

# Sandy Town Council

**Minutes of the meeting of Sandy Town Council held in the Council Chamber at 10 Cambridge Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire on Monday 18 January 2016 at 7.30pm**

**Present:** Cllrs P N Aldis, P Blaine, T Cole, A M Hill, W Jackson (Mayor), G Leach, M Pettitt, C Osborne, D Quick, M Scott, P Sharman, J Sparrow and S Sutton.

**Absent:** Cllrs J Ali and D Sharman, Cllrs Maudlin and Stock (CBC) and PCSO Ann Jeeves

**In attendance:** Cllr Smith (CBC), Chris Robson (Town Clerk), Ms M Bracey (Minutes Clerk), Mr Derek Kemp (Accountant and Responsible Financial Officer) and two members of the public.

	<b>Action</b>
<p><b>1 Apologies for Absence (108-2015/2016)</b> Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr D Sharman, Cllrs Maudlin and Stock (CBC) and PCSO Ann Jeeves</p>	Admin
<p><b>2 Declaration of Interest and requests for dispensations (109-2015/16)</b> i) <i>Disclosable Pecuniary Interests</i> – None ii) <i>Non Disclosable Interests</i> – Agenda Item 9 and 10 Cllrs Pettitt, Osborne and Scott as officers of Sandy Football Club and Cricket Club iii) <i>Dispensations</i> – None</p>	Admin
<p><b>3 Public Participation Session (110-2015/16)</b> The member of the public present would speak at Agenda Items 9 and 10. Cllr Aldis said he had two questions from two members of the public. The first was 'What is the Council's attitude towards having plaques on buildings to inform residents/visitors what the building was originally. eg. former pubs'. The second was 'Would the Council consider having finger post(s) in the Town Centre to direct visitors to points of interest like the Library, Town Council, car park etc? A member stated that he thought plaques were for notable celebrities and at local level this was not common practice and they cost a lot of money. He did not think there would be local support. A member thought that local groups took it upon themselves to do this. A member said that Biggleswade have plaques and he thought the</p>	Admin

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costs of these were borne by the History Society.

On the question of finger post(s) a member thought that there was a proliferation of posts and signs around the town.

**RESOLVED** to take these questions to the next meeting of the Community Services and Environment Committee.

## 4 Minutes of previous Town Council Meeting (111-2015/16)

**RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the meeting of Sandy Town Council held on Monday 21 December 2015 and to approve them as a correct record of proceedings.

Admin

## 5 Police Matters

In the absence of PCSO Jeeves the Chair reminded members that if they have any questions on the report that they can email PCSO Jeeves.

Town Clerk

A member said that she was concerned about the accuracy of the report as she knew of a number of burglaries that were reported to the Police but were not in the report. Other members also said that they were concerned about inconsistencies in the report.

It was suggested that the Town Council invite Sgt Gary Kidd to the next available meeting of the Council to give a more in depth report and address what is being done in Sandy.

**RESOLVED** to request Sgt Gary Kidd to attend the next available meeting of the Town Council or a Committee meeting.

## 6 Minutes of Committees and recommendations therein (112-2015/16)

Admin

To receive and note the minutes of the meetings of the following committees and sub committees (if applicable) to approve recommendations therein which do not arise elsewhere.

i) **RESOLVED** to note the minutes of meetings of Development Scrutiny Committee held on 4 January 2016.

ii) **RESOLVED** to note the minutes of the meeting of the Community Services and Environment Committee held on 4 January 2016.

The Town Clerk said that Cllr P Sharman was also on the Cemetery Working Group along with the members detailed in the Minutes.

## 7 Financial Matters (113-2015/16)

There were no financial matters to discuss.

Admin

## 8 Action List (114-2015/16)

The Clerk reminded members that there was £1,200 for the line marking of the car park and there may be potential part funding.

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Cllr Pettitt and the Town Clerk had met with the applicants regarding the proposed gym equipment on Bedford Road Recreation Ground. There is new funding available in April 2016 and an application will be made.

Cllr Pettitt reminded members that he had requested their help in carrying out a users survey and he will draw up a questionnaire for use late February to early April 2016.

## 9 **Scale of Charges (115-2015/16)**

A member of the public raised a number of questions about the Burials and Memorials section and whether side by side burials should no longer be made unavailable due to the lack of burial space. Discussion took place about the measurements and width/depth. A member said that at this stage the charges be authorised and a report regarding the measurements and width/depth come to the appropriate Committee for discussion.

Members discussed the scale of charges at length and commented as follows:

- A member asked if the line markings were included in the costs to the football club and does it reflect the costs of staff time? The Town Clerk said that he had discussed this with the Groundsman and it did reflect the costs.
- A question was asked about block booking and VAT. Mr Kemp stated that VAT only applies to the hire and use of the pitches.
- A member asked if the figures for the Bowls Club were as per lease and the Town Clerk said this was the case.
- A member asked what were the costs of a market stall? The Chair replied that a Friday stall cost £10 and a Farmers Market Stall cost £8. There was no charge for the first time somebody hired a stall.

It was **agreed** that the Scale of Charges be amended to reflect these costs.

A member asked about a Charity stall and the Chair said that these were free.

- Discussion took place about the talks and guided walks increase of 20%. Members felt that these should be assessed on an individual basis as some speakers requested more than others.

It was **agreed** that the office would be given authority to decide on the costs of talks and walks on an event by event basis.

- It was stated that the Council no longer had a committee

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room for hire and that this should be removed from the scale of charges.

- On the scale of charges it was **agreed** to keep the existing fee for Interment of a non-viable foetus or a child under 12 months and interment of a child over 12 months but under 12 years with no increase.
- It was **agreed** that Burial in all sections 7ft x 6ft be increased to £370 and cremated remains 4ft x 4ft be increased to £200.

Also discussed were the treble fees for non parishioners and whether to give the Clerk permission to waiver these in certain circumstances. It was **agreed** that this be discussed at another meeting.

- The costs for maintenance in perpetuity were discussed and what length of time was 'perpetuity? This was said to be for 15 years. It was suggested that the cost for 2016/17 be £2,325 equivalent to 15 years of maintenance.

**RESOLVED** to approve the Scale of Charges subject to the above changes.

## 10 Budget (116-2015/16)

A member of the public questioned the 2% increase and was advised by Mr Kemp of the figures. He also mentioned Section 106 money available for children's play areas.

The Town Clerk presented the report regarding projects and stated members may wish to increase the Grants budget from £1,500 to £3,000.

A member said that we should support activities within the town and said the Grants budget should be doubled to £3,000.

A member said that whatever is in the Grants budget will be spent and he did not support the increase to £3,000 but that he considered it be increased to £2,000.

It was proposed, seconded and **Resolved** that the Grants budget be increased to £3,000 for the financial year 2016/17.

12 - For

1 - Against

The Town Clerk commented that the Council was waiting to hear from CBC if they are taking a camera out of action and that this may affect the next year's budget. Mr Kemp reminded members that the budget is set at 'what we know' not 'what we do not know' and as such the CCTV budget did not need to be increased.

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Mr Kemp went on to present the Budget Summary report and the proposed 2016/17 Budget. The budget proposed a 3.57% increase to 'balance the budget'

Mr Kemp said that the Council had done well to keep their spending down this year. It was pointed out that some of the 2016/17 increases were beyond the control of the Council as the Chancellor had announced removing contracted out rate of National Insurance which would increase the payroll costs by 3.4%. Another significant cost was going to be increased insurance premium tax from 6% to 9.5%.

Discussions took place re the proposals for the precept and a member stated that with all the projects and work the Council needed to address the proposed increase, allowing £30,000 in project capital fund, would not adequately allow the Council to fund the projects.

It was noted there is an option to borrow money from the Public Works Boards. Members requested information on the cost implications. Mr Kemp said that the rates as at September 2015 were, for every £1,000 borrowed, repayment at 20% equals £66.30. You have to ensure you have sufficient capital to pay for loan money. There is also need to consult with the electorate and this can be done by a simple slip on a newsletter or similar. You can borrow the maximum of £500,000 in any one year. He reminded members that 2016/17 was the final year that the Council can raise the precept above 2% - 3%.

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Members were told that the Cemetery Working group had met that afternoon and were encouraged that the cemetery plans were achievable and there was the possibility of some outside financial support.

A member stated that it made sense to borrow over twenty years to achieve the project, rather than putting it on this year's precept.

With regards to Section 106 monies there is a considerable pot of money available to Sandy for a variety of purposes. The Town Clerk is in the process of investigating the money available and a means of accessing this.

Members discussed the costs and implications of increasing the precept to allow for a larger increase in the Council's capital

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project fund.

It was proposed and seconded that the Council increase the rolling capital project fund to £40,000 and that the precept be set at £517,647, a 5.99% increase from 2015/16. The average Band D taxpayer will pay £131.08.

**A recorded vote was requested.**

**Cllrs Cole, Jackson, Leach, Pettitt, Osborne, Quick, Scott, Sharman, Sparrow and Sutton voted for.**

**Cllrs Aldis, Blaine and Hill voted against.**

**RESOLVED** to set the precept at £517,647.

## **11 CBC Councillors (117-2015/16)**

Cllr Smith referred to the discussion on borrowing and offered to include a consultation/reply slip on the In Touch leaflet which will go out at the end of January 2016.

He also referred to the discussion on crime in Sandy and said that this was a concern with a number of parishes in Central Beds. Central Beds Councillors have raised this and it is being discussed at a high level. He reminded members that there will be a Police and Crime Commissioner Election in May 2016 and the electorate will see leaflets canvassing for a candidate.

It is understood that the current Police and Crime Commissioner will again hold a referendum asking for increased monies.

He reassured members that their Central Beds Councillors share their concerns over the increase in crime.

He reminded members of the Market Town Regeneration funding available and that the submission date of 29<sup>th</sup> February 2016. Sandy Town Council may like to work in conjunction with Biggleswade Town Council if they considered this a good link. A Business Case has to be made for the funding.

There has been a change in the contract for care in the area with Savercare taking over from Homecare as of 18<sup>th</sup> January 2016 and staff transferring.

Residents in Engayne Avenue will be canvassed on their opinions about the number 73 bus route. There will be some parking restrictions to allow the buses to swing round. The 83 temporary bus service will finish in June 2016.

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He drew members attention to a website 'Clean for the Queen' with projects of cleaning up areas during the weekend of 4 – 7 March 2016.

He updated members on the CBC Development Plan which is being re done after the refusal by Central Government. It is expected that this will be re submitted in 2017.

Without the development plan the area is going to be subject to aggressive development proposals. He advised that the Council look at a community plan which is cheaper than a Neighbourhood Plan or using the existing Town Plan to identify areas where the Council agree are acceptable for development and also those that are unacceptable.

He informed members that the recent planning application for land west of the A1 has been recommended for refusal under delegated powers.

A member requested that the consultation with Engayne Avenue regarding the number 73 bus route be widened to a larger audience as this affects a great number of people in Sandy.

Cllr Smith said that with the improvements to the A1 at the Black Cat and south of Biggleswade, his concern was 'where does this leave Sandy?'

Cllr Smith was asked about two tier and three tier school system and whether CBC would go for a two tier? Cllr Smith replied that Central Beds had no plans to go to a two tier school system due to lack of funds.

Members were interested in the Cllr Smith's comments about a Community Plan /Town Plan and agreed to a workshop to discuss. Cllr Smith agreed to get some examples to share good practice.

**RESOLVED** to hold a workshop for members on 8 February 2016.

A member asked that if the 83 bus is stopping in June 2016 will the turning circle be ready when that ends. Cllr Smith replied that there is a need to lift the block paving and there was no time scale available.

**It was agreed that Standing Orders be suspended for fifteen minutes.**

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## **12 Calendar of Meetings (118-2015/16)**

There was concern that some of the Committee meetings were close together making it difficult for paperwork to get completed in time.

**RESOLVED** to bring a revised Calendar of Meetings to the next Committee meeting.

## **13 Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebrations (119-2015/16)**

Discussion took place re the 'Clean for the Queen' proposal and it was agreed that some organisations may take action on this. It was agreed a Beacon celebration should take place if the Scouts agreed and lead the event.

**RESOLVED** to have a beacon to celebrate the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday and engage with Scouts and other Community groups for support.

## **14 News Release(120-2015/16)**

1. Precept in Bulletin with reference to the Cemetery Project.
2. Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday to encourage members of the public to organise something.

## **15 Chairman's Items (121-2015/16)**

The Chair had been invited to Ely by the Air Cadets to celebrate their 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. As it was outside the normal area of travel, he requested members to agree for him to attend. It was **agreed** that the Mayor attend.

The Mayor informed members there will be a Barn Dance on the 19 March 2016 at Sandy Upper School.

**Date of next meeting: 7 March 2016.**

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