

# Sandy Town Council

## Minutes of a meeting of the Community Services and Environment Committee of Sandy Town Council held virtually via Zoom on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2020 commencing at 7.30pm

**Present:** Cllrs N Aldis, P Blaine, S Doyle, A Gibson, A M Hill, T Knagg, C Osborne, M Scott, S Sutton (Chair)

**Absent:** Cllr N Thompson

**In Attendance:** Cllr M Pettitt and Mr C Robson (Town Clerk)

### Action

- 1 **Apologies for absence (1-2020/21)**  
Apologies were received from Cllr N Thompson and Central Bedfordshire Cllr C Maudlin. Admin
  - 2 **Declarations of Interest (2-2020/21)**  
There were no declarations of interest.
  - 3 **Minutes of Previous Meeting (3-2020/21)**  
**RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Community Services and Environment Committee held on Monday 9th March 2020 as a correct record of proceedings. Admin
  - 4 **Public Participation Session (4-2020/21)**  
There were no members of the public present. The Clerk informed Councillors that he had received communication from a member of the public in relation to agenda item 7, specifically the A1 signage section of the report.
  - 5 **Action List (5-2020/21)**  
Members received the action list and the Clerk informed the committee that Central Bedfordshire Council had confirmed that their solicitor will be issuing a lease for the land to the Town Council's appointed solicitor. Delays had been experienced as a result of discussions within CBC about how the housing section of the site will be developed. It is hoped that a lease can be drawn up for approval during the next meeting cycle. It was agreed that the previously established smaller working group of Cllrs Gibson, Hill, Scott and Sutton would review the lease and look at the next steps for developing the community site. Town Clerk
- Members noted that the Chairman, Deputy Chairman and Clerk would be holding a virtual meeting with the approved outdoor gym contractor on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> July. Members **RESOLVED** to give Cllrs Sutton, Gibson & The Clerk

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delegated authority to the Chairman of CSE, Deputy Chairman of CSE and the Clerk to finalise the specific pieces of equipment and location of the gym so as to avoid further delays in placing an order.

## 6 **Green Plan (6-2020/21)**

Members received and considered a first draft Green Action Plan for Sandy Town Council. Members commented that the plan was a good start in setting environment ambitions for STC and it was a clear, well presented document. Members did feel that the suggested actions did not go far enough and there was potential for STC to take further steps in its actions to be greener, such as installing sensors to automatically turn lights off when rooms are empty or committing to the planting of a specified number of trees. The Chairman pointed out that agreeing a number of trees to plant was one of the actions in the plan, but land would need to be identified.

A Member commented that there needs to be more work on prioritising actions, and a group of Members should go through the plan to look at the next steps. A Member added that some more Sandy specific additions could be made, such as the Green Wheel and Beeston Green Plan. There also needs to be better coordination of which authority and organisation is responsible for what (such as areas of fly tipping).

**RESOLVED to RECOMMEND** that the draft Environmental Plan is adopted by the Council and that a working group of Cllrs Aldis, Blaine, Hill and Sutton work to develop the action points within the plan.

*Cllr C Osborne left the meeting.*

## 7 **Town Entrance Signage (7-2020/21)**

Members considered designs for new Sandy town entrance signage. Members discussed what they felt was most important to be displayed on town entrance signage given the need to limit text and logos. Too much signage is distracting and appears 'cluttered'.

A Member suggested that signs should simply say 'Welcome to Sandy' and reference the important link with the RSPB. Other items should be left off. Other Members disagreed, stating the town's historic and foreign links were important and should be recognised. It was also pointed out that 'twinned with' was no longer a term used and a more appropriate phrase would be 'linked' or 'partnered' with.

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After further discussion it was agreed that 'Historic Market Town' was not appropriate and it was more important that the signs include reference to the town's historic European links, its link with the RSPB and its place within Greensands Country.

A Member commented that there may be more appropriate positions for the signage than their current locations. A signage audit should accompany the new signs and correspondence to CBC Highways on the matter.

**RESOLVED** to delegate authority to Cllrs Gibson, Hewitt and Scott to finalise signage designs and locations.

Members discussed having a 'Sandy' sign on the A1 to show drivers they were now in the parish. It was noted that any approval of this would be down to Highways England, who had indicated they would not approve more signage on this section of the A1. The Clerk shared communication received from a member of the public on misleading signage directing drivers on the A1 heading south into Sandy via London Road. The Council had already raised this with Highways England, and it was agreed that it would be included again in new correspondence.

Town  
Clerk

Further communication from the member of the public on the lack of signage directing people to the Sunderland Road industrial estate was shared with Members. Again, the Town Council had raised this previously and the Clerk was asked to follow this up again with Central Bedfordshire Council Ward Members.

Town  
Clerk

## 8 **NHS and Keyworkers Bench (8-2020/21)**

Members considered a request from the Mayor that the committee look at a permanent way of thanking NHS and keyworkers for all they have done during the pandemic. The Mayor spoke on the matter, stating that while it was difficult to find a suitable way to thank so many people across our community who had worked hard and supported the vulnerable during the last four months, the proposed bench would be a long lasting way of recognising all they had done. The bench should be somewhere highly visible and could be part funded by donations from residents.

A Member asked whether such a bench could form part of the Sandy Enhancement Group's (SEG) proposed memorial garden to Dr. Judy Baxter. It was agreed that the Judy Baxter Memorial Garden was a separate issue which was between SEG and the Sandy Health Centre. SEG would pursue this matter further.

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Members discussed the matter at length and agreed that a permanent, durable, and long lasting thank you would be appropriate. However, several Members commented that now was not the right time as we are still in the midst of a pandemic. While the message of thanks would not change, we do not know how things will develop over the next few months, and a permanent display of thanks to the NHS and keyworkers must be appropriate, durable and reflect all that was done throughout the pandemic. Volunteers and the work they have done should also be included.

Members agreed to the proposed commemorative 'thank you' bench in principle and **RESOLVED** to defer the matter for six months and bring back to a future committee meeting for further consideration.

## 9 **Youth Engagement (9-2020/21)**

Members reviewed and considered amendments to the Town Council's Youth Engagement Plan.

The report included a list of projects which had been suggested when the Council was looking to apply for youth grant funding. It was agreed that a list of potential projects, with sufficient supporting information and costs be compiled so the Council is prepared as and when grant funding opportunities arise.

Members considered four initial project ideas which had been put forward when the Council was looking at grant funding opportunities. Members broadly supported carrying out more research and feasibility work on improvements to, or a new skate park. Members held some concerns of lighting in recreation grounds and the potential increase this may lead to in anti-social behaviour, however the merits of allowing young people longer use of youth activity specific sites during darker months was recognised. Members discussed the potential to rent a vacant unit on the High Street as a community space and the difficulties in getting revenue grant funding to support the running costs that would be involved. The positives of such a scheme and the potential uses of the space were recognised.

**RESOLVED** that;

- The enhancement of the Sandy Skate park should be further explored in case funding opportunities arise.

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- Lighting in recreation grounds should remain on the list for potential grant funding as costs and plans have already been established.
- The rental of a shop for community use should remain on the list as a long-term project, but that it would be re-visited at a later date and not prioritised for work at this time.

Members considered the previously agreed steps to be taken to engage with young people in Sandy and increase awareness of the Council and what it does. Given the restrictions put in place by social distancing and the pressure that will be on schools and youth organisations in the coming months it was agreed that the youth engagement actions would not be able to be carried out during 2020.

Members considered whether there would be an opportunity to engage with young people about their Covid-19 experiences via a virtual forum. Difficulties in engaging with organisations at this time would make this hard, but it was agreed that the Clerk would contact the organisers of Sandy Youth Voice to see what was possible.

Town  
Clerk

## 10 **Sandy Green Wheel (10-2020/21)**

Members received and noted an update report from the Sandy Green Wheel Group. It was commented that usage of the Green Wheel has increased dramatically during the last three months, in part as a result of the lockdown and the need for people to exercise locally. The route is being walked a lot more and as a result, paths are staying clear and defined. CBC's Rights of Way are undertaking grass cuts as part of a scheduled maintenance.

It was commented that there is still an awful lot more that needs to be done to progress the route and make sections suitable for cycling. It was questioned if there was any more support the Council could give at this time to help progress matters. It was noted that most of the work that needs to be undertaken will be of considerable cost and the Council is not in a place to fund those works. At some stage the Council may be asked to consider contributing towards any works undertaken. The Council should continue to support and publicise the Green Wheel, it can also help identify areas for trees to be planted along the route.

Admin

Members discussed concerns over the erosion of the steps leading up to the Pinnacle from Sand Lane. The erosion has become increasingly worse and action will need to be taken. BRCC are

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reviewing the situation and will suggest options for consideration. This will likely need to include the closure of this route to allow vegetation to re-establish.

## 11 Greensands Country (11-2020/21)

Members received and considered a report from Cllr Gibson on the recent Greensands Country's workshop. Members commented that the work being undertaken looks positive and the Council should look for opportunities where it can work with Greensands Country and help build recognition of the name, logo and area. The committee would await further updates and communication from Greensands Country as initiatives developed.

## 12 Circus request (12-2020/21)

Proposed, Seconded and **Resolved** that the previously approved request to hold a circus on Sunderland Road run from 12<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

Admin

## 13 Events (13-2020/21)

Members received an update report from the Events Working Group. The Chairman informed the committee that further guidance from the RBL had been received which suggested that there would be no events held as part of the VJ Day commemorations on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2020. However, if guidance allowed for an outside gathering of up to 30 people to observe an act of remembrance, similar to that which the Council held with the Sandy Fire Service and St Swithun's Church on VE Day. There was some discussion whether a bugle player could be included, as at present wind instruments cannot be played within the church boundary under Covid-19 guidance.

It was agreed the Chairman would coordinate with the RBL on arrangements for an act of remembrance and let Councillors know if they would be needed to participate. The Chairman commented that it would be appropriate for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to be present.

Chairman  
of CSE

It was noted that it was unlikely the RBL would be able to hold a poppy appeal this year and that there was concern over getting a sufficient number of wreaths and poppies due to the shut down in manufacturing during lock-down. The wreaths from 2019 will now be removed from the War Memorial and cleaned in case these are needed for November 2020.

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**14 Great British Spring Clean (14-2020/21)**

Members noted that the rescheduled 2020 Great British Spring Clean will be happening between 11<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

**RESOLVED** to approve that the Council promote the initiative and support local litter picking events via the provision of equipment and collection of waste.

The Clerk informed Members that donations towards litter picking equipment totaling £227 had been received from the Sandy Guild and Cllr Tracey Stock's Central Bedfordshire Ward Member grant.

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

There were no Chairman's items.

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

The date of the next Committee meeting is 24<sup>th</sup> August 2020.