

Sandy Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee of Sandy Town Council which was held in the Council Chamber at 10 Cambridge Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire on Monday 23 July 2018 commencing at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllrs T Cole, W Jackson, C Osborne (Chairman), M Pettitt, M Scott, P Sharman and J Sparrow.

In attendance: Cllrs N Aldis, G Leach and Mr C Robson (Town Clerk) and 1 member of the public.

	<i>Actions</i>
<p>1 Apologies for absence (16-2018/19) Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs P Blaine, A M Hill and D Sharman.</p> <p>Cllr P Sharman updated Members on the wellbeing of Cllr D Sharman. Members expressed their best wishes on a speedy recovery to both Cllr D Sharman and Cllr S Sutton, who had sent apologies for the night's meetings.</p>	Admin
<p>2 Declarations of interest (17-2018/19) Cllr T Cole declared a personal interest in item 11 as a volunteer member of the Friends of Sandy Christmas Lights Committee.</p> <p>Cllr M Pettitt declared an interest in item 10 as Vice-President of the Sandy Colts.</p>	
<p>3 Public Participation Session (18-2018/19) One member of the public was present and would speak, if required by Councillors, on item 9 of the agenda. The member of the public had read the report written by the Clerk and agreed that it adequately put forward the points and concerns raised.</p>	
<p>4 Minutes of previous meeting (19-2018/19) RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee held on 4 June 2018 and to approve them as a correct record of proceedings.</p>	
<p>5 Financial Reports (20-2018/19)</p> <p>i) A balance sheet and detailed financial report showing income and expenditure against the revenue budget for the year to 30 June 2018 had been circulated in advance of the meeting.</p>	

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Members considered the report in conjunction with Appendix II, the budget overview report. The Clerk commented that expenditure on utilities was higher than expected and that this has been investigated.

A Member queried Christmas Lights expenditure. The budget overview report stated that there had been no expenditure, however the budget papers suggest expenditure had been incurred. The Clerk confirmed that expenditure had been incurred on deposits for the staging and grotto and that no expenditure in the overview report was an error.

It was **RESOLVED** to receive and note the report.

ii) Members received and considered the budget overview report from the Clerk in conjunction with Appendix I. It was **RESOLVED** to receive and note the report.

iii) Members scrutinised a schedule of payments made since the previous meeting. Members reviewed the schedule and it was:

RESOLVED to approve the schedule of payments.

iv) Bank reconciliations and statements.

RESOLVED that Cllr Osborne scrutinise the bank reconciliations and statements and sign these as approved at the end of the meeting.

Cllr Osborne

6 Grant Applications (21-2018/19)

Members received and considered a grant application from Citizens Advice Bureau.

A Member asked for confirmation of the remaining grants budget for the year. The remaining budget was confirmed to be £2,600

Members noted that the Council had supported the CAB in the past and that it carried out a lot of valuable work. It was noted that the service previously helped 17 people in Sandy and that given the town's demographics it was likely there would be a similar number of residents in need of assistance from CAB this year. Members agreed that the Council should support the service in some way.

It was Proposed, Seconded and **RESOLVED** to award a grant of £250 to Citizens Advice Bureau.

Admin

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7 Action List (22-2018/19)

The Clerk informed Members that he was still experiencing difficulties getting the required information from BT and CCTV on fibre connections for the Fallowfield Play Area. It is intended to bring a full scheme with costs to the September meeting of Policy, Finance & Resources, so Members can consider capital projects ahead of the next financial year's budget setting.

8 Sale of Market Stalls (23-2018/19)

The Clerk informed Members that an offer of £250 had been made for the sale of the Council's old market stall frames. The frames are currently stored at the Mayor's premises and are gradually deteriorating. Members noted that there were 16 stalls with no boards or covers. The Council has not used them for some time and there are no upcoming occasions where they may be used. Seasonal or special markets bring their own stalls and would not need the Council's.

RESOLVED to accept an offer of £250 for the disposal of the Council's old market stalls.

Admin

9 Beeston Green (24 -2018/19)

Members received and considered a request from a resident on maintenance of a track across Beeston Green. Members had previously received and considered a report on the matter from the Clerk along with legal advice from NALC.

A Councillor stated that he understood concerns raised over maintenance of tracks and that the matter had come up some years ago. The Council has never approved tarmac or concrete surfacing to tracks and has never paid for maintenance. Work has been carried out to two tracks and maintenance may have been carried out by Sandy Urban District Council when it was in existence. The legal advice indicates that the Council does not have responsibility for maintaining tracks and to fund such maintenance now may set a precedent. Home owners are entitled to carry out work to the tracks, but it is right that the Council ask what maintenance/work is to be carried out as owners of the Green. Other Members agreed that the Council should not look to fund works to the track.

A Member of the public present pointed out that refuse lorries use the track to cross The Green and that this added to the wear and tear of the track. As a resident, he was only responsible for taking his bins to the edge of his property, therefore should the trucks be crossing The Green?

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The Chairman noted that the Beeston Green Management plan was looking to incorporate details on rights of access over tracks, but not specifically the maintenance of the track in question. That needed to be answered in response to the request.

Town Clerk

It was Proposed, Seconded and **RESOLVED** that the Council does not pay for maintenance of the track in line with legal advice provided by NALC.

10 2018/19 Scale of Charges (25-2018/19)

Members considered charges for Sunderland Road football pitches and the way in which the Colts football team is charged for use of the Sunderland Road pitches and Jenkins Pavilion.

A Member noted that 50% of the Colts usage was for mini pitches, however the Council had no separate charge for mini pitches and the Colts are charged for the use of junior pitches.

Members agreed that there should be a reduced rate for mini pitches, but a Councillor cautioned that the rates charged were already relatively low and as such are we able to practically reduce them further?

The scale of charges has always set charges based on the use of a pitch. Therefore, each team pays for use of the pitch they play on. Members felt this was appropriate and while lines are only marked out once there is wear and tear on the pitch.

Members noted that the Colts were concerned over use of pitches by other teams which is adding to the wear and tear. Members expressed concern and asked that the Clerk raise the matter with SLL to find out how this is being managed.

Members also queried why The Colts were paying for changing rooms if they didn't use them. The Clerk explained that the Colts had experienced problems in accessing the changing rooms which the management company (SLL) needed to address. Many of these issues were linked to the wider concerns of management of the site between SLL, CBC and Sandy Upper School. Members felt that the Colts should be able to access the pavilion kitchen and large event room for use on weekends, especially if it wasn't in use by SLL. It was agreed that the Clerk would pursue use of the pavilion by the Colts with SLL and involve members as needed.

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It was Proposed, Seconded and **RESOLVED to RECOMMEND** that charges for the 2018/19 season include a separate charge for use of mini pitches agreed at;

Admin

Casual use of mini pitches - £10 + VAT
Seasonal use of mini pitches - £55

It was Proposed, Seconded and **RESOLVED** that the Clerk would meet with SLL to address concerns raised over the Colts use of the Jenkins Pavilion and how this can be improved.

Town Clerk

11 Friends of Sandy Christmas Lights (26-2018/19)

Members considered the request that the Friends of Sandy Christmas Lights (FOSCL) set up its own bank account.

Cllr Gee Leach, who acts as Chairman of the FOSCL outlined the group's request as to why they wished to become an independent group with their own bank account for fundraising purposes. The group are trying to improve the event over time and bring in more community volunteers and involvement. They feel this would be easier to achieve if they were separate from the Council.

It is proposed that the group becomes a group in its own right for the purpose of fundraising to support the event, and taking on the organisation and booking of entertainment (street and stage), stalls/vendors and publicity. The Council would continue with the road closure, staging, PA, grotto, site set-up and the related costs. This would help reduce the amount of work Council officers had to do in support of the event.

A Member noted that it was the group's intention that money raised from fundraising go to local groups rather than to the Council to help support the cost of the event. The Chairman of FOSCL stated that depending on how much money was raised by the group, they would look at making a donation to the Council to help with the costs of the event set-up. They would like a proportion of the money to go back into the community and a proportion to be kept for future years' events.

A Member asked whether enquiries had been made to the Charity Commission about becoming a charity body. Members stated that they could only support such a proposal if the FOSCL were to become a properly constituted body.

A Member stated that if it were to work successfully they could see that it would reduce the burden on the Council. However, it would be good to see some money come back to the Council to help offset the

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large set-up costs each year.

Some Members commented that they did support the proposal in general but felt that more work needed to be done to clarify what the Council would be managerially, as well as financially responsible for, and what would fall to the FOSCL.

Members reiterated their concerns about the status of the group and emphasised the need to ensure the group was properly constituted.

A Member expressed some caution that if STC were still to be paying out the majority of the funds for the event, it must keep control. Legally speaking, if Sandy Town Council places an order for an item - such as the staging, then it is the 'project lead'.

A Member asked whether the Council needed to continue with the grotto, the mulled wine and St John's Ambulance if the FOSCL were to be taking a larger independent role. A Member agreed that to move this forward there needed to be clarity on who would do what.

A Member agreed that items such as the mulled wine stall could go to the FOSCL and that gradually they may be able to take on all aspects of the event, including the road closure. The group must be given the opportunity if the event is going to continue to improve.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the committee agree in principle to the Friends of Sandy Christmas Lights becoming separate to the Council with its own bank account, subject to the group becoming a constituted charity and agreeing clarity over financial arrangements and areas of responsibility.

Cllr Leach/
Town Clerk

12 The Pinnacle Field (27-2018/19)

Members reviewed and reconsidered the committee's previous recommendation to carry out landscape works to protect the Pinnacle Field from unauthorised encampments.

The Chairman read out a message from Cllr Sutton in which she stated that she felt the Council must continue with a large bund as a second line of defence. Members agreed that an additional barrier should be put in place.

A Member expressed concern of the installation of a bund, which would require 1-2 diggers to dump soil and due to its positioning may still allow for access either side. He doubted that there was room for the bund in the space available. It was suggested that installing two more girders may be a more cost effective and quicker

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option. It was also suggested that the two existing drop-down barriers be welded upright as an additional deterrent.

A Member noted that top soil was costly and what we may end up with is rubble if we agree a free dumping with a local tradesman.

A Member commented that they didn't feel that the bund needed to be that high to be effective. Alternatively, the Council could approach local companies to get free concrete slops to make additional barriers. Local companies may be willing to help if the Council approaches them. A lot of employees for companies such as Kier live in Sandy.

A Member commented that he had spoken with a local company about purchasing Home Office approved terrorism barriers which would be capable of stopping a tank. He would chase up costs and provide these to the Clerk.

RESOLVED that;

- 1) The Clerk has the two pull-up bollards welded in place.
- 2) Cllr M Pettitt chase up costs for robust Home Office approved barriers
- 3) The Clerk approaches local companies to seek assistance to creating and transporting concrete barriers

RESOLVED that delegated authority be given to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Clerk to agree and implement a solution within the budgetary constraints within the Council's Standing Orders.

13 Replacement of Damaged Streetlight (28-2018/19)

Members received and then considered a report and cost for the replacement of a damaged streetlight in Park Road, Sandy.

RESOLVED that the damaged streetlight be replaced and that the costs come from the Streetlights Maintenance Revenue budget (405 4042)

14 Human Resources and Health and Safety Provision (29-2018/19)

Members considered quotes for provision of Human Resources and business Health and Safety support. Members commented that the recommended provider's model was different to that previously used and while it could generate savings for the tax payer, it may also lead to unknown costs should a major HR incident occur for which assistance was needed. The Clerk informed Members that based on

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the hourly rate charged by company B, dealing with recent cases would not have resulted in an overspend (approximately 57 hours of work). However, there is an element of the unknown as it is impossible to predict what issues may arise. Members noted that Company B's contract was only for 12 months and as such, the Council should try the company and review its delivery through the year. While the same budget would need to remain in place in case an incident arose, there would be the potential of a saving to the Council at the end of the financial year.

RESOLVED to appoint Company B as the Council's HR and Health and Safety support for the next 12 months.

15 Cemetery and Depot Development Update (30-2018/19)

Members received a report from the Town Clerk on the current status of the cemetery and depot development. The Clerk informed Members that demolition work had started on 23 July and should be done within a week. The archaeologists will begin back-filling the current excavation and excavate the final section of the site following the demolition. The recent archaeological open day was a big success with over 250 people attending. The Cemetery Working Group are due to meet at 4pm on Wednesday 25 July to review structural drawings of the depot.

16 Code of Conduct (31-2018/19)

Members reviewed and approved the Council's adopted Code of Conduct.

17 Chairman's Items (32-2018/19)

There were no Chairman's items.

18 Date of next meeting (33-2018/19)

It was noted that the date of the next committee meeting will be 3 September 2018.