

Sandy Town Council

Minutes of the meeting of Sandy Town Council held virtually via Zoom on on Monday 29th June 2020 at 7.00pm

Present: Cllrs P N Aldis, P Blaine, S Doyle, A Gibson, J Hewitt, A M Hill, W Jackson, T Knagg, R Lock, C Osborne, M Pettitt, M Scott (Chair), P Sharman, and S Sutton

Absent: Cllr N Thompson

In attendance: Mr C Robson (Clerk), CBC Cllrs Ford, Maudlin and Stock, Mrs C Baker-Smith (Admin Team Leader), Mrs A Elliott-Flockhart and Mrs V McFarlane (Administrators). No members of the public were present.

Before the start of the meeting, the Mayor announced that the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Martin Pettitt had reached the milestone of serving on Sandy Town Council as a Councillor for 25 years, having joined the Council in 1995. For 20 of those years Cllr Pettitt has served as a Chairman, a Vice Chairman or other positions of responsibility. He was on the founding body of the SSLA and the all-weather pitch and has worked hard to help maintain this asset and renewing the lease. His work on the Council has been exemplary, his views are honest, and he is diligent in everything that is asked of him.

Councillor Pettitt was then presented with a gift which was delivered to him by the Mayoress, Mrs Scott. Cllr Pettitt thanked everyone in the Town Council that he had worked with – past and present, and the gift and sentiment was greatly appreciated. He very much hopes that there will be many years ahead to carry on with the work of the Town Council.

This was followed by a one-minute silence held following the sad passing of Cllr Mrs Fiona Chapman – the former Chairman of Central Bedfordshire Council. Cllr Chapman spent much of her life serving the local community, having previously held office as High Sheriff, and had been a Deputy Lieutenant of Bedfordshire since 2003, and was a great friend and supporter of the town.

Action

1 Apologies for Absence (1-2020/2021)

No apologies had been received.

Admin

2 Declaration of Interest and requests for dispensations (2-2020/21)

- i) *Disclosable Pecuniary Interests* – None
- ii) *Non-Pecuniary Interests* – Cllr Pettitt declared an interest on agenda item 13 as a life member of Sandy Cricket Club and a previous vice president. He would therefore not vote on this item. He is currently secretary of SSLA but clarified from the Clerk that he could take part in this item. Cllr Scott is Chairman of the Trustees for the SSLA, as appointed by the Council but clarified that it was also permissible to vote.
- iii) *Dispensations* – None

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3 Public Participation Session (3-2020/21)

There were no members of the public present however Cllr Jackson raised an issue on behalf of his near neighbour regarding 11 Westfield Gardens which he believed was a property owned by Central Bedfordshire Council. The previous occupants have now vacated the property but despite Cllr Jackson reporting the fact that rubbish to the rear of the property needed collecting a month ago, it had still not been removed, even though CBC have since been to cut the hedge at the property. This rubbish is causing a health hazard and the neighbour is very concerned. CBC Cllr Stock reported that she will look into the matter and get back to Cllr Jackson with her findings.

4 Minutes of previous Town Council Meeting (4-2020/21)

RESOLVED to:

Receive the minutes of the meeting of Sandy Town Council held on Monday 2 March 2020 and to approve them as a correct record of proceedings.

5 Minutes of Committees and Recommendations therein (5-2020/21)

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 Community, Services and Environment Committee held on 9 March 2020.
- ii) **RESOLVED** to receive and note the minutes of the Development Scrutiny Committee held on 9 March 2020 and 30 March 2020.
- iii) **RESOLVED** to receive and note the minutes of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee held on 23 March 2020. The Chairman of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee noted that there were a number of **Resolve to Recommend** items which had already been dealt with prior to the decision to suspend meetings as a result of COVID-19.

6 Reports from Central Bedfordshire Councillors (6-2020/21)

Members received verbal reports from the Central Bedfordshire Councillors. CBC Cllr Maudlin gave an update on the parking facility planning application for land adjacent to Stratford Road and the rail line. The application has been called in to DMC. The application will

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be considered by Town Councillors at a meeting of the DS Committee on 13th July 2020.

Cllr Stock gave an update on the grants awarded to each Councillor, which was £2,000 but all three Councillors have been given an additional grant allowance of £1,000 each for Covid-19 specific projects. If Members have any specific ideas of how to spend this, please let a CBC Cllr know.

The Winchester Road project was put on hold temporarily with CBC's Paul Salmon who was looking at the change of use of the planters etc, being redeployed due to Covid-19. This is now once again underway and when ready, an application will be submitted and a letter to residents will be sent out.

There have been 18 Highways projects completed or due to be completed in the area and Cllr Stock will forward the list to the Clerk to circulate.

Cllr Stock gave a Covid-19 update on grants awarded and work carried out to help residents.

The planning application for 107-109 High Street has been called in to DMC and there is a concern over the size of the annex and access.

The Covid situation has highlighted the problems with the Sunderland Road area which is turning into a speedway and Ian Dalgarno and Paul Salmon will be consulted to see how to tackle this. Cllr Stock added that there has now been a proposal for a zebra crossing outside St Swithun's School and on Tuesday 14th July, will be coming to Traffic Management. Cllr Ford added that they are waiting for clarification and acceptance of a petition with 495 signatures on it.

A Member commented that in the Biggleswade Chronicle, areas of housing growth for Sandy and Tempsford have been removed from the Local Plan. Cllr Stock explained that Tempsford is part of the future growth plan, so it was removed.

A Member enquired if there were any updates on when the A1 cameras would become operational. Cllr Stock said this is a police matter and so she will call the camera team, with the Clerk also chasing this up.

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A Member asked why the car park proposal had been called in to DMC as it has not been discussed yet. CBC Cllr Maudlin replied that in light of the parking issues in Sandy, it has been called in to ensure Members get an opportunity to consider the application. It was added that regarding traffic management issues, Bedford Road and the High Street has also seen problems with speeding.

A Member asked about Sandye Place Academy and its grounds and how this will progress, and in regard to the future of Sandy Secondary school and the education in the town. Cllr Stock replied that Assets continued working on plans and there is still an ongoing plan to look at Sandy Secondary school, nothing is agreed but it is coming to cabinet in two weeks' time and an update will then be provided. Cllr Ford added that he shared concerns that the project would halt but this is not the case and it has carried on. James Jamieson has been pushing the issue with the Secretary of State for Education to release SPA to CBC.

In regards to using SPA to support schools during the pandemic, Cllr Stock said that guidance is changing and on-going, but schools will be back to normal in September and they do have the capacity and SPA is not an ideal site, has no furniture and the site needs to be kept secure. Much work has been carried out with safety assessments within schools and it would be too time-consuming to consider SPA.

The Mayor thanked CBC Cllrs for keeping the pressure up especially regarding SPA and keeping discussions going.

7 Annual Meeting of Council (7-2020/21)

Members considered whether to hold the next Annual Town Council Meeting in May 2021, with the positions of Mayor, Deputy Mayor, committee membership, Chairmanship and representatives on outside bodies remaining unchanged, or to hold the meeting at an earlier time virtually or at a date when the Council can meet in person.

It was proposed seconded and **RESOLVED** to hold the next Annual Town Council Meeting next May, with all positions and memberships on committees and bodies remaining unchanged.

The Council would return to its usual calendar of meetings from 29th June, meeting virtually until guidance allowed otherwise.

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8 Planning Application (8–2020/21)

The following applications submitted for comment by Central Bedfordshire Council were reviewed and comments agreed.

09.06.20	CB/20/01789/FULL 16 Osprey Close Sandy SG19 2TW	Proposed extension to the existing single garage forming part of a garage block. Resolved: to make no objection to this application providing that the recommendation of the traffic and planning officers are adhered to.
09.06.20	CB/20/01560/FULL 7 Cherrycroft Sandy SG19 1BD	Front ground extension with new pitched roof. Resolved: to make no objection to this application.

9 2019-20 Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) (9–2020/21)

i) Members received and noted the Internal Auditors year-end report, together with the completed Annual Internal Audit Report 2019-20 of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return Part 3. It was commented that this was a very complimentary report. There was one matter relating to petty cash noted up by the Auditor, who confirmed that it was not an issue of concern. The Clerk has requested that the accountant update the software to reflect the true value of petty cash left over each month on in the system, not just the excel sheet.

It was Proposed, Seconded and **RESOLVED** to record that this is an excellent report and to convey thanks to the Clerk and staff for their work.

ii) Members checked the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) of the 2019-2020 Annual Governance & Accountability Return Part 3. Members confirmed and approved each statement and it was Proposed, Seconded and **RESOLVED** that the Clerk – being the Responsible Finance Officer, and the Chairman, sign the statement.

10 2019-20 Accounting Statement (Section 2) (10–2020/21)

Cllr Osborne spoke first as Chair of the PF&R committee about Agenda Items 10 and 11 which would in normal circumstances, go to the PF&R committee for consideration and these documents had

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been shared with Cllr Osborne in advance. Cllr Osborne went through the financial matters on the agenda.

i) Members received the year-end financial statements for 2019/20. The Chairman of the PF&R Committee took Members through each page of the statements.

It was proposed, Seconded and **RESOLVED** to approve the year-end financial statements for 2019/20.

ii) Members reviewed and approved the figures in the Accounting Statement (Section2) of the 2019-2020 Annual Governance & Accountability Return Part 3.

It was Proposed, Seconded and **RESOLVED** that the Clerk – being the Responsible Finance Officer, and the Mayor, sign the statement.

11 Financial Reports (11-2020/21)

i) Members received and considered a balance sheet and detailed financial report showing income and expenditure against the revenue budget for May 2020. It should be noted that in the Agenda, it states 'the revenue budget for April 2020', but should in fact be 'May 2020'. Cllr Osborne talked through the report page by page. The Clerk and the Admin Team Leader will be following up on the water rates and electricity charges.

It was Proposed, Seconded and **RESOLVED** to approve the balance sheet and detailed financial report showing income and expenditure against the revenue budget for May 2020.

ii) Members received a budget overview report to 31 May 2020 and Members Proposed, Seconded and **RESOLVED** to approve the report.

iii) Members scrutinised a schedule of payments made since the previous meeting. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Schedule.

iv) It was **RESOLVED** that the Chair of PF&R check and approve the bank reconciliations and statements.

12 Grant Application (12-2020/21)

Members received and considered a grant application from the Need Project. Members commented that we are already aware as to how important the Need Project is within our community, but never more so than in the last few months, so the sooner the funding can be received by them, the better. It was Proposed, Seconded and **RESOLVED** to award the Need Project the sum of £1,000.

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Clerk/
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Team
Leader

Admin

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13 Outdoor Sports Section 106 Application (13-2020/20)

Members considered supporting a request to Section 106 funding for the purchase of some equipment required by the Sandy Cricket Club.

Cllr Pettitt left the meeting for this item.

A Member stated that he has no problem with the application and feels that this should be funded, therefore supports a Section 106 application for the purchase of this equipment which is appropriate. Another Member echoed that a section 106 application for the costs of the equipment was appropriate if funds are available. The Clerk confirmed they were.

Members queried who would own the equipment. The Clerk confirmed that the application could be from the club with Council support and in such a case they would purchase and own the equipment. Alternatively, the Council could apply to receive the grant and make the purchase, in which case the equipment would be STC's asset.

The Clerk said that the revenue budget for maintenance of SCC equipment, which is in part managed by the cricket club who review what they spend is historically underspent so maintenance costs for this equipment could be supported in the existing revenue budget. The Clerk reminded Members that the Section 106 application may get rejected.

It was Proposed, Seconded and **RESOLVED** that the Council apply for Section 106 funding for the purchase of a Pro Roller Mower as required by the Sandy Cricket Club. That the mower be an asset of Sandy Town Council.

Town Clerk

14 Lease Renewal (14-2020/21)

i) Members received and considered signing of a renewed lease with the SSLA for the land on which the all-weather pitch is located. The content of the lease has been modernised, with no automatic assumption to renew in 2045. The SSLA are in agreement that the lease is satisfactory in addition to the new plan.

A Member commented that the maps on pages 71 and 72 were quite small and not very clear and asked if the extension of the all-weather pitch to allow the stands to be put on that side is reflected on those plans. It was stated that the consultants did draw up a plan which had been supplied to the solicitor. A Member added that one of the plans was very old and an updated version should be included with the lease.

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A Member commented that on page 56 of the document, a 'concrete garage' is referred to. This should say 'brick built' as shown on the map on page 72.

It was Proposed, Seconded and **RESOLVED** that the Council approve the signing of a renewed lease - subject to amending page 56 and the inclusion of an updated site plan.

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ii) Members received and considered signing of a renewed lease with the Reserve Forces & Cadets Association for East Anglia for the Sandy Army Cadets HQ.

It was Proposed, Seconded and **RESOLVED** that the Council approve the signing of a renewed lease with the Reserve Forces & Cadets Association for East Anglia for the Sandy Army Cadets HQ.

15 **Outdoor Gym Equipment (15-2020/21)**

Members received and considered a report and recommendation on a preferred contractor for the supply and installation of outdoor gym equipment.

It was Proposed, Seconded and **RESOLVED** that the Council approve Company C as the preferred contractor for the supply and installation of outdoor gym equipment. The final plan for the location and selected items of equipment will be agreed by the Community Services and Environment committee.

Town
Clerk

16 **Electric Car Charging Points (16-2020/21)**

Members considered the proposed location of electric charging points in the Council's car park - the Council having previously agreed in principle to this. Members expressed some concern about the loss of standard parking bays as there is pressure on the town's parking. However, these electric charging points are becoming more popular and there is no provision in Sandy following the removal of the point at the former Days Inn site.

A Member commented that it is realistic to suggest that having such charging points could bring people into the town and could then use the shops in Sandy while their car is charging, which he would welcome.

It was Proposed, Seconded and **RESOLVED** that the Council approve the proposed location of electric charging points in the Council's car

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park. A further complete proposal will come back for approval following more work by the company.

17 Consultations (17-2020/21)

Members considered the LGA's consultation on a new model Code of Conduct. Councillors commented that it had been well written but queried what the definition of 'an independent person' would be in terms of the internal resolutions procedure, whether this would be a member of the Council, or someone who is appointed from outside. It was agreed this could be brought forward as a comment – ie, to be more prescribed as to who can and cannot be used or classed as 'an independent person'.

RESOLVED that the Clerk respond to the consultation asking for a definition of who could act in the capacity of an 'independent person'.

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18 Reports from Councillors on Outside Bodies (18-2020/21)

Members received a verbal update from Cllr A Gibson on the work of Sandy – In it Together (SAIT). Cllr Gibson passed on a 'big thank you' on behalf of the Group to the Town Council for helping in its setting up at the end of March. Funding from the Mayor's charity has also been gratefully received to provide emergency cash for a hands-free terminal enabling a track and trace system for shopping and payments from vulnerable residents. Many people and organisations have donated to the group – the public, the Mayor, the church and funding from Ward Councillors. Funding was used initially to set up and produce leaflets. Now it is being used for food for food banks, food vouchers for children and families in need. There are currently sufficient funds to continue with what the group has been doing for the past few months.

The group are considering the next steps and how they will need to adapt to what could happen next as a result of this crisis. The group leaders are committed to doing that and continue to help the most vulnerable in our community.

Cllr Aldis wished to once again express his thanks to the group as he had done previously and also the support the Council has provided. Individuals have stepped up and gone above and beyond with shopping and befriending and has helped many to come through the crisis together.

The Mayor added his recognition that many people have come forward to help, support, volunteer and befriend in the community

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and it is impossible to thank everybody for the work that they have done during this time. It is very uplifting to see the community working together, and asked that his thanks on behalf of the town, be passed on to everyone involved in SAIT.

19 News Release (19-2020/21)

It was agreed to issue news releases on the following matters, particularly in light of the response to the current pandemic – not least work undertaken within the community as discussed above;

- The Council holding its first successful Full Council meeting via video conferencing.
- The postponement of the Council's Annual Meeting with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and committee chairs remaining in their current positions and membership of committees staying as they are, until the Annual Meeting is held.
- The detailed report from CBC Councillors.
- CBC Cllrs pushing for decisions on leisure, education and the future of the Sandye Place Academy building and grounds.
- The approval of a £1,000 grant to be awarded to the Need Project.
- A complimentary internal audit report and agreed its annual governance and accounting statements, which will be submitted to the external auditor in July.
- Agreement of a preferred outdoor gym equipment contractor.
- Approval of two electric car charging points in the town centre car park.
- The leases being renewed with the SSLA for the land on which the all-weather pitch sits, and for the Sandy Army Cadets headquarters.

20 Chairman's Items (20-2020/21)

The Mayor wished to propose a vote of thanks for the Council staff's reaction to this Covid crisis - led by Chris our Town Clerk, our staff were working hard to ensure there weren't delays or lost momentum. Also during this time, time was found to help others. This was fully endorsed and seconded by the Deputy Mayor. The normal meeting cycle will now resume going forward, with the next meetings - Development Scrutiny and Community Services and Environment committees being held on Monday 13th July 2020. The vote was unanimous.

21 Date of Next Meeting (21-2020/21)

Monday 17th August 2020.

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