

Sandy Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee of Sandy Town Council held in the Town Council Chamber at 10 Cambridge Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire on Monday 20 October 2014 commencing at 7.40 pm

Present: Cllrs N Aldis, C Butterfield, M Groom, W Jackson, C Osborne (Chairman), M Scott, D Sharman, K Sharp and R Smith

Absent: Cllr Pettitt

In attendance: Cllr Runchman, 8 members of the public and the Town Clerk

Actions

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Pettit who was unwell.

2 Declarations of interest

- i) Disclosable pecuniary interests - None
- ii) Non pecuniary interests - Cllr Jackson declared a personal interest in item 12 (Sandy Markets) because he was a friend of Mr and Mrs Goldman. Cllr Aldis declared a personal interest in item 11 (Allotments) because he was on the waiting list for an allotment tenancy should a new site become available.

3 Public Open Session

A member of the public requested that agenda item 11 be brought forward to the beginning of the meeting.

A second member of the public asked questions about the account codes used on page 22 of the agenda papers, questioned the lack of a written report for agenda item 7 on the website and asked where the minutes from the public consultation meeting on the burial regulations on 11 September 2014 could be found. The member of the public then drew attention to the Town Clerk's report on the Town Council's policy on co-options (agenda item 8) and asked for the wording to be changed. The member of the public then stated that the wording of the report on Item 9 regarding the second complaint which was to have been held on 13 October 2014 was incorrect. Members noted the questions and comments.

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4 Allotments

RESOLVED to bring this item forward on the agenda as requested by a member of the public.

A short report and exchange of correspondence giving revised estimated costs for soil testing at a potential new allotment site had

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been circulated before the meeting. Members expressed dissatisfaction at the delay and the increasing costs of the soil testing. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the increased cost of £3,900 plus VAT and to note the need for a total sum of £5,000 to be made available should a contingency sum be needed. The sum of £3,900 was to be made available from reserves.

Town
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5 Minutes of previous meeting

RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee held on 1 September 2014 and to approve them as a correct record of proceedings.

Admin

6 Internal and External Audit

- i) **RESOLVED** to approve the continued engagement of HW Accountants as internal auditors for the current year, arrangements for internal audit of the Town Council for the financial year 2014/15 and the first visit of the internal auditor on 4 November 2014
- ii) The external auditors' report for 2013/14 was scrutinized and discussed.

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RESOLVED to note completion of the external audit of Sandy Town Council's annual return and accounting statements for the year 2013/14 and publication of the audit completion notice.

Mayor,
Chairman
of PF&R
and
Town
Clerk

RESOLVED that the action arising from the audit report was that the Mayor and the Chairman of PF&R Committee should review the annual return in more detail before submission to the external auditors in future years.

7 Financial Reports

- i) A balance sheet together with a financial report showing income and expenditure against the revenue budget for the year to date had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The Chairman drew attention to continued work on the recoding of the accounts system and a list of errors on the reports was confirmed. The Town Clerk was asked to encourage DCK Beavers to resolve the software problems which were causing the both old and new codes and incorrect budget figures to appear on the reports generated by the RBS Omega computer system.

Town
Clerk/DCK
Beavers

RESOLVED to note the financial information provided.

- ii) **RESOLVED** to approve a schedule of payments made since the previous meeting

Cllr Aldis

- iii) **RESOLVED** that Cllr Aldis be designated to check and sign bank reconciliations and statements on behalf of the committee at the end of the meeting.

- iv) A report from the Town Clerk on matters to do with the Jenkins

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Pavilion had been circulated before the meeting and was discussed. The Chairman noted that correspondence about the report had been received from Sandy Colts FC and a meeting with them had been offered by the Town Clerk.

RESOLVED to note the report and the planned actions of the Football Foundation and the Bedfordshire FA to encourage football in Sandy.

8 Budget Process for 2015/16

- i) The Chairman reminded members that at the informal financial workshop held on 29 September 2014 the Town Clerk had been asked to supply additional information and this was provided in a report circulated in advance of the meeting which was discussed.

RESOLVED to instruct the Town Clerk to use an inflation rate of 2% where real costs are not known in preparation of a draft budget.

Town Clerk

RESOLVED to hold a second workshop for members, potential dates to be circulated after the meeting.

Town Clerk/
Chairman

- ii) Correspondence regarding outsourcing of accountancy work for 2015/16 from DCK Beavers had been circulated in advance of the meeting and this was discussed.

RESOLVED to write to DCK Beavers expressing disappointment that costs were to be increased so early in the contract and asking for the fee for 2015/16 to be held.

Town Clerk

9 Burial Regulations Review

Cllr Aldis reported that the Cemetery Working Group had held two meetings to review the regulations. It had been hoped to report recommendations at the current meeting but this was not possible. A third meeting of the working group was scheduled and it was expected that recommendations would be brought to PF&R and Town Council within the timescales published previously.

Cemetery
Working
Group

10 Policy on co-options

A report on the Town Council's arrangements for co-options had been circulated before the meeting. It drew attention to changes on the Town Council's website aimed at improving clarity of information about the co-option process. The report and issues arising from it were discussed.

A motion was proposed that arrangements should be changed so that future applicants for co-option should complete a confidential application form and should also make a separate free-form statement for publication about their reasons for standing for co-option and the skills/experience which they would bring to the Town

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Council. A recorded vote was requested. Cllrs Aldis, Butterfield and Sharp voted in favour of the motion. Cllrs Groom, Jackson, Osborne, Scott, D Sharman and Smith voted against the motion.

RESOLVED that following advice from BATPC no changes to the application form for co-option would be made and the form would not be published.

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A recorded vote was requested. Cllrs Groom, Jackson, Osborne, Scott, D Sharman and Smith voted in favour of the resolution. Cllrs Aldis, Butterfield and Sharp voted against the resolution.

RESOLVED to continue the practice of asking questions of applicants at the meeting at which co-option was considered and to advise applicants that this would happen regardless of whether all applicants for co-option were present.

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11 Cemetery Expenditure

Members were advised that a meeting of the Complaints Committee due to be held on 13 October 2014 had been cancelled due to lack of member availability consequently there were no financial issues to consider at this time. A new date for the meeting would be arranged as soon as practical.

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12 Cemetery Extension

A design for the planned extension of Sandy Cemetery alongside a report showing estimated fees and completion dates for aspects of the project had been circulated in advance of the meeting. A plan of a proposed depot building was tabled at the meeting. These documents were discussed in detail and the following suggestions for alterations were made.

- 1) Entrance to be relocated to approximate position of current entrance to depot yard, sight lines to road would necessitate low hedges in this area
- 2) Access arrangements for depot building to be clarified
- 3) Provision of yard space was necessary
- 4) Depot building should be 30-40% bigger and include a drying space (though not necessarily any kitchen facilities)
- 5) Car parking arrangements to be clarified
- 6) Access to cess pit to be confirmed
- 7) Footpath from existing cemetery should be tarmac and not grass

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk should provide this feedback to Cemetery Development Ltd and report back to the next meeting of Town Council if practical or alternatively to the next available meeting.

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13 Sandy Markets

A progress report on Sandy's Monthly Markets had been circulated

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before the meeting with copies of a request from a market trader for a reduction in Friday market fees. Cllr Groom provided a further update noting that there had been four traders on the first Saturday in October rather than three as recorded in the report.

RESOLVED to allow one week's trading free of charge to regular Friday market traders for the same period as the free trading previously agreed for the monthly market ie one week free per month from October 2014 up to the end of March 2015.

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14 Bank Reconciliations

RESOLVED to note that Cllr Aldis had checked the Town Council's most recent bank statements and reconciliations on behalf of the committee.