

Sandy Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of Sandy Town Council held in the Council Chamber at 10, Cambridge Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire on Monday 21 October 2013 commencing at 7.30 pm

Present: Cllrs J Ali, N Aldis, C Butterfield, K Lynch, A Maycock, W Jackson, M Pettitt, C Osborne, M Runchman, M Scott, D Sharman, R Smith, S Sutton (Mayor), G White.

Absent: Cllr S Walsh.

In attendance: Four members of the public and the Town Clerk.

1 Apologies for absence (74-2013/14)

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Walsh. Members also noted apologies for absence from Central Bedfordshire Cllrs C Maudlin and N Sheppard and from PCSO Ann Jeeves.

2 Declarations of interest and requests for dispensations (75-2013/14)

- i) Declarable Pecuniary Interests -None
- ii) Other Interests- Cllr Osborne noted that the neighbours of 29 Orchard Road were known to him in connection with agenda item 7. Cllr Aldis noted that the residents at 29 Orchard Road were known to him in his capacity as a Central Bedfordshire Councillor in connection with agenda item 7. Cllrs Pettit and White reminded the meeting that they were both members of the Sandy Twinning Association in connection with agenda item 9.
- iii) Requests for dispensations - None

3 Minutes of Town Council meeting (76-2013/14)

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of a meeting of Sandy Town Council held on Monday 9 September 2013 as a correct record of proceedings.

4 Minutes of Committees and Sub-committees and recommendations (77-2013/14)

RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the following committees. Recommendations to Town Council from within the minutes were considered.

- 1 **Development Scrutiny Committee** on 23 September 2013 and 14 October 2013
(No recommendations)
- 2 **Community Services and Environment Committee** on 23 September 2013

Item 6 Orchard Road (C24/2013-14)

RESOLVED to campaign vigorously for the construction of an

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entrance and exit to the timber yard at Beeston via the A1 so that safety is improved in Orchard Road.

RESOLVED to issue a press release, write to Alistair Burt, MP, to the relevant government department and to Central Bedfordshire Councillors expressing concerns about Orchard Road and to refer the matter back to the Community Services and Environment committee of the Town Council.

Item 12 S106 Arts Funding (30/2013-14)

RESOLVED to elect Cllrs Maycock, Sharman and White to a task and finish group to produce recommendations for the use of S106 arts funding and to confirm that this matter fell within the remit of the Community Services and Environment Committee.

3 Policy Finance and Resources Committee on 14 October 2013

Item 4 Financial Matters (43/2013-14)

RESOLVED to approve a request from the Town Clerk to purchase additional software for the Council's accounts software package before the end of the financial year to enable the software to be ready and working for the start of the financial new year and to fund this payment of £1,241 from reserves.

Item 7 Jenkins Pavilion (45/2013-14)

RESOLVED to proceed with the outsourcing of the management of Jenkins Pavilion as part of the CBC Leisure contract on the terms proposed in the report provided to the committee.

Item 9 Fallowfield (47/2013-2014)

Recommendation A2 Cllr White, a ward member for Fallowfield, spoke against the committee's recommendation not to replace failed shrubbery at Fallowfield Recreation Ground and Open Space noting that the council had received a commuted sum of £380,000 in recompense for adopting this facility.

RESOLVED that no snapped trees in Fallowfield Recreation Ground be replanted, landscape material would be removed and grass seeding undertaken over the areas that were initially planted with shrubs at an approximate cost of £150 for materials.

Recommendation A3

RESOLVED that three additional bins (model currently priced at £386) be installed at Fallowfield Recreation Ground an additional bin in the ball wall area and a bin at the two entrances to the site that do not have a bin.

Recommendation B Goldfinch Drive

RESOLVED that selected shrubs and hedging areas which have failed in this part of the estate be replaced with a mixture of replacement planting and grass seeding at an approximate cost of £750 for materials.

Recommendation E Open Space behind odd numbers of The Jays

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RESOLVED that the shrub planting in this area is significantly reduced by Town Council staff to allow the area to be managed and maintained effectively by the outdoor staff.

Finally in connection with these minutes Cllr Osborne drew attention to item 4 iv which concerned Central Bedfordshire Council's decision not to pass on any mitigation funding for 2014/15 in compensation for the cuts to Sandy's tax base. He also highlighted item 5 which concerned the committee's intention that the council should reconsider its banking arrangements in the future.

5 **Public Open Session (78-2013/14)**

A resident expressed concern about New Road, and noted his surprise that Sandy Town Councillors should query the safety of leading pedestrians down New Road to the A1 when the Council had supported the introduction of a footpath in the CBC Local Area Transport Plan for Biggleswade and Sandy. He also noted that councillors had seemed confused about the bus service at Tesco although he asserted that the original s106 agreement connected with the development stipulated buses should be in operation within 28 days of the store opening. The same resident asked for details of the PCSO for Sandy as he wished to send details from the SG19 safety group about the use of the pedestrian crossing in the High Street.

Cllr Sharman raised a question from two electors who wished to know whether the Town Council would get in touch with the relevant minister about the failure of Central Bedfordshire Council to pass on mitigation funding in respect of Council Tax benefit changes. The meeting was advised that in September the Under Secretary of State for DCLG had stated that the department was not making a directive that monies must be passed down from principal authorities to town and parish councils but was issuing advice that it should be passed on. However the parish element of the local government settlement amount would not be separately identified. NALC and SLCC have been lobbying Mr Eric Pickles Secretary of State for DCLG but he had refused to issue a ministerial order.

Cllr Osborne raised a question from an elector who was concerned about the rubbish and mess outside the local shop in Engayne Avenue which was creating an eyesore and potentially a health and safety hazard. The resident wanted the Town Council to take action to improve the area. Cllr Aldis advised he had spoken to manager of shop. The storage area near the shop was not available to the shop owner and for this reason rubbish was collecting on the street. Cllr Aldis agreed to pursue the matter further with several departments of Central Bedfordshire Council

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on behalf of the Town Council.

Cllr Lynch raised a question on behalf of a resident, stating that the resident was being ignored by Sandy Town Council, that the Town Clerk had discriminated against the resident who was a pensioner and was receiving very unfair treatment from the Clerk. The Mayor reminded Cllr Lynch that a decision had been made by the whole council as a result of an agenda item first raised on 29 July 2013 that the staff should not communicate with this individual. This decision was made because the council had a duty to protect staff from unreasonable behaviour by third parties. Cllr Lynch said he knew nothing of this, he explained he had not been at the relevant meeting and he had thrown his council papers away because he did not attend. Cllr Lynch then threatened the Town Clerk and the Council with court action, asserting that they had behaved unreasonably and unlawfully towards this individual. Cllr Lynch then left the meeting advising that he would see the Mayor and the Town Clerk in the county court.

The Mayor apologised to members of the public who were present for the behaviour of Cllr Lynch which was unbecoming to the office of councillor.

6 Police Matters (79-2013/14)

RESOLVED to receive a report from PCSO Ann Jeeves on policing in Sandy. Members welcomed the reduced number of recorded crimes but expressed the view that a reduced number of detections would be more helpful to the community.

7 Beeston Common (80-2013/14)

Mr J H Bretherton, a resident of Beeston, addressed the council to explain his concern about the council's previous decision to decline permission for a right of access across Beeston Common to his property at no 29 Orchard Road. Mr Bretherton again advised that he was looking for an additional 6m spur to an existing access road using grasscrete as he wished to change the existing annexe to his property into a two bedroomed dwelling. He noted that councillors had already indicated that evening that Orchard Road was not safe and he asked the council to reconsider its position.

An exchange of correspondence between the Town Clerk and the Brethertons had been circulated to members before the meeting.

Members discussed the matter and established that no planning permission for the proposed new dwelling had been sought or obtained and many considered this to be the most important first step before

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access was even considered. A range of other views were expressed. It was noted that if the sale of any access rights were considered the matter might be referred to the District Valuer and the Clerk was asked to correspond with the Brethertons on this aspect of the situation.

RESOLVED that the original decision of Council not to grant permission for the proposed access road at this time would stand.

8 Financial Matters (81-2013/14)

- i) **RESOLVED** to note a list of payments approved for September 2013. Questions were raised about the purchase of dumpy bags and the purchase of a leisure battery, the Clerk agreed to respond to these after the meeting.
- ii) **RESOLVED** to note a report showing income and expenditure against budget for the financial year to date.
- iii) **RESOLVED** to note the conclusion of the external audit of the Town Council for the year 2012/13 and to approve the completed annual return. No issues had been raised in the audit report.
- iv) **RESOLVED** to accept the kind donation of £200 from Motley and Hope, Solicitors in Biggleswade and to make use of this to supplement the Christmas lights budget for the benefit of the largest possible number of residents. The Clerk agreed to write to the firm to advise how the money had been spent.

9 Skarszewy Community Garden (82-2013/14)

A report on the purchase and installation of a memorial stone with inscription in the community garden at Bedford Road to mark the forthcoming visit of the Mayor of Skarszewy to Sandy on 8 November 2013 had been circulated before the meeting.

RESOLVED to authorise the engraving and installation of the stone as described in the report, the costs come from the Council's reserves and the details of the ceremony would be notified to members and the press as soon as it was finalized.

The Mayor advised members that she had chosen a piece of traditional English china made by an organization funded by the Princes Trust as a gift for the civic delegation.

10 Presentation by DCK Beavers (83-2013/14)

RESOLVED to take this item earlier than listed upon the agenda for the benefit of the presenter.

RESOLVED to be exclude members of the public and press from the meeting for the following item of business because it involved the likely

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disclosure of confidential personal information and/or information which is commercially sensitive as defined as exempt information in Part 1 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972 (personal and confidential data).

Members received a presentation from Mr Derek Kemp, a representative of DCK Beavers on the potential benefits and consequences of employing DCK Beavers as contract accountants to Sandy Town Council. Mr Kemp explained the contract proposal which had been circulated before the meeting and enumerated the advantages of using a sector specialist for accounts work. He drew attention to the special arrangements which apply to local councils rather than commercial organisations and described his company's experience in this sector. The contract proposed had been priced on the basis that visits would coincide with those planned to Biggleswade Town Council. Members asked a range of questions about the detail of the proposals.

RESOLVED that in principle Sandy Town Council wished to outsource its accountancy work to DCK Beavers on the terms detailed in the report.

The council would take this matter forward as part of the staff restructure and budgeting process for 2014/15.

11 **Land at bottom of Ivel Road (84-2013/14)**

RESOLVED to take this item earlier than listed upon the agenda. **RESOLVED** *to be exclude members of the public and press from the meeting for the following item of business because it involved the likely disclosure of confidential personal information and/or information which is commercially sensitive as defined as exempt information in Part 1 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972 (personal and confidential data).*

A confidential report from the Town Clerk concerning land at the bottom of Ivel Road which is the property of Central Bedfordshire Council and which may be offered for sale for development had been circulated before the meeting and the matter was discussed.

RESOLVED that Sandy Town Council would make no offer to buy land at the bottom of Ivel Road from Central Bedfordshire Council but the Clerk would be instructed to write to Alan Fleming, Deputy Chief Executive (Assets) at Central Bedfordshire Council, to express the Council's wish that the land should stay undeveloped and remain in public ownership for the enjoyment of the community because of its importance as a gateway to footpaths around Sandy and because development would remove a specific and important aspect of Sandy. The letter would be

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copied to the Countryside Access Team at Central Bedfordshire Council.

12 Mayoral Communications (85-2013/14)

RESOLVED to note the Mayor's engagements and correspondence. The Mayor advised that an additional email had been sent to Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Service to thank them for their work in the locality and to congratulate those who were newly appointed to positions of seniority.

Members also noted the Choral Festival which had been held in St Swithuns Church on Saturday 19 October 2013, this was the third year that choral festival had taken place and the standard of singing had been very high. Cllr Maycock was congratulated for organizing this event.

Cllr Osborne left the meeting.

13 Reports from Representatives (86-2013/14)

i) A report from the Sandy Ward Councillors of Central Bedfordshire Council had been circulated before the meeting and Cllr Aldis highlighted the low level of ASB offending in Sandy.

RESOLVED to note the report.

ii) A report from Friends of Sandy Christmas Lights had been circulated before the meeting.

RESOLVED to note the report.

14 News Release (87-2013/14)

RESOLVED to issue a joint press release with the Twinning Association on the November visit from Poland.