

Sandy Town Council

Minutes of the meeting of Sandy Town Council held in the Council Chamber at 10 Cambridge Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire on Monday 26th June 2023 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs P N Aldis, J Hewitt (Chair), R Lacey, A Lock, R Lock, M Scott, P Sharman and N Thompson

Absent: C Osborne, M Pettitt and S Sutton

In attendance: Mrs N Sewell (Clerk), Ward Cllrs Bell, Ford and Pashby, Mr A Effiong (Co-optee), Ms S Baker (Co-optee), Ms B Blackley (Co-optee), Deputy Clerk Ian Reed and one member of the public.

	Action
<p>1 Apologies for Absence (31- 2023/2024) Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Osborne, Pettitt, and Sutton.</p>	
<p>2 Declaration of Interest and requests for dispensations (32-2023/2024) i) <i>Disclosable Pecuniary Interests</i> - None ii) <i>Non-Pecuniary Interests</i> – None iii) <i>Dispensations</i> – None</p>	
<p>3 Public Participation Session (33-2023/2024) A resident from Beeston spoke on a planning application that had been agreed at their property and informed Members of the measures they were looking to put in place to protect the green from the construction traffic.</p> <p>Suggested actions from the resident was to trim some of the lower branches of the trees on route to prevent them snagging on vehicles and causing further damage to the trees.</p> <p>They mentioned that every effort would be made to ensure access was not blocked and that they had requested the contractors use lighter vehicles. Boards and sands would be used to protect the right of way.</p> <p>Cllr Scott suggested the Beeston Working Group meet to look at the trees and see if the access plans were acceptable.</p> <p>Cllr Lacey requested that no tree work was undertaken during nesting season.</p>	

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On a separate matter Cllr Aldis raised a question on behalf of two residents regarding the status of the installation of two benches and some other works at The Mill triangle that had been previously agreed by the Council.

Cllr Aldis was reminded that Members had been informed that the area of land in question came under Central Bedfordshire Council ownership and that officers were awaiting permission to undertake the works on this land. Ward Cllr Ford stated that he would look into the delay in receiving a response.

4 Co-option for Vacancies in Fallowfield, Ivel and Pinnacle Ward (34-2023/2024)

The Chairman welcomed Mr Archie Effiong, Ms Susannah Baker and Ms Briony Blackley who had all applied for co-option and were in attendance.

Each candidate was offered the opportunity to present to the Council, while the other candidates were asked to leave the room for the duration of other candidate's presentations. After the presentations the candidates were asked to answer questions from Members.

Mr Archie Effiong presented first. He talked about how he had lived in the UK for 30 years the last 4 years living in Sandy and previously in Tempsford.

He stated that he was aware of businesses disappearing from the High Street and he was keen to work with the Town Council to attract businesses and visitors to the town centre. He added he would like to inspire young people and attract more to the town.

When asked by a Member what brought him to move to Sandy he responded that he originally came to the area for work. However, he had stayed in the area attracted by the green land and surrounding farms in the area.

He was asked how he would attract businesses to the High Street and replied that he would look to set up business centres where people could rent office space and create a business hub.

When asked if he would be happy to help at the numerous events that the Town Council organized he responded that he would be.

He was finally asked if he had already engaged with any of the younger members of the community or youth groups at all to which

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he replied: "I play sport, basketball, and I engage with younger people through that." He suggested that setting up a youth centre would help with youth engagement and that this could be part of the work to utilize the empty shop space on the High Street.

Next Ms Susannah Baker was invited to present. She told Members that she was keen to help the Town Council make Sandy a better place to live. She had only lived in the town for the past three years and had grown to love the community here and was interested in its nature and history.

She added she was keen to encourage more people to get involved in the community events and had enjoyed the Jubilee event the Town Council had put on the previous year.

Sandy Place was of particular interest. Having worked for the National Trust she could see the potential of the area and would like to see it used as a recreational space with a café and perhaps a museum.

She continued that she was interested in the Cemetery extension project and would like to be more involved with that. She was keen to join the Council as her husband was involved in the Neighbourhood Plan which she said had been positive for the household.

When questioned by Members about what she loved about the town she explained she had come from a larger area which didn't seem to have the same ethos as Sandy. She added: "People love Sandy, it's a small town but you are doing some big events that involve the whole community, and that appeals to multiple generations".

She continued to say it was important to teach people about the history of the town, its origins and how it's been preserved.

On the question of engaging with teenagers she said that young people needed a place where they could gather to talk, listen to music and play sports. She was keen to represent the youth voice and inspire them to be passionate about the town.

She added that she looked forward to getting involved in the Town Council's events, in every aspect of it not just enjoying the event itself.

Last to present was Ms Briony Blackley. She talked of her background in Marketing and Comms and suggested that her skills

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could help the Council improve it's PR particularly through social media. She added that she felt connecting the community was vital and was keen to work together with the community to build safe spaces for all.

She expanded on her experience of living and visiting many different places around the world including asbseiling down the tallest building in Macau.

A priority for her was to support the Town Council's communication's strategy and to engage with more people. When questioned on whether she would be able to help out at events she said, yes, she came from a large family and always been taught to 'muck-in'.

One Membr asked if she could have a magic wand what would she do for teenagers and older people in Sandy? She commented she would want to create safe gaming spaces to encourage young people to come together and was keen to offer services that would help older people get to grips with technology better. Bringing life skills back to people.

She was asked to leave the room and join the other candidates outside.

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** to co-opt all three candidates to the Council. Mr Effiong, Ms Baker and Ms Blackley were invited to rejoin the meeting and the Chairman announced the result. They each signed their Declaration of Acceptance and joined the meeting as new Members. The Mayor offered them her congratulations and welcomed them to the council.

Cllr Blackley was invited to join the Beeston Working Group and agreed to do so.

Cllr Baker was invited to join the Cemetery Working Group and agreed to do so.

Cllr Blackley left the meeting at 20.15

5 Minutes of previous Town Council Meetings (35-2023/2024)

Receive the minutes of the Annual meeting of Sandy Town Council held on Monday 22nd May 2023 and **RESOLVED** to approve them as a correct record of proceedings.

The following amendment to the minutes on page 8 under item 17 was noted for clarification that Cllr Pettitt was commenting on the

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closure of the gap on the A1 at Caldecote and not the closure of the A1 at Caldecote as minuted.

6 Minutes of Committees and recommendations therein (36-2023/24)

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 5th June 2023.
- ii) **RESOLVED** to receive and note the minutes of the Policy, Finance & Resources Committee meeting held on 12th June 2023 and agree the following recommendations:
 - The Council adopt the 2022/23 Unaudited Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2023 (see item 10i).
 - Full Council tick boxes 1-9 in Section 1 of the AGAR as yes (see item 9).
 - Full Council agree the figures set out in Section 2 of the AGAR as an accurate record (see item 10ii).
 - To note the approved payment of an additional £480 to contractors for the installation of a boundary fence at Potton Road will be honoured by the Town Council.
- iii) **RESOLVED** to receive and note the minutes of the Community, Services and Environment Committee and agree the following recommendations:
 - That the Council welcomes the opportunity to celebrate the eightieth anniversary of the D Day landings – 6th June 2024
 - That the Council consider taking on the responsibility to stage the Christmas Lights Switch-on event subject to representatives of the former Friends of Sandy Christmas Lights being invited to join the Working Group.
 - That the Council seeks Football Foundation Funding to carry out the recommendations in its report regarding the improving the pitch conditions at Sunderland Road Recreation Ground.
 - That the Council adopt the Community Safety Charter.

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- 7 Year-End Accounts 2022-2023 (37-2023/2024)**
Members received a report from the Town Clerk on the year end accounts process.
It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

- 8 Annual Governance & Accountability Return 2022/2023**
ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2022/2023 (38-2023/2024)
In accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations, Members were requested to consider the Internal Auditors Report for the year ending 31st March 2023, and the completed Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23 attached to the Annual Return.

It was **RESOLVED:** To note the report.

- 9 Annual Governance & Accountability Return 2022/2023**
SECTION 1 – ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (39-2023/2024)
In accordance with the Council's Financial Regulation, Section 1 of the Annual Return, Annual Governance Statement, for the year ended 31st March 2023 was attached for consideration and approval. As Chair of the meeting Cllr Hewitt read out the Accounting Statements 1 – 9 in turn for Members to agree and the Clerk completed the statements accordingly.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) Part 3 for 2022-2023 and the statement was duly signed by Cllr Hewitt as Chair of the meeting and N Sewell as Clerk.

Town Clerk and Mayor

- 10 Annual Governance & Accountability Return 2022/2023**
SECTION 2 – ANNUAL ACCOUNTING STATEMENT (40-2023/2024)
i) Members received and checked the year-end unaudited financial statements for the year ending 31st March 2023.

RESOLVED: to approve the unaudited Financial Statements for the year 2022-2023.

- ii) Members received and checked the Accounting Statement (Section 2) of the 2022-2023 Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) Part 3. The Clerk, as Responsible Financial Officer, had signed to certify that the Accounting Statement had been prepared following guidance in Governance & Accountability for smaller Authorities.

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RESOLVED: To approve Section 2 of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) Part 3 for the year 2022-2023 subject to external audit and duly signed by Cllr Hewitt as Chair of the meeting.

Mayor

11 Annual Governance & Accountability Return 2022/2023 EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS (41-2023/2024)

Following the Council's approval of Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR, the Clerk confirmed the commencement date for the exercise of public rights. The Annual Return will be published on the Council's website on Tuesday 27th June 2023, and the period of public rights will commence on Wednesday 28th June for a period of 30 working days.

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12 Reports from Central Bedfordshire (42-2023/2024)

Ward Councillor Bell welcomed the new members of the Council. She informed Members that she had been undertaking youth engagement with CBC's Safer Central Team who had recently carried out a weapons sweep in Sandy around the Sunderland Road Park area. There have been reports of antisocial behaviour in the area and the team had also undertaken a door knock exercise and letters had also been delivered asking for information to be passed on. During the day no weapons had been found.

The Safer Central Team had also visited the Youth Club to engage with the children there. She mentioned that thanks to Cllr Pashby a meeting had been set up with Inspector Grant Maxsted, as when it came to policing it was felt that Sandy missed out.

She added that she was keen to put a Youth Council together and would be happy to use her Ward Councillor grant to put funds towards this. The Mayor commented that she hoped that a skatejam event being organized by STC for September would provide an opportunity to engage with young people around different issues in the Town and would be inviting Safer Central and the Police to attend. She asked if perhaps some funds could go towards putting on the event?

Cllr Bell said she would look into whether the event would be eligible for funding. She added that it was only a small group of youngsters that were causing the issues of antisocial behaviour at the recreation ground and that young people needed to be encouraged to look for entertainment in the town. She was keen to move things forward for Sandy and believed that working together was the best way forward, however she said that ownership of the issues also needed to be put in the hands of the children themselves.

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Cllr Pashby spoke about a meeting with Beeston residents that Ward Councillors had organized, and to which more than a hundred Beeston residents had been in attendance. The meeting was to discuss a contentious planning application regarding the rubble and soil recycling plant there. He added that Cllr Ford had called the application in to go to the Development Management Committee for consideration. .

Sandy Town Councillors let it be known that they were disappointed that neither they or the office had been made aware of the meeting and as such no Town Council representation was present. Cllrs Bell, Ford and Pashby apologised for this stating that the meeting had been called at the last minute and had changed from it's original intentions due to resident's concerns.

Cllr Pashby continued by saying that Beeston Green had been part of CBC's 'No Mow May' and as such it had left the area looking untidy now it had been cut. Work was being undertaken to ensure the area didn't become over grown again over the coming months. He added that work was also being undertaken to improve signage at Lime Avenue and Orchard Way.

He mentioned that in September Sandy faced an anniversary event to commemorate a biker who had lost their life in an accident on the A1 in 2022. The memorial event that took place that year had attracted anti social behaviour and widespread disruption to the town as bikers rode in circles up and down the A1 between Beeston and the Sandy roundabout. He added that he was working with Inspector Maxted to plan better this year in the hope of reducing disruption to residents and visitors to the town.

Cllr Ford told Members that along with the Mayor he had taken up an invitation to visit Year 6 at Maple Tree School. The visit lasted two hours and during that time they asked pupils about the skatepark. Some issues were highlighted regarding antisocial behaviour at the site from older children, which was putting youngsters off using the facility. This is something all parties were keen to address.

He continued to say that grass cutting across the county had been a problem and that he was meeting with teams to properly understand what areas CBC were supposed to be maintaining, what they do and when they do it.

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He reminded Members that each Ward Councillor had a £2,000 Ward Grant to offer and that there was also a £31,000 Community Grant Scheme which closed to applications on 24th July.

Cllr Ford alerted those present to an upcoming road closure that would take place from 18th September at Berwick Way up to the roundabout in town. The closure would be between 9am and 3.30pm and was for resurfacing works.

Cllr Aldis asked Cllr Ford if there were any plans to bring forward Sandy town centre as a no idling zone? Cllr Ford said he would discuss the matter with the appropriate member of CBC.

13 Action Plan (43-2023/2024)

Members received an Action Plan for the year, which included the Council's key events and projects for 2023/24.

RESOLVED to note the Action Plan and have a regular update on progress. The Action Plan is to remain a living document.

Town Clerk

14 Defibrillator (44-2023/2024)

Members received a verbal update from the Clerk on this item. Having spoken to the resident in question some further work needed to be done to take the project forward. As such the Clerk was organizing a meeting with the resident and a representative of the Community Heartbeat Trust on site to discuss options and understand costs. The matter would be brought back to council on a future date.

Town Clerk

15 Insurance Renewal (45-2023/2024)

Members received an insurance renewal from James Hallam.

RESOLVED to accept the renewal quote and ask for a further quote on taking out the insurance over a three year term.

Town Clerk

16 Internal Auditor's Charges (46-2023/2024)

Members received a report from the Clerk outlining the Internal Auditors increased charges for 2023/24.

RESOLVED to note the report and increases.

17 Christmas Lights Switch On Event (47-2023/2024)

Members received a report from CS&E recommending STC take over the organization and running of the Christmas Lights Event from the Friends of Sandy Christmas Lights group (FOSCL), which had disbanded.

RESOLVED that the Town Council would take on the event as organisers and would need to seek volunteers in order to make this

Events Working Group

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happen. It was also noted that the event would need extra funding (it was estimated in excess of £3,000) to top up the £4,000 budget provisioned for it and that in 2023 this expense could be met through funds raised and held by the former FOSCL (reported to be £8,000) for the event. A letter would be sent to the Chair of FOSCL to request the money be transferred to STC's bank account to be held in a designated reserve.

18 Clerk's Report (48-2023/2024)

Members received a report from the Clerk outlining the tasks and actions undertaken by the Administrative Team over the past six months and their current priorities.

RESOLVED to note the report.

19 Reports from Councillors on Outside Bodies (49-2023/2024)

Members received a report from Cllr R Lock regarding a visit made to the Children's Community Centre. The report was circulated to Members prior to the meeting. No further reports were received.

RESOLVED to note the report.

20 Planning Applications (50-2023/2024)

CB/23/01835/FULL 2-6 High Street, Sandy, SG19 1AH	RESOLVED 1) that the Council objects to the existing application because it would like the ground floor of the building retained for retail with the first floor only developed for accommodation. 2) that the CBC Ward Councillors be asked for the application to be called in for determination by the Development Management Committee as it is premature to convert the whole building to accommodation without considering the option of retail on the ground floor and flats on the first floor.
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21 *Please note due to a numbering error on the agenda there was no item listed here (51-2023/24)*

22 Cemetery Extension – water monitoring training (52-2023/2024)

Members received a quote from CDS for training to undertake water monitoring at the Cemetery Extension site as required by the planning conditions.

RESOLVED to agree the costs for training.

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23 Vehicle repair costs (53-2023/2024)

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Members received a report and quotes for the repair of two diesel vehicles which had initially been discussed at PF&R on 12th June 2023.

RESOLVED to agree the quote to from Company B and to organize for the newer of the two vehicles to be repaired. For a meeting between Members and the Outdoor Team to be held to discuss vehicle needs before deciding on the future of the second vehicle.

Deputy
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24 Correspondence (54-2023/2024)

Members received correspondence which had been circulated to them via email prior to the meeting.

RESOLVED to note the correspondence.

25 Mayoral Events (55-2023/2024)

Members noted the engagements undertaken by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

The Deputy Mayor added that he had also taken part in the Sandy Carnival, which had showcased the Council's electric vehicle. The attendance had not been noted on the agenda.

26 Press releases (56-2023/2024)

- New members of the Council

27 Chairman's Items (57-2023/2024)

There were none

28 Date of next meeting (58-2023/2024)

7th August 2023

The meeting closed at 21.46