

# 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 10 October 2016 commencing at 7.30pm.**

**Present:** Cllrs P N Aldis, P Blaine, T Cole, M Hill, C Osborne, M Pettitt, M Scott (Chairman) and P Sharman.

**In attendance:** Mr C Robson (Town Clerk) 3 Members of the public

*Actions*

## **1 Apologies for absence (50-2016/17)**

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs W Jackson, D Sharman and CBC Cllr Stock.

## **2 Declarations of interest (51-2016/17)**

- i) Declarable pecuniary interests – None
- ii) Non pecuniary interests – Cllrs Cole declared an interest in item 7(ii) as a Council appointment member of the Carnival committee.

## **3 Public Participation Session (52-2016/17)**

There were no questions received from members of the public.

## **4 Minutes of previous meeting (53-2016/17)**

**RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee held on 22 August 2016 and to approve them as a correct record of proceedings.

## **5 Financial Reports (54-2016/17)**

- i) A balance sheet and detailed financial report showing income and expenditure against the revenue budget for year to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2016 had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

Members scrutinised the financial report.

**RESOLVED** to note the report.

- ii) A balance sheet and detailed financial report showing income and expenditure against the revenue budget for year to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2016 had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

Members reviewed the report and queried an overspend in 409, public toilets and car park. The Clerk explained that this was due to unexpected repair work needed to both the barrier and the ladies

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toilets. This was unusual expenditure compared to previous years and did not highlight a need to increase the maintenance budget line.

Members noted that there was an overspend in Service Agreements. The Town Clerk informed Members that this was due to additional sanitary disposal costs for 10 Cambridge Road and that this often varied year on year. The Council's major service providers had now been paid for the year and expenditure in the budget code was not expected to increase.

**RESOLVED** to note the report.

- iii) Members received and reviewed a budget overview report. A Member requested that future reports completed by the accountant include the estimated year end surplus for Members information.

**RESOLVED** to note the report.

- iv) Members scrutinised a schedule of payments made since the previous meeting. A Member queried a payment of £744 to Rosetta publishing. It was confirmed that this was a quarterly payment for the Council's articles in the Bulletin magazine.

A Member queried a payment of £34.50 to Sandye Place Academy. This was an entry payment for a recent Council guided walk of Sandye Place academy.

**RESOLVED** to approve the schedule of payments.

- v) Bank reconciliations and statements.

**RESOLVED** that Cllr Scott scrutinise the bank reconciliations and statements and sign these as approved at the end of the meeting.

## 6 Action List (55-2016/17)

The Town Clerk presented the Action List which identifies actions from previous meetings and their status.

Members discussed the lack of response from CBC on the Archaeological WSI report and asked that this is progressed with urgency. It was agreed that the Clerk speak with CBC Cllr T Stock to move the matter forward. A Member requested that the sale of some land at the cemetery to residents of Holly Lodge come on the next Agenda for discussion.

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Members noted the Action list.

## 7 Grant Applications (56-2016/17)

- i) Members received a grant application from Biggles FM. A Mr Alan Waring spoke on behalf of the application.

Biggles FM is a community radio station and a not-for-profit organisation. The station is run by local people and addresses local concerns on a professional level via a well-equipped studio.

The Community Radio's fund raising is governed by OFCOM, which states that they can raise funds through advertising, but this must be on a 50/50 split with money raised through community grants and donations. A Member noted that the accounts did not include income and expenditure and queried whether this was available. Mr Waring believed it would be if required.

A Member asked whether listener numbers could be provided. Mr Waring informed Members that there was a large cost in getting the data which a community radio station could not justify.

Members discussed the application and noted that it was greater than the remaining grants budget available to the Committee. Members commented that it was a valuable community asset that was well used, including by the Town Council at times. Members felt that the Council should support the community station in some form.

It was Proposed and Seconded that a grant of £500 is awarded to Biggles FM.

**RESOLVED** to approve a grant of £500 to Biggles FM.

- ii) Members received a grant application from the Sandy Carnival Committee and heard from Mr R Burton who spoke on behalf of the application.

Mr Burton explained that the Sandy Carnival Committee was made up of 10 volunteers who planned the event throughout the year. The committee is entirely self-funded and relies on donations, grants and fundraising activities. The event has always been a great success and a major feature in the Sandy calendar. The committee has received funding from the Council in the past for which they are grateful. The committee is seeking funding for a marquee, hoodies and replacement bins.

Admin

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A Member mentioned that there was no balance sheet accompanying the application to show what assets were currently held. Mr Burton confirmed that the account was in the black and that it ran on year-on-year expenditure.

A Member commented that they would rather see financial support from the Council spent on something specific each year, such as insurance or the hire of Sandye Place Academy. Other Members agreed that this was a good idea and should be looked at for the 2017/18 financial year. Noting that the current grants budget did not have enough in it to meet the requested funding, Members asked when the Carnival Committee would require the funding, as it may fall within the next financial year. It was confirmed that expenditure would be in 2017/18.

A Member commented that the Carnival Committee gives away its own grants from income generated. Mr Burton explained that the Carnival's constitution stated that it had to give away 50% of its income in grants and that this was generated from bucket collections.

It was Proposed and Seconded that a grant of £500 is awarded to the Sandy Carnival out of next year's budget to meet their 2017/18 expenditure.

A Member suggested that the Council should cover the cost of replacement bins aside from the £500 donation, as they were reportedly damaged following use by the Council and we have a moral obligation to do so. It was Proposed and Seconded that the recommendation be amended to support this.

**RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND** that a grant of £500 is awarded to the Sandy Carnival out of the 2017/18 financial year budget and that this comes from the proposed new events budget line.

Town Clerk

**RESOLVED** that the Council cover the cost of new replacement bins and that the Clerk negotiate with the Carnival Committee to arrange purchase within the current financial year.

Admin

- iii) Members noted the thank you letter from the Sandy & District Horticultural Association
- iv) Members received the letter from the Ivel Sprinter and expressed some disappointment that the Council's previously awarded grant was referred to as 'small'. Members noted that there are public transport funds available in Sc106 and the Ivel Sprinter should be directed to contacting CBC in order to establish if this

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money can be applied for.

## **8 External Audit (57-2016/17)**

Members received a copy of the external auditor's report for 2015/16. The Clerk explained that the actions advised in the both the external and internal auditors reports had been completed. A risk assessment had been approved and would be reviewed again in this financial year and the Council's asset register was up to date with regular on going updates as items changed.

**RESOLVED** to receive and note the external auditors report.

## **9 Town Centre Bench Marking (58-2016/17)**

Members received a report from the Town Clerk. The Town Clerk explained that as part of Central Bedfordshire Council's Market Town Match Funding initiative the Council and business who receive shop front funding will need to feedback data to CBC on footfall and vacancies. Training is available to help towns establish the benchmark data and collect future data for information about the town.

Under delegated authority the Clerk is able to approve the training out of the Councils training budget. The matter was brought to Committee as the Clerk would like to open up the training day to other groups within the community who may be interested in attending. This would help the Council in completing the exercise and feeding back to CBC. It would also prove useful for businesses.

**RESOLVED** to approve the recommendation that the Clerk organises a bench marking and town centre audit training day to be held in the Council Chamber. That the training be open to Council staff, Members and representatives of the Chamber of Trade.

Town Clerk

## **10 Section 106 Funding (59-2016/17)**

Members received a report from the Town Clerk on section 106 (Sc106) applications and uncommitted funds held by Central Bedfordshire Council. Members discussed the level of uncommitted funds and commented that there was a large amount of funding available and it was difficult to know which groups should be advised to consider submitting applications for Sc106 funds. The Clerk informed Members that typically a Town or Parish Council would make applications and assist community groups in making applications to just a few of the categories. These include outdoor sports, play equipment and Village/Community Hall funding. The Chair reminded Members that the Council was currently looking at improvement projects for the Town Council play parks and that this would include

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Sc106 applications. A Member requested that the details of groups contacted about applying for sc106 funds be included in future reports.

## **11 Detailed Budget Report (60-2016/17)**

Members received a report from the Town Clerk. The Clerk informed Members that the purpose of the report was to give Members an opportunity to review individual budget codes ahead of the precept and 2017/18 budget report. Members' comments on budget levels will be fed into the budget calculation which will come back for review and amendment as required.

Members reviewed each of the budget lines in the report and agreed with officer recommendations with the exception that; Cost centre 401 should not be reduced as proposals will be coming forward for additional staffing hours, which will incorporate the estimated surplus.

402 4011 – 2016/17 estimate should read £6,171 with a budget of £6,300 for 2017/18

403 4011 – 2017/18 budget should be £2,050

403 4043 – 2017/18 budget should be increased further due to expected fuel cost rises

500 4012 – Reduce 2017/18 budget to £1,400 in line with past year expenditure

500 1242 – zero budget for 2017/18 as ice cream van no longer parks in Bedford Road Recreation ground

602 4200 – Historic overspend and no increase in past years. Increase 2017/18 by RPI

Members noted that the Christmas Light Switch on Event, its budget and the way it is organised needs to be reviewed in early 2017.

Proposed events budget for 2017/18 needs to be greater than £2,000.

Income budget code to be created alongside the event budget for the purpose of any income from specialised markets.

Members thanked the office for producing the report and asked that a version was sent to all Members to use during the upcoming precept and budgeting process.

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## **12 National Association of Local Council's Consultation (61-2016/17)**

Members discussed the consultation on the government's proposals to extend referendum principles for precept increases above 2% or £5, whichever is greater, to Town and Parish Councils. Members were against the proposals and questioned how the government expected councils to raise funds to complete projects. The proposals would prevent justified expenditure and there would be instances when the cost of holding a referendum would be greater than the precept increase. Devolved services from Local Authorities are going to continue to be passed down to parish level and councils need to be able to have the freedom to raise funds to provide vital services.

**RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk draft a response to the Consultation and that this be circulated to Members for approval.

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## **13 Fireworks (62-2016/17)**

The Chairman reminded Members that Cllr T Cole was previously appointed as the Council's representative on the Scouts' fireworks committee. Cllr Cole informed Members that she had heard from the Scouts but had not received an invite to a committee meeting. The Clerk informed Members that he had met with a representative from the Scouts who had confirmed the organisation for the event was on track, the fireworks had been purchased and advertising commenced. The fireworks display would be on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2016.

## **14 Chairman's Items (63-2016/17)**

There were no Chairman's items.

## **15 Date of Next Meeting – 21 November 2016 (64-2016/17)**