

Sandy Town Council

Minutes of the meeting of Community Services and Environment Committee of Sandy Town Council held in the Council Chamber at 10 Cambridge Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire on Monday 8th November 2021 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs P N Aldis, A Gibson, A M Hill, T Knagg, R Lock and S Sutton (Chair)

Absent: Cllr C Osborne, S Paterson, M Scott, N Thompson

In attendance: Cllrs P Blaine (part), J Hewitt, Mr C Robson (Clerk), Mrs C Baker-Smith (Admin Team Leader)

- | | Action |
|--|---------------|
| 1 Apologies for Absence (55-2021/2022)
Apologies were received from Cllrs Osborne, Paterson, Scott. | Admin |
| 2 Declaration of Interest and requests for dispensations (56-2021/22)
i) <i>Disclosable Pecuniary Interests</i> – None.
ii) <i>Non-Pecuniary Interests</i> – None.
iii) <i>Dispensations</i> – None. | |
| 3 Minutes of previous Meeting (57-2021/22)
RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the meeting of Community Services & Environment Committee held on Monday 4 th October 2021 and to approve them as a correct record of proceedings. | |
| 4 Public Participation Session (58-2021/22)
There were no questions. | |
| 6 Action List (59-2021/22)
Members received and noted the action list. | |

Allotments & Community Orchard at Beeston: The Clerk informed Members that the notice had not been included in last week's Biggleswade Chronicle.

A Member asked if items in the Action List could be made shorter to save paper? Members agreed that items should only have the latest updates included at each meeting but that a first recorded date and summary be included.

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SID Signs: The Clerk said that he had been taking photographs of signs in other towns and had compiled a list to send to Central Beds.

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It was still not clear as to why some roads in parishes were approved, while Sunderland Road isn't. The Clerk will ask why Sandy is different from these towns and roads where SID signs are installed.

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5 **Guest Speaker (60-2021/22)**

Members welcomed Mr Steven Beer from Bedfordshire Police's Community Cohesion Team who apologised for being late. He attended the meeting to discuss with Members fostering positive relationships with organisations, groups and communities in Bedfordshire.

He explained that some areas in Central Beds had been neglected, with everything going to Luton and he wanted to build contacts with local councils. He can be called if there are problems with tensions or problems in the town. He would like to know about any community events happening in Sandy to see if he could assist in any way. He said he can report problems to other police groups for them to action. He said he works with the local PCSO's and can arrange a police presence at local events. A Member asked if he had communication with local schools and he said that they have School Liaison Officers who will go into schools to give advice on matters, and they also interact with Youth Groups. A Member asked where Sandy fits in the hierarchy and he said that we are as important as anyone else. A Member said that drugs and anti-social behaviour issues were a concern. Steven said that resources were a problem, but he can make other police groups aware of problems. He will let the Clerk know when quarterly meetings are to be held. A Member said that the town has been bereft of watch groups eg. Home Watch or Street Watch for a decade, and Steven said he would investigate this and get back to us. A Member said that there was a recent PCSO meeting with the public, but the queries had not been followed up by the police and resources such as leaflets on security and other subjects had dried up. He asked that the Clerk email him with what information leaflets we needed. He will also let us have personal attack alarms to give out to vulnerable residents. The Clerk asked where he sat with other police teams ie. who to report incidents to etc, and he said to call 101 or report online and if no response, please let him know.

Steven thanked the Town Council for inviting him to visit and he was happy that Members had questions for him to answer.

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7 **Social Media Engagement (61-2021/22)**

Members received and considered a report on expanding the Council's use of social media platforms. Members agreed that the Council should look at new ways to communicate and engage with differing sections of the community. A Member commented that they would also support use of YouTube for informational videos in the future, should this become appropriate.

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the Council sets up an Instagram account as part of its efforts to widen its community engagement. That the Council's Social Media Policy is updated to reflect use of Instagram as part of its communications.

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8 **Play Park Overview (62-2021/22)**

Members considered an overview report from the Clerk on the Council's play parks following annual inspections by an external company.

A Member asked how do the ground staff schedule inspections and accompanying work? The Clerk said that inspections are done each week and any work is scheduled with the Outdoor Team Leader.

A Member said that replacement of the gates was expensive. The Clerk said that the gates need replacing now as they have to close properly for child safety. The timings for self-gate closures are advised by play inspectors.

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the committee noted the information within the report and that the committee **RECOMMENDED** to the Policy Finance & Resources committee that faulty gates be replaced and that costs be brought forward.

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Cllr Blaine left the meeting.

9 **Skatepark Project (63-2021/22)**

Members received and noted an update on the Skatepark Project.

The Clerk spoke on behalf of Cllr Paterson who was absent from the meeting, that the Pride of Place event held in the Jenkins Pavilion on Saturday 6th November had not been well attended but that the children that did attend spoke to Maverick. Cllr Hewitt said she knew the children who had turned up and that feedback from them had been good regarding the use of the park and it was valuable to talk to them. She suggested that Maverick go to the schools and ask the students direct.

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The Clerk said that engagement and planning permission was needed to reach the final plan to progress grants. A Member asked if outline planning would be acceptable. Another Member asked if a projected design could be submitted for planning. The Clerk said he would liaise with Maverick and Central Beds Council on these points.

Thanks were given to the Skatepark Project Working Group for their report.

10 Welcome Back Fund (64-2021/22)

Members received an update report on actions undertaken or still outstanding under the Central Bedfordshire Council Welcome Back Fund grant funding.

A Member asked how the footfall was being evaluated? Cllr Gibson said that there had been feedback from the first round of the voucher scheme. She said that the shops did not get many new customers from the voucher scheme. She said that trade is 'lumpy', people are coming back into the Market Square but that a larger café is needed to draw people into the centre. New businesses are in the town eg. the Pet Shop and Mobility Shop but that the old Barclays building needs re-opening. The Clerk said that Central Bedfordshire Council are doing a footfall survey through People and Places. Sandy Centre group have asked for another leaflet scheme in the spring and that an outside company should prepare the Directory.

A Member asked if there had been any tenant interest in the old Barclays building? Cllr Hewitt said that as the Barclays lease did not run out until March/April 2022 and they were still paying, the owners of the building were not co-operating. She said that she was however, being allowed to put a Christmas display in the building.

A Member asked if the Town Council could apply for the building to become a Community Asset and the Clerk said he would look at the criteria to see if it could be considered eligible.

11 Remembrance Commemorations 2021 (65-2021/22)

- i) Members noted that they were all invited to join with others in St Swithun's churchyard on 11th November at 11am to mark the national silence.
- ii) Members received information on the 2021 Remembrance parade and service. The Clerk informed Members that the

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water leak would be looked at today and repaired in time for the ceremony.

- iii) It was proposed, seconded and **RECOMMENDED** to Policy Finance & Resources that a separate budget for costs associated in the holding of the Remembrance parade are factored into the 2022/23 budget.

12 Events Working Group (66-2021/22)

Members received and noted notes from a meeting of the Events Working Group held on 5th October 2021.

Item 4 – The Queen’s Platinum Jubilee - It was proposed, seconded and **RECOMMENDED** to Full Council that the budget planned for the VE Day event be used for a Platinum Jubilee Street Party.

Item 5 – Christmas Lights Switch On – Cllr Hill said that there would be only two local schools taking part.

13 Chair’s Items (67-2021/22)

The Chair reminded Members of the National Silence for Armistice Day at 11am on the 11th November in the churchyard and the Remembrance Day Parade on the 14th November at the War Memorial.

14 Date of Next Meeting (68-2021/22)

Monday 20th December 2021.