

Sandy Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee of Sandy Town Council which was held virtually via Zoom on Monday 29 March 2021 commencing at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllrs N Aldis, P Blaine, J Hewitt, A Hill, W Jackson, R Lock, C Osborne (Chair), M Pettitt, M Scott and P Sharman.

In attendance: Cllrs A Gibson, S Paterson and Mr C Robson (Town Clerk).

Actions

1 Apologies for absence (96-2020/21)

There were no apologies.

2 Declarations of interest (97-2020/21)

None.

3 Minutes of previous meeting (98-2020/21)

It was **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee held on 15 February 2021 and to approve them as a correct record of proceedings.

4 Public Participation Session (99-2020/21)

There were no questions from members of the public.

5 Financial Reports (100-2020/21)

i) Members considered a balance sheet and detailed financial report showing income and expenditure against the revenue budget for February 2021.

It was noted that there had been a large electricity charge at the depot building. This was significantly higher than the previous charges which had averaged £60-£70 a month. During winter electric heaters had been used as more time was spent in the depot building by employees. However, the use of an electric heater would not be expected to incur the large bill received. To be investigated.

A Member asked about replacement of the barrier to the car park. The Clerk confirmed that the insurance company had now received payment from the party responsible for the damage and that funds had been issued to the Council. The replacement barrier has been ordered.

Members discussed the water bills at Sunderland Road, which following a previous credit, another large bill had been received. The matter is continuing to be investigated. The Bowls Club has had to use some additional water over the year on the green due to the hot and dry summer. There was also additional green care needed due to a worm issue.

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It was agreed to note the balance sheet and financial reports.

ii) Members received a budget overview report for February 2021. Members reviewed the report page by page and agreed to note the report. A Member commented that they found the accompanying report very helpful in understanding the budget expenditure.

iii) Members scrutinised a schedule of payments made since the previous meeting. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the list of February 2021 payments.

iv) It was **RESOLVED** that the Chair of Policy Finance and Resources check and approve the bank reconciliations and statements.

Cllr
Osborne

6 Grant Budget (101-2020/21)

Members noted the payment of a previously agreed £1,000 grant for the Ivel Sprinter towards the cost of a new minibus.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the Ivel Sprinter grant payment and the remaining community grants budget for 2020/21.

7 2020/21 Year End Underspend (102-2020/21)

Members **RESOLVED** that any year end underspend be allocated to the Council's Rolling Capital Fund for future capital expenditure.

8 Church Wall (103-2020/21)

The Clerk informed Members that a boundary wall between the Churchyard and a private premises needed repairing as two sections had fallen down. The wall is within the Churchyard, for which the Town Council is responsible for maintaining and repairing. Various builders had inspected the wall and informed the office they would be submitting a quote. Unfortunately, at the time of the meeting quotes had not been received. It was agreed that the matter go to the next Full Council if quotes are received, so it can be moved along quickly.

Town
Clerk

9 Cemetery Gates (104-2020/21)

Members received a report on the installation of gates to the Council's new cemetery/depot site. The Clerk commented on an error in the report, stating that in section 2 'nearly' should read 'neatly'.

It was recommended and seconded that the quotation from Company B is approved. It was clarified that the proposal, and the recommendation in the report, did not include brick pillars as quoted by the preferred contractor.

The Chairman commented that it was important to reach a decision on

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the pillars tonight so the matter could be brought forward, and the installation completed as quickly as possible.

A Councillor commented that this was an important stage in the project and that the gates installed will be there for a significant time and as such the Council should take this opportunity to ensure that something that works and is attractive in the long-term, is required. As such he was proposing that brick pillars be included in the work at this stage.

An amendment was proposed and seconded that in addition to the gates and fencing to be supplied and installed by contractor B, a pair of brick piers be built to the dimensions set out by the same contractor in their supplementary estimate dated 3 March 2021 up to a maximum cost of £3,940.00 + vat. But, before placing any order, further efforts are made in an attempt to identify an alternative brick laying contractor who will build the piers at a lower cost and work with Contractor B to complete both phases of the work as a single project.

A Member commented that the build had gone on longer than hoped and was concerned that seeking additional quotes of pillars would elongate the project further and add to the workload of the Clerk. The cost of the pillars was high, and this should be re-visited at another time in the future.

A Member responded that the Council should avoid a situation whereby it would create more work by re-visiting the pillars at a later date and that it was better to take care of all aspects now with a chosen contractor as a partner in finding the best solution. The proposed amendment ensured the gates and pillars would be installed but put a limit on the costs involved.

A Member commented that he supported the amendment but did not believe it would be possible to reduce costs of pillars by that much.

Members voted in favour of the amendment.

RESOLVED that Company B's quotation for cemetery gates be accepted and that a pair of brick piers be built to the dimensions set out by the same contractor at a maximum cost of £3,940.00 + vat. But, before placing any order, further efforts are made in an attempt to identify an alternative brick laying contractor who will build the piers at a lower cost.

10 Berwick Way Land (105-2020/21)

The Clerk informed Members that the transfer of land from Taylor Wimpey to Sandy Town Council was now in the hands of both parties' solicitors who would be progressing the transfer. The Clerk has asked

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that Taylor Wimpey's agent, Tilco, raise with the Taylor Wimpey board the transfer of an additional small area of land which impacts on the Army Cadets HQ building, which is leased from the Council to the Army Cadets. Updates will be brought forward to the next meeting of the committee.

Town
Clerk

11 Land Registry Registration (106-2020/21)

Members received and considered a report from the Town Clerk on registering three areas of land with Land Registry. It was proposed and seconded that the recommendation in the report be approved.

A Councillor asked why the Council was going to pay fees to a solicitor for a task which could surely be done in-house. The Clerk responded that he and an administrator had both looked into the transfer and concluded that it was a complicated task. Advice had been taken from a local architect who had advised having a solicitor deal with the registration. The HM Land Registry website also suggests that the registration of unregistered land will need to be carried out by a specialist property solicitor.

RESOLVED that the Council instruct its solicitor dealing with the Berwick Way land transfer to extend its work to include registering three unregistered Council owned sites with Land Registry.

12 Recycle Bins (107-2020/21)

Members received a report on the installation of new public waste bins. A Member asked about the rationale of having advertising boards on the bins. It was explained that this had originally been intended for the Council to advertise its services and events, or to provide information.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council does not pursue recycling of waste from public bins at this time and the Environmental Working Group look at other feasible ways to undertake environmental and recycling initiatives.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council replace the concrete bins in the recreation grounds with new single bins, including advertising boards.

13 Memorial Bench Policy (108-2020/21)

Members received and considered a draft policy and procedure on requests and installations of memorial benches. It was suggested that an addition should be added that a letter of intention to install a bench would be issued to any residences next to the proposed location of the bench.

The Chair commented that some numbering in the policy needed to be amended.

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RESOLVED to adopt the Memorial Bench policy subject to amending section numbering within the report and including that a letter of intent will be issued to any nearby residents.

The Clerk commented that some residents might not have a proposed bench in mind and would prefer to have a bench advised to them. It was agreed that the bench application form should include some standard benches which could be purchased through the Council.

14 Drone Policy (109-2020/21)

Members received and considered a report on changes which will impact on the Council's Drone Policy.

It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the amended Drone Policy.

15 Removable Media Policy (110-2020/21)

Members reviewed the Council's Removable Media Policy.

It was **RESOLVED** to re-adopt the Removable Media Policy.

16 Social Media Policy (111-2020/21)

Members reviewed the Council's Social Media Policy.

It was **RESOLVED** to re-adopt the Social Media Policy.

17 Co-option Policy (112-2020/21)

Members reviewed the Council's Co-option Policy. The policy had been amended to make allowance for virtual meetings. It suggested that as the situation around virtual meetings had not yet changed, the policy should remain as it is and be reviewed again in six months' time.

It was **RESOLVED** to review the co-option policy again in six months.

18 Chairman's Items (113-2020/21)

There were no Chairman's Items.

19 Date of Next Meeting (114-2020/21)

It was noted that the next Policy, Finance and Resources Committee meeting will be on Monday 10th May 2021.