

Sandy Town Council

Minutes of the meeting of Sandy Town Council held in the Council Chamber at 10 Cambridge Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire on Monday 6th November 2017 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs P N Aldis, P Blaine, T Cole, A M Hill, W Jackson, T Knagg, C Osborne (Mayor), M Pettitt, M Scott, D Sharman, P Sharman, J Sparrow and N Thompson.

Absent: Cllrs G Leach and S Sutton

In attendance: Mr C Robson (Clerk), Cllrs C Maudlin (CBC), P Smith (CBC), T Stock (CBC) and eight members of the public.

	Action
<p>1 Apologies for Absence (97-2017/2018) Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs G Leach and S Sutton.</p>	Admin
<p>2 Declaration of Interest and requests for dispensations (98-2017/2018) 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 (99-2017/2018) The Chairman noted that there were three members of the public who wished to speak and that in addition Cllr Aldis had received questions from a Member of the public.</p> <p>1) The Chairman invited Mr D Osborn to speak on behalf of the Sandy and District Leisure Gardens and Allotment Association (SDLGAA)</p> <p>Mr Osborn read a statement from the SDLGAA which stated that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is approaching four years since the closure of the allotment site in Stratford Road, with nothing obvious achieved at the former site or substantive achievements in relation to finding a new site. The Association recently canvassed public concern over the need for public allotments in Sandy and gathered signatures on a petition.	

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- The Council has a statutory duty to make adequate provision for allotments under Section 23 of the 1908 Allotment Act. Sandy Council is not meeting this provision.
- It is recognised that the need for housing development makes it difficult to persuade landowners to release land for allotments but there are areas in Sandy which are unlikely to be developed which could potentially be utilised.
- The Council could eventually achieve adequate and affordable allotment space by insisting new housing developments include allotments on an integrated basis, including access, water, electrics and other facilities.
- Asked that the Council make a firm commitment to ensure allotment land is included on its input to planning applications to Central Bedfordshire.

Mr Osborn handed the petition and names to be added to the waiting list to the Mayor and Clerk.

2) Cllr Aldis presented a similar question received from Mr J Gurney which related to allotment provision.

The Chairman suggested that the matter could be taken to the Community Services and Environment Committee for discussion and the Vice-Chairman so agreed. However, he commented that the Council had approached landowners in the area and not received positive responses. Considerable time was spent working to agree a parcel of CBC land to the north of the town but the short-term security of the site due to the risk of development meant it was not a viable option. The Clerk is liaising with agents of a plot of land known as 'Chapel Meadows' but the owner wishes to wait until agreement over a pathway to cross the land is established before taking the matter further.

The Council are currently working with CBC on securing land in Beeston for the provision of some allotments and the basis on which that land will be transferred to the Council is to be discussed later in the meeting.

The SDLGAA had been kept apprised of these various actions.

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- 3) CBC Cllr A Zerny spoke on Section 106 funding which is managed and administered by CBC. Cllr Zerny stated that he had looked through section 106 agreements over recent years and highlighted cases where contributions generated by development in one town or parish were then spent on projects in different areas. In the case of Sandy, money generated had been spent on the Biggleswade Green Wheel and at the Forest of Marston Vale. Sandy had also received money for projects which had been generated by development elsewhere. Cllr Zerny intended to put a motion to Central Bedfordshire Council on 16th November 2017 asking that Central Bedfordshire Council ensure that greater communication and consultation is carried out with town and parish councils on Section 106 contributions and spend.
- 4) Cllr Aldis presented a question received from Mr J Gurney which was also related to sc106 contributions.

As Members, are aware more that £130k of Section 106 money has been diverted by Central Bedfordshire Council to projects in other parishes. Was Sandy Town Council ever aware that this amount had been generated by Sandy developments? Did Central Beds consult in any way before diverting these funds? What action does this Council intend to take in order to ensure that in future "our" Section 106 money is ring-fenced for Sandy?

The Chairman thanked Cllr Zerny for speaking and commented that as the matter relating to Section 106 was not on the agenda it would not be appropriate for the Council to make any resolutions on the matter. The Clerk has been asked to bring back a report to Council on section 106 contributions generated in Sandy, including what funds are committed and which remain uncommitted. The matter will be taken to the Community Services and Environment Committee for further discussion and consideration of the question submitted.

- 5) The Chairman took Item 14 iv next as a member of the public wished to speak on the matter.

Mr S Allen, Chairman of the SG19 Group updated the Council on additional action by SG19 which had occurred since Cllr Aldis' report.

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A Member asked that the roundabout pollution be raised again in any letters issued. It was confirmed that it would be.

Mr Allen asked whether the Council was going to revisit its decision about whether it is in favour of a path along New Road. The Chairman stated that the Council's position was that it was in favour of the creation of a path along New Road.

Cllr C Maudlin informed the meeting that the matter all came down to funding and the expense of the project. A question has been raised as to whether Sc106 funds from a nearby development could be used to fund the project.

A Councillor asked where the Clerk was with setting up a meeting with the DfT. The Clerk informed the Council that he had contacted A Burt MP as requested to set up a meeting with the DfT. Mr Burt's office has confirmed that due to the interest from a variety of groups, they are looking into setting up a joint meeting. It was asked that the Clerk continue to push for this.

4 Minutes of previous Town Council Meetings (100-2017/2018)

RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the Meeting of Sandy Town Council held on Monday 25th September 2017 and to approve them as a correct record of proceedings.

5 Minutes of Committees and recommendations therein (101-2017/2018)

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 meetings held on 25th September 2017 and 16th October 2017.
- ii) **RESOLVED** to receive and note the minutes of the Community Services and Environment Committee held on 16th October 2017.

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- iii) **RESOLVED** to receive and note the minutes of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee held on 23rd October 2017.

It was proposed and seconded and **RESOLVED** to accept the Recommendation that the Council approve the proposed 2018/19 calendar of meetings.

- iv) **RESOLVED** to receive and note the minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of the Human Resources Committee held on 23rd October 2017.

The Chairman of the Human Resources Committee informed Members that Mr B Groom had now retired from the Council and the vacant role would soon be advertised.

6 Financial Matters (102-2017/2018)

- i) **RESOLVED** to note a summary statement of income and expenditure against the budget for the year to date (previously circulated and scrutinised at a meeting of Policy, Finance and Resources Committee on 23rd October 2017).
- ii) **RESOLVED** to note a list of payments made since the last Town Council meeting (previously circulated and scrutinised at a meeting of Policy, Finance and Resources Committee on 23rd October 2017).

7 Reports from Central Bedfordshire Councillors (103-2017/2018)

- i) Cllr Stock reported that information for the next Town and Parish Councils conference had been issued today and the topics to be covered were to include:
- Parish boundary / local governance review
 - A briefing on the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and its implications
 - An update on the Local Plan
 - Information on a new Highways Report IT system

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillors N Aldis and M Hill would attend the conference as representatives of the Council.

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A Member queried whether the 'Report It' system was now working smoothly following difficulties in using it. Cllr Stock reported that it was.

- ii) Cllr Maudlin reported that information on CBC's waste collection services were now available via the CBC website. Green waste collections would be suspended over the winter. CBC also wished to promote local groups and volunteers by using display space at the Chicksands Office provided by CBC. This could be arranged online.
- iii) Cllr Smith reported that the Central Bedfordshire would be consulting on local governance arrangements. The consultation was not around the need for town and parish councils, which are recognised as very valuable but focused on whether changes could be made to ensure the needs of communities are properly reflected. The Consultation would run until January 2018.

CBC surgeries were continuing to receive complaints about HGV's going down Cambridge Road trying to reach Sand Lane industrial estate. Cllr Smith did not believe more signage was necessarily the answer but wanted to hear the Town Council's thoughts. It was agreed to put the item on the next Community Services and Environment Committee.

8 Action List (104-2017/2018)

Members noted the action list and the Clerk informed the Council that he had been informed the surgery relocation was progressing well with a hope to be in the premises by early 2018.

Cllr Aldis confirmed that he was awaiting a response from BATPC with regards to arranging a meeting with a representative from Network Rail.

The Clerk informed Members that Mr A Burt MP was looking to organise a meeting with the DfT in response to the Council's request.

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9 Annual External Audit for the Financial Year 2016/17 (105-2017/2018)

The Council received, reviewed and accepted the external auditors report for the financial year ending 31st March 2017. It was noted that the Council had received a clean report.

10 Beeston Green Land Transfer (106-2017/2018)

Members received a report from the Clerk and considered Central Bedfordshire Council's (CBC) request that the Town Council identify its preference for taking on a land transfer from CBC for the provision of a community orchard and allotment site. The associated planning application for 6 affordable houses is due to be decided on by CBC's Development Management Committee on 8th November 2017.

It was proposed and seconded and **RESOLVED** that the Council has a strong preference to take the community land on a freehold transfer basis.

11 Councillor Surgeries (107-2017/2018)

Members considered whether the Council should return to holding regular surgeries and if so on what basis this should work.

A Member commented that the Council should hold surgeries in the Council Office as it opened up the Roman Exhibition as well. It would also mean Councillors could give out waste bags at the same time. The library is not the best location as it gets less passing footfall than the chemist did when surgeries were held there.

A Member commented that she liked the idea of inviting other groups to attend surgeries, as with the recent surgery coupled with a display by the Sandy Historical Research Group. This might attract more people.

A Member agreed that the Council should have more regular surgeries but that he would prefer to hold these outdoors in the Market Square. It was noted that once the community stand is installed this would provide a good location.

It was commented that if surgeries are not held regularly people lose interest, therefore monthly surgeries would be better.

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A Member commented that in his experience attendance by the public is very low, as people tend to deal with matters immediately using social media and websites. A Member agreed and said that a lot of the queries tend to be CBC related or regarding matters which cannot immediately be answered. Sitting waiting for people doesn't work and instead Councillors should get out amongst the community.

It was Proposed and Seconded that the Council hold monthly surgeries on a Saturday morning in the Council Chamber.

The Proposal fell; Against:7 For: 4

It was Proposed and Seconded and **RESOLVED** that the Council hold bi-monthly surgeries on Saturday mornings in the Council Chamber and that other community groups be invited to join. That once the weather improves surgeries are held in the Market Square.

It was agreed the first surgery would be held in January 2018.

12 **CCTV (108-2017/2018)**

Members received and discussed a report from the Town Clerk on CCTV coverage in Sandy, including specifications for upgrade cameras.

A Member commented that he visited the control room and felt that the static cameras provide a good level of coverage, however he did not feel the mobile camera provided value for money and it should not be replaced.

A Member disagreed and stated that there are known issues at the area where the mobile camera is currently located and to remove coverage would be an error. He agreed that the picture coverage provided by the mobile CCTV was poor and that this was due to insufficient lighting. More must be done and if a camera was to be removed there would be more need for other action to be taken.

A Member commented that the report, coupled with the data from the CCTV company, reassure him of the value CCTV provides in the town. It was noted that not all cameras are owned by STC, so if cameras are to be replaced the Council would need to persuade CBC to update their cameras in the town centre. The Council should continue to fund CCTV and try and put together the best package that can be afforded.

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A Member stated that he attended the visit to the control room as he wished to see the cameras capabilities. Having closely studied the specifications of the existing cameras and the possible upgrades, he issued caution that he did not feel the upgraded cameras would necessarily provide better coverage and that a lot of it was dependent on various conditions. The difference between cameras is electronic rather than optical. Under good conditions the cameras could identify a person. He concluded that he was not satisfied that an upgrade of the cameras would result in a noticeable quality improvement.

A Member informed the Council that she found the visit to the control room extremely useful and that the quality of image was reasonable and sufficient. There are still problems at the Fallowfield Recreation Ground and coverage is needed there, however to have a good effect, additional lighting is required. Rather than replace existing cameras with upgrades it would be better to extend the number of cameras and coverage we have.

A Member noted that one of the Council's play areas was not covered by a static camera and that rather than renewing the mobile camera a static camera could be installed instead.

A Member stated that CCTV costs each household £3.97 a year and that the mobile camera is very important, especially as it can be moved to address problems at various points in the town. If the image isn't good enough because of lighting then that needs to be addressed.

RESOLVED that the Council continue with its level of CCTV coverage and purchase a new mobile CCTV camera. That the Clerk investigate improving lighting at the Fallowfield recreation ground.

13 Crime Figures in Sandy (109-2017/2018)

- i) Members received and noted a report outlining data provided by the CCTV company. The Clerk informed Members that this information would now be available on a more regular basis and would be brought back to each Full Council meeting.
- ii) Members received and noted a report outlining Police crime figures for Sandy. A Member commented that the figures were still inaccurate as they did not show crimes that we know have occurred. In their opinion

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this is because incident numbers, rather than crime numbers are issued by police when a crime is reported.

The Chairman commented that the Council had brought this to the attention of the Police and Crime Commissioner and that Chief Superintendent Boyle is due to come to a Council meeting in January, at which time the Council should again raise the matter.

- iii) It was agreed that the Clerk arrange two dates for visits to the Police Control room so all Members had the opportunity to attend.

14 Reports from Representatives on outside bodies (110-2017/2018)

- i) A report from Cllr Hill on the Talk of the Town was received and noted.
- ii) A report from Cllr Hill on the Sandy Sports and Leisure Association (SSLA) was received and noted. Cllr Pettitt confirmed that an EGM of the SSLA was set for 9th November at which point the existing trustees would relinquish their position with the Charity in advance of the Town Council becoming sole trustee at midnight on 30th November 2017.
- iii) A report from Cllr N Aldis on the Sandy Green Wheel was received and noted. The Chairman drew members attention to point one of the report which mentioned land known as 'Chapel Meadows'. The owner of the land was currently negotiating with BRCC over a permissive path. Once agreement was reached on this the landowner would be willing to consider agricultural use for the land, including allotments.

Cllr Aldis drew Members attention to section 10 of the report and asked whether the Council would support the upgrading of a public footpath from the Alley Bridge across the Pinnacle Field and onto Sand Lane Bridleway. This would allow cyclists and horse riders to legally use the route.

Members noted that the Council did not own the land but did lease it from the Pym Estate. The 99 year lease for the land was to be renewed in 2018.

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RESOLVED to support the upgrading of the footpath and that the Clerk bring this forward during negotiations with the landlord on the renewal of the lease.

- iv) A report from Cllr N Aldis on the activity of the SG19 group was received and noted earlier in the meeting.

15 Representatives to Outside Bodies (111-2017/2018)

- i) Cllr T Knagg volunteered to sit as the Council representative on the Village Hall Committee. Councillor Knagg was nominated and Seconded.

RESOLVED that Cllr T Knagg be the Town Council representative on the Village Hall committee.

- ii) It was noted that a meeting of the Community Plan working group clashed with the Police Priority setting meeting and that unfortunately no Member was available to attend on this occasion. CBC Cllr Stock informed the Council she would be attending and could report back accordingly.

16 News Releases (112-2017/2018)

To issue a news release on Cllr M Scott's 25 years of service as a town councillor.

17 Chairman's Items (113-2017/2018)

The Mayor expressed his congratulations and thanks to Cllr M Scott upon completion of 25 years of service as a Town Councillor for Sandy. A presentation was made to Cllr Scott ahead of the meeting.

A civic reception is to be held on Friday 10th November for visiting delegates from the Polish town of Skarszewy. The delegates will be joining the Mayor and Councillors at the Remembrance Day Service. All Members are invited to the reception on Friday to welcome the delegates.

An invitation to the Remembrance Day Parade and Service from the Sandy and District Branch of the Royal British Legion had been circulated to Members. In previous years the Council has been well represented and it is hoped the same will be the case this year.

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St Swithun's Church will be running its successful Christmas Tree festival again in 2017 during the first weekend in December and if any Member is able to help put forward an entry from the Town Council they are asked to contact the office.

Raffle tickets to support the Christmas Light Switch on Event have been passed to each Member of Council and it would be greatly appreciated if Members were able to sell any tickets to support the event.

The Mayor will be holding a Town Carol Service again this Christmas in conjunction with St Swithun's Church. An invitation has been issued to Members for the service which is to be on 16th December 2017. So far 72 people have already confirmed attendance.

The Mayor encouraged Members to put forward any items or matters they wished to be debated by Council for inclusion on agendas.

**18 Date of Next Meeting (114-2017/2018)
Monday 18th December 2017**