

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 3 August 2020 commencing at 7.30pm.

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

In attendance: Mr C Robson (Town Clerk) and one member of the public.

Actions

1 Apologies for absence (1-2020/21)

Apologies were received from the Committee Chairman, Cllr Osborne. Apologies were also received from CBC Cllr Tracey Stock.

2 Declarations of interest (2-2020/21)

There were no declarations of interest.

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

RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee held on 23 March 2020 and to approve them as a correct record of proceedings.

4 Public Participation Session (4-2020/21)

There were no questions from Members of the public.

Cllr Aldis raised a query he had received about a memorial bench request within the town centre. The Clerk confirmed that there was no policy for memorial benches in the town centre and the member of the public should make a request to the Council's office and the matter can be considered.

5 Financial Reports (5-2020/21)

i) Members considered a balance sheet and detailed financial report showing income and expenditure against the revenue budget for June 2020.

ii) Members received a budget overview report for June 2020.

It was noted that there were no concerns and it was **RESOLVED** to note the budget reports.

iii) Members scrutinised a schedule of payments made since the previous meeting. A Member queried duplicate payments to Central Bedfordshire Council and the photocopier provider.

The Clerk confirmed that the three payments to Central Bedfordshire Council were for three months management fees for the Jenkins Pavilion. CBC had not issued the invoices for April and May until June.

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A duplicate payment for the photocopier was taken in error via direct debit. The company has refunded this payment.

It was noted that there was a spelling error, and this should be corrected to read 'Planting Displays'.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the schedule.

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

Cllr
Blaine

6 **Beeston Library Box (6-2020/21)**

Members considered a request from CBC Cllr Stock as to whether the Council would match fund a community library box at Beeston Green. The request for a library box had come from residents of Beeston. Cllr Stock has secured some funding but requires up to £150 in further match funding. During the COVID19 pandemic residents of Beeston have been using a community book stand which has raised a considerable amount for charity.

Members commented that they thought it was a good idea and the Beeston Green was a good location for such a project. It was commented that the design and location would be important. The library should ideally have two or four supporting legs as opposed to just the one post.

It was Proposed and Seconded that the Council provide up to £150 in match funding subject to approval of the design and location by the Beeston Green Working Group.

The library would not be a council asset and would be maintained by the community.

It was noted that the Council would need to agree to the delegation of a decision to install an item on council property to the working group.

It was **RESOLVED to RECOMMEND** that the Town Council provide up to £150 in match funding for the purchase and installation of a library box at Beeston Green. That the Beeston Green Working group be delegated authority to approve the final design and location of the box.

Admin /
Beeston
Working
group

7 **Sandy Bowls Club (7-2020/21)**

Members considered correspondence from Sandy Bowls Club on a grant to help ensure safety of the ground.

RESOLVED to support and make a Section 106 application for the funds needed to erect a 3ft high fence between the bowling green and Village Hall patio at the Sandy Bowls Club.

Town
Clerk

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Clerk

8 Play Equipment Replacement (8-2020/21)

Members received and considered quotes for the replacement of swings at Bedford Road recreation ground. It was Proposed, Seconded and **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendation that Company B's quote be accepted, that an application to Section 106 is made for the funding, and work is carried out after the school holidays.

9 Tree Works (9-2020/21)

Members received and noted works to be carried out to some council owned trees, with funds to come from the arboriculture budget. Further inspections are ongoing, and work will continue to come forward based on recommendations from the contractor.

10 Section 106 Update (10-2020/21)

Members considered a report on Section 106 funds generated from development in Sandy to which the Town Council can submit funding applications. An amount of funding available for Outdoor Sports projects needs to be committed by December 2020. The Council may want to consider applying for funding in case it is lost due to the 'spend by date'. The Clerk informed Members that he is in discussion with CBC with regards to how the information on available funding is reported and made accessible to town and parish councils.

A Member asked whether children's play equipment could be funded by the available Section 106. The Clerk informed Members that it could not, as children's play equipment has its own Section 106 category.

The Clerk read out comments which had been submitted by Cllr Amanda Gibson, who had not been able to join the meeting. Cllr Gibson expressed concern that we are nearing a deadline for significant funds to be allocated and we don't have an agreed project for these. At the CS&E meeting on 13th July, we reviewed a list of projects where grant funding would be required, one of these was to explore sources of funds for a skate park.

Biggleswade skate park has just been opened and there was comment from the community on social media that Sandy also needed a similar facility. An application to commit available S106 funds by December to be used for a skate park would send a clear message of intent and also enable the Council to seek match funding from other sources.

The Clerk informed Members that once funds had been committed to a project and the 'spend by date' was passed, it would not usually be possible to reallocate those funds if the project didn't go ahead.

Concerns were raised that a skate park would be a very expensive

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capital project and would require ongoing revenue funding for maintenance. A Member responded stating that modern design skate parks require a lot less ongoing maintenance and have longer life spans than the equipment which was previously in the skate park.

A Member stated that he had some support for all three of the potential projects mentioned in the report for varying reasons. He stated that nationally popularity of skate parks had been declining and data would be needed to ensure such a facility would be popular.

It was commented that the SSLA should have enough funds of its own to purchase a tractor to maintain the all-weather pitch and that grant funding should not be needed. Additional outdoor gym equipment could be funded from the Council's capital as part of the capital process if members felt the town needed more equipment in the future.

A Member noted that Potton's skate park appears very popular and that this would be something that children in Sandy would use. Potton's skate park was also less costly than Central Bedfordshire Council's Biggleswade skate park, so something similar could be an option for Sandy.

It was felt that STC was not doing enough for young people in the town and a project such as a skate park would be one valuable way of engaging with young people. It was acknowledged that funding would be difficult, CBC's support would be needed, and it would not be a quick project to complete. However, it was agreed that applying for funds would start the process and give the project something to start with. It was felt that some more information was needed on potential funding streams and national user statistics.

RESOLVED that the Clerk bring back statistics on skate park use, additional potential funding streams and further information on a potential project plan for a skate park.

Town
Clerk

11 Annual Report (11-2020/21)

Members received and considered the Council 2019/20 Annual Report and whether this can be recommended to Council for adoption.

It was agreed that the Grants Awarded list on page 15 of the report should clarify the purpose of the £25 donation to the school. This was not a payment in support of an educational cost, but rather a specific donation for a prize to be awarded to a student. The prize is known as the Audrey Boothby Award.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the Council approve the publication of the 2019/20 Annual Report subject to amending page 15 of the

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report to clarify the purpose of a grant payment to Sandy Secondary School.

12 Unreasonable Behaviour and Vexatious Complaints Policy (12-2020/21)

Members reviewed the Council's adopted policy and if any changes are required.

RESOLVED to approve the re-adoption of the Council's Unreasonable Behaviour and Vexatious Complaints Policy.

13 Internal Audit (13-2020/21)

- i) Members reviewed the Council's internal audit plan. A Member stated that in the past someone familiar with the Council and its operations had completed the internal audit. The Clerk stated that the internal auditor should be an independent person who can apply an independent and potentially critical eye to the Council's processes.

RESOLVED to approve the Internal Audit Plan

- ii) Members received and considered the Council's internal audit terms of reference. **RESOLVED** to approve the Internal Auditor's Terms of Reference.

- iii) Members reviewed the internal audit effectiveness plan. **RESOLVED** to note and approve the Internal Audit Effectiveness Plan.

14 Data Protection Policy (14-2020/21)

Members reviewed the Council's Data Protection Policy. A member commented that this should be reviewed on an annual basis.

RESOLVED to approve the re-adoption of the Council's Data Protection Policy.

15 Chairman's Items (15-2020/21)

There were no Chairman's items.

16 Date of next meeting (16-2020/21)

It was noted that the next Policy, Finance and Resources Committee meeting will be on 14th September 2020.