

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 6 January 2020 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 S Doyle, A Gibson and Mr C Robson (Town Clerk) and three members of the public.

		<i>Actions</i>
1	Apologies for absence (90-2019/20) Apologies had been received from Cllr Sutton.	Admin
2	Declarations of interest (91-2019/20) Cllr N Aldis declared an interest in agenda item 6 ii as Secretary and Bookings Manager of the Talk of The Town bus service, which sometimes rented a bus to the Ivel Sprinter service and 6 iii as a former trustee and someone who had benefited from CAB services.	
3	Public Participation Session (92-2019/20) The Members of the public present were in attendance to speak on agenda item 6 - the Bowling Club and Ivel Sprinter grants, and would speak at that point of the agenda.	
4	Minutes of previous meeting (93-2019/20) RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee held on 25 November 2019 and to approve them as a correct record of proceedings.	
5	Financial Reports (94-2019/20) i) Members considered a balance sheet and detailed financial report showing income and expenditure against the revenue budget for November 2019. The Chairman went through each page of the budget report and Members considered expenditure. It was RESOLVED to note the financial reports for November 2019. ii) Members received a budget overview report for November 2019. It was noted that there was an error on the first page of the report and that the current year budget surplus should be £234,239 rather than £255,730. Members noted the report. iii) Members scrutinised a schedule of payments made since the previous meeting. A Member asked about a payment for temporary storage. The	

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Clerk confirmed that the storage facility was no longer used, but that the payment referred to November when the temporary storage was occupied.

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

- iv) It was **RESOLVED** that the Chair check and approve the bank reconciliations and statements.

6 Grant Applications (95-2019/20)

- i) Members received and considered a grant application from Sandy Town Bowling Club. The Secretary of the Bowling Club explained the reasons for making the grant application and that they had also applied to Tesco for funding. The Chairman asked whether this equipment would be new additional equipment to be maintained by the Bowls Club as opposed to the equipment which is covered by the STC lease with SBC. This was confirmed to be the case.

Members queried what other fundraising was taking place and whether funds currently held by the Bowls Club could be used towards the machine. The representative explained that no other fundraising had taken place, but a grant application had previously been submitted to Sports England but turned down. It was noted that the outcome of the Tesco grant would not be known until April 2020, which made it difficult for the Council to reach a decision without this information available. In addition, the current grants budget did not have the funds to support such a sizeable request.

It was suggested that the Council could support a section 106 application for funds towards the equipment.

RESOLVED to support an application by the Bowls Club to Central Bedfordshire Council for Section 106 funding towards the purchase of a Blade Runner. That the secretary of the Bowls Club work with the Clerk on an application.

- ii) Members received and considered a grant application from Ivel Sprinter (East Beds Community Bus Ltd). A representative from the organisation explained the role of the Ivel Sprinter and how they were raising monies for the provision of a replacement bus. As part of their fundraising, the organisation has a programme of submitted applications to local councils in towns who benefit from the bus service.

A Member spoke in favour of the application, commenting that it was an extremely important service for individuals and groups

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and that a substantial grant should be awarded.

Proposed and Seconded that a grant of £1,000 be awarded to the Ivel Sprinter.

A Member spoke in general support of the application by stating that the Ivel Sprinter had missed an opportunity to acquire a new bus through a previous government grant scheme. It was queried as to whether or not a similar scheme was likely to come forward. Ivel Sprinter are not aware of any such schemes at present but would be making an application if such a scheme were to be made available.

An amendment was made to the proposal that it be awarded from the 2020/21 financial year and that the £1,000 be included in the 2020/21 budget preparations.

The Clerk commented that this would be a recommendation to Council under the Committee's 2020/21 budget proposal.

Members voted on the amended proposition and it was **RESOLVED to RECOMMEND** that a grant of £1,000 for the Ivel Sprinter (East Beds Community Bus Ltd) be included in the 2020/21 budget proposition.

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iii) Members received and considered a grant application from Citizens Advice Mid Bedfordshire.

It was Proposed and Seconded that in light of the detailed application submitted, the Council match the funding provided to CAB by Biggleswade Town Council and award a grant of £750. Members spoke in agreement to the proposition.

RESOLVED to approve a grant of £750 to Citizens Advice Mid Bedfordshire.

Admin

7 Action List (96-2019/20)

Members received and noted the action list. It was commented that the temporary storage had been vacated and that work would start on moving equipment stored in the Chapel. The Cemetery Working Group was to meet in January to review the amended cemetery layout plan which allows for the Roman Wall. Cladding on the works building is to be replaced by the developer due to it 'bowing' when wet. Members asked that the date for this replacement be pushed forward.

8 Internal Audit Report (97-2019/20)

Members received and noted the internal auditors 6-month report. The

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Chairman spoke on a recommendation by the internal auditor on an un-presented cheque. A cheque had been re-issued to the contractor and they had again been asked to bank the cheque. The Clerk will seek further advice from the accountant on what to do if the cheque is not banked by the contractor by the financial year end.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the Council accept the internal audit 2019/20 interim report.

9 Pension Contribution (98-2019/20)

Members received and noted the LGPS employer contribution rates for the next three financial years. The Clerk informed members a full report on the pension fund was available and could be requested from the Clerk.

RESOLVED to accept the pension contribution increases as per the Local Government Pension Scheme.

10 Depot Insurance Additions (99-2019/20)

Members received and noted the cost of adding the new depot and CCTV cameras on to the Council's insurance premium.

11 Data Protection Officer (100-2019/20)

Members received and considered a report from the Town Clerk and 2020/21 data protection officer cover.

RESOLVED to appoint PNC as the Council's Data Protection Officer for 2020/21.

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12 Scale of Charges (101-2019/20)

Members considered an amendment to the previously agreed Scale of Charges for 2020/21. **RESOLVED** to approve the proposed increase in charges for 2020/21.

	2019/20 £	2020/21 £
<u>Burials and Memorials</u>		
<u>Exclusive rights to Burial of cremated remains</u>		
Cremated remains in earthen grave 2 ft x 2 ft (all sections)	102.50	105.00
Cremated remains in earthen grave 4 ft x 2 ft (all sections)	204.50	209.00
Treble fees for non-parishioners		

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13 Commemorating VE Day (102-2019/20)

Members considered a report on the costs of providing commemorative items and whether this is something the Council wish to pursue. Members did not support the purchase of mugs due to the cost and practicalities of providing these. Members spoke in favour of offering each school a tree and plaque which could commemorate both VE and VJ day.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that £1,757 be included in the 2020/21 budget to cover the costs of planting five trees with commemorative plaques.

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14 Fireworks 2019 (103-2019/20)

Members received a report on the Scouts 2019 Fireworks and the Council loan. The loan repayment will appear in the Council's January 2019/20 accounts. It was noted that the Scouts had made less of a profit on the event this year and that due to reduced volunteer numbers, they may not be putting the event on in 2020. A Member proposed that the Events Working Group should engage with the Scouts to see how the Council might be able to assist in helping continue the event in November 2020. There would need to be a lot of discussion on how the event might be able to run in the future, but a budget should be allowed to support it. It was Proposed and Seconded that a budget of £3,000 be included in the 2020/21 Community Event budget to support the event.

Some Members expressed concern that a £3,000 contribution or grant was high, and this would have an impact on the 2020/21 precept level and that other groups may wish to run the event if the Scouts are unable to. Some Members expressed concern that taking on the event could be costly and commit a high level of Council resources to the running of the event.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that £3,000 be included in the 2020/21 Community Events budget to support the Events Working Group in discussions over future support for a firework display to be held in 2020.

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15 2020/21 Budget and Precept (104-2019/20)

Members received and considered the 2020/21 Budget and Precept reports. It was noted that the current 2020/21 budget would require an additional £11,813 in precept funding which would result in a £2.73 increase per Band D Equivalent which would be a 1.88% increase from 2019/20. It was noted that the number of Band D Equivalents was confirmed at 4007, which is an increase of 6.

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The Clerk informed Members that factoring a £1,000 grant for the Ivel Sprinter and £1,757 for the proposed VE Day commemorative tree planting would increase the additional precept needed to £14,570. This would equate to a 2.35% increase of £3.42 per Band D Equivalent from 2019/20.

Members went through the budget page by page. A Member queried whether there would still be a rate relief for toilets. This had been included in a bill but stalled when parliament was dissolved. It was not included in the Queen's speech but bodies such as NALC and SLCC are still pushing for the rate relief to come forward in legislation.

No amendments were made to the individual budgets or cost centres.

Members discussed the recommendation to include an additional £3,000 in community event funding which might be needed to support a fireworks event in November 2020.

The Clerk informed Members that the inclusion of the £3,000 would result in a total precept increase of £17,570 from 2019/20. This would equate to a 2.88% increase of £4.17 per Band D Equivalent.

It was Proposed and Seconded that the budget be recommended to Council.

The Chair reminded Members that the proposed budget and the amounts within it would be a recommendation to Council and could be further considered when the Council come to approve the budget and precept on 20th January 2020.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the proposed budget be put forward for approval to Town Council with a precept request of £597,768 which would equate to a 2.88% increase of £4.17 per Band D Equivalent.

16 10 Cambridge Road Clock (105-2019/20)

Members received and noted an update on the cost to investigate the fault with the public clock at 10 Cambridge Road. Members discussed the cost of the work and what alternative could be put in place if the clock was not deemed necessary.

A Member commented that no money had been invested in the clock for over 20 years and that costs would need to be incurred at some time. It was Proposed and Seconded that the Clock be repaired at a cost of £2,200.

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RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that repair works are carried out on the public clock at 10 Cambridge Road at a cost of £2,200.

17 Chairman's Items (106-2019/20)

There were no Chairman's items.

18 Date of next meeting (107-2019/20)

It was noted that the next Policy, Finance and Resources Committee meeting will be on 17 February 2020.