerb in Newton Way and it was agreed that there were other areas of the town which could benefit from the installation of dropped kerbs.

RESOLVED that the Clerk investigate making an application to the Rural Match Fund for the installation of dropped kerbs at certain points within the town.

Greensands Country Landscape partnership: Claire Poulton would be holding a talk on the 25th January 2018 on the partnership's work. The talk would be held at the Jenkins Pavilion and would be free to attend and open to the public. Relevant community groups would be invited.

A Member noted that in many cases items on the action list were held up by CBC and that simple jobs were turning out to be longer and more complicated.

6 **Closure of Barclays Bank (56-2017/18)**

The committee discussed the recently announced closure of Barclays Bank, Sandy and expressed concern about the impact it would have on the town, businesses and individuals.

It was noted that Councillor Aldis attended a Central Bedfordshire

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Council (CBC) meeting to speak on the closure of the branch and asked that in light of their efforts to support market towns via the regeneration scheme that they try and persuade Barclays to change their stance. The Leader of the Council agreed to contact Barclays.

Members felt that the closure of the bank was going to have a negative effect on the town and its traders as footfall may drop and people will spend money elsewhere. Members also expressed a fear that the closure of the bank may lead to the loss of other shops.

A Member commented that there were a variety of issues concerning the regeneration of the High Street and that its regeneration is not wholly reliant on Barclays remaining. The decision by Barclays has been taken at a high level for strategic reasons and it will not be easy to change such a decision.

A Member commented that the closure of banks was a national issue and that it was happening 20 years too early as a great deal of people still rely on local branches. Banks needed to be reminded of their social responsibility within local communities.

The committee agreed unanimously that the Council needed to act quickly in objecting to the closure but noted that it would need to get the support of Sandy residents to get its voice heard.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council demonstrate its objection to the closure via;

- Issuing a strongly worded objection to Barclays at the highest possible level
- Seek a meeting with representatives of the bank
- Arrange and host a petition against the closure

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Cllrs Aldis and Cole offered to collect signatures for the petition.

Cllrs
Aldis/
Cole

7 **Fallowfield Recreation Ground (57-2017/18)**

The Committee considered the report previously circulated and the various emails from residents.

A Member stated that exclusion of dogs from the recreation ground will not work and that the field is for the use of everyone in the community. There would be no circumstances in which the Member would be able to support an exclusion.

The ongoing issue with dogs off leads was resulting in some members of the community, particularly elderly and children, feeling excluded as they no longer feel they can use the area. There

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is clearly an issue and an enforceable order around keeping dogs on leads is perhaps what is required.

A Member stated that dogs have the dominant space on the recreation area and that in some cases children were terrified after experiences with dogs, this is not an acceptable situation.

A Member stated that the issue was a cultural one and that there needed to be a degree of education and training on dog ownership and behaviour. This had been an approach adopted in other areas of the town. It was suggested that leafleting houses with guidance and information on dog control and concerns may help if coupled with increased waste bins. It was noted that two additional dog waste bins had recently been installed in Fallowfield.

It was commented that Fallowfield is not the only area to experience problems with dogs off leads and dog waste. Sunderland Road also experienced similar issues, despite an enforceable dog order which prohibits dogs off leads on sports pitches. A Member felt that the issues described are of concern in other areas of the town as well and that the Town Council needed to involve CBC in enforcing rules where they apply. It was unlikely any decision the council could make tonight would remedy the situation and a long-term strategy and joint approach with CBC was required. It was proposed and seconded that the Clerk find out more information on Public Space Protection Orders and powers to introduce and enforce.

A Member stated that he believed training could be provided to give the Council's outdoor team the authority to act when they witnessed dog order breaches and it was agreed that the Clerk look into what training could be provided and how it would work practically.

It was noted that the issues reported appear to be around school drop off and pick up times and it was proposed that the Clerk liaise with Maple Tree School to seek their views on the reported problems.

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RESOLVED that the Clerk provide more information on Public Space Protection Orders and how this could be linked to dogs off leads control and enforcement.

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RESOLVED that the Clerk write to Maple Tree school for their view on dog behaviour on the recreation ground at school drop off and pick up times.

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8 Allotments (58-2017/18)

Members received a report from the Clerk and the petition from the allotment association which had been presented to the Mayor at the meeting of the Full Council on 6th November 2017. Members also addressed a question received from a Member of the public regarding the length of time taken to find an alternative site and the lack of allotment provision.

The Council has continued to search for available allotment land and the Clerk is currently in communication with agents for land near The Limes. The Council is continuing to work with CBC to progress the Beeston site and will always look to push for allotment land from any development that may come forward in Sandy. The Council made its decision to close the former allotments based on the information available to it at the time.

The Clerk informed Members that CBC were preparing documentation for transfer of land at Beeston but that the next stage is dependent on CBC getting a house builder on board.

It was proposed and seconded that the Council re-affirm its resolve to finding allotment land.

RESOLVED that the Council re-affirm its commitment to finding and providing allotment land in Sandy.

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Councillor Aldis agreed to report back to the member of the public who had raised the question.

**Cllr
Aldis**

9 Section 106 Contributions (59-2017/18)

Members received a report from the Town Clerk on section 106 contributions generated in Sandy between 1 January 2000 and 30 September 2017. The report showed funds held by CBC under specific spend categories. The report included uncommitted, committed and spent funds. The Clerk informed members that the information shown was taken from a report issued by CBC but was different to the same report which was available a year ago. The Clerk believed there were some items missing, specifically amounts relating to the forest of Marston Vale and spent funds which were not shown in the report.

Members expressed concern that it did appear that some funds generated by development in Sandy had been spent outside of the parish. It was understandable that funds might be diverted to large regional projects which are of benefit to several towns and parishes

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within the area, however the council were not consulted on such decisions or invited to get involved.

It was noted that at a meeting with CBC's Planning Manager the Council were advised to get involved with section 106 at the planning application stage. This may be difficult if the Council objects to an application, but it is something that will need to be done.

It was also noted that many of the section 106 categories, such as police and education, are not in our control and the Council should concentrate on securing those that are.

Some Members stated that they did not feel they had enough information about the section 106 process and how it worked. In some cases, there were considerable funds sitting uncommitted and it was unclear how these could be applied for and used.

It was **RESOLVED** that a meeting should be held with Sandy's CBC Councillors to get a greater understanding of how section 106 worked.

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The Clerk would also forward a copy of his report to the member of the public who had raised a question at the recent Town Council Meeting.

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10 **HGVs Along Cambridge Road (60-2017/18)**

At a meeting of the Full Council on 6th November 2017 CBC Cllr P Smith informed the Council that he was still receiving complaints about HGVs using Cambridge Road in an attempt to reach the Sand Lane Industrial Estate. Cllr Smith stated that he was unsure whether additional signage was a solution and asked that the Council consider the matter and give him its opinion.

Members considered the issue and Cambridge Road's existing signage. It was felt that signage was located too far up Cambridge Road and that clearer signage needed to be placed on the High Street. The signage should clearly state 'No Access to Sand Lane Industrial Estate'.

A Councillor mentioned that the same problem existed at Fallowfield and a lot of time had been spent trying to get Highways to take action. Signage at Sunderland Road is confusing, and HGVs are travelling along Merlin Drive. In both cases it is resulting in large HGV's moving through residential areas.

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RESOLVED that the Clerk issue letters to Sand Lane and Sunderland Road Businesses asking for their support in ensuring HGV's are aware of the correct routes to use.

Town Clerk

RESOLVED to request that Central Bedfordshire Council install additional 'No Access' signage in the Market Square and at Fallowfield.

Town Clerk

11 **Community Agent Proposal (61-2017/18)**

The Committee received a proposal from BRCC asking that the Town Council fund a community agent for Sandy. Similar schemes are currently operating in Potton and Biggleswade.

It was noted that the Citizens Advice Bureau already carried out many of the services within the proposal and that they would be able to carry out more work in Sandy if funds were available from the Council. It was also noted that the Sandy Good Neighbours also already voluntarily carried out many of the services of the proposed community agent.

The funding required for the proposed agent would equate to an increase of approximately 2% in the Council's precept.

RESOLVED to support the principle of the proposed community agent but to not grant any funding.

12 **Sandy Community Board Pilot (62-2017/18)**

The Committee received and reviewed a report from the Town Clerk on the proposed introduction of Community Boards for Central Bedfordshire. CBC Councillor Mrs T Stock has been working with Peter Fraser of CBC on the proposal, which has reviewed a variety of successful similar schemes from other areas. The proposed Community Boards will be comprised of CBC councillors and town/parish councillors, they will cover agreed geographical areas and focus on local issues and priorities. The intention of the boards is to increase joint working and encourage greater engagement from the public.

The Committee considered the scheme and the request that Sandy be a pilot for the first Community Board.

Members indicated that they were unsure on how the board would practically work and how successful it would be. A Member stated that the Council should support it and be involved from the beginning.

The Clerk informed Members that CBC would deal with the

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administration of the board so there would be little to no impact on the Town Council office. The Clerk also informed Members that a presentation would be given to provide more details on the Community Boards.

RESOLVED to support the Community Board proposal and that Sandy act as a pilot for the scheme.

13 Story in Stone, Mosaics Project (63-2017/18)

Members noted that the next three mosaics were to be installed and unveiled on 28th November 2017 at 1pm and 2:30pm.

A Member informed the committee that there had been some concern expressed about the location as it was not in the centre of town. Other Members commented that the proposed location on the St Swithun's School wall which runs along the High Street was good as the mosaics would be highly visible and would create a trail along the High Street. The Clerk reminded Members that there were two more mosaics to be installed in the New Year which would be located on the library. All mosaics are easy to move should alternative locations become available.

14 Charter for Trees, Woods and People (64-2017/18)

It was noted that the Council had received a tree which was to be planted on Beeston Green as part of National Tree Week. The planting would take place between 27th November – 3rd December 2017.

15 Correspondence (65-2017/18)

Members noted a response from Nick Hurd M.P of the Home office. The response was in reply to the Council's recent letter supporting additional funding for the Bedfordshire Police Force.

16 Chairman's Items (66-2017/18)

The Vice Chairman reminded Members that the Clerk had arranged for two sessions at the Police's Control room. Members should respond to the Clerk advising which session they would prefer to attend.

**17 Date of Next Meeting (67-2017/18)
Monday 8th January 2018**