

Sandy Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Community Services and Environment Committee of Sandy Town Council held in the Council Chamber at 10, Cambridge Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire on Monday 4 February 2013 commencing at 7.30 pm.

Present: Cllrs N Aldis, J Ali, W Jackson (Chairman), A Maycock, M Runchman, and S Walsh

In attendance: Cllr M Pettitt and the Town Clerk

Absent: Cllrs K Lynch, C Osborne (designated substitute), M Scott, R Smith, S Sutton

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Lynch, Scott, and Sutton. Cllr Osborne, who had agreed to substitute for Cllr Scott, also sent apologies for absence due to a last minute emergency.

2 Declarations of interest and requests for dispensations

- i) Declarable Pecuniary Interests** Cllr Aldis declared a DPI in agenda item 7 as an allotment tenant
- ii) Personal Interests** None

3 Minutes of previous meeting

It was resolved to approve the minutes of the Community Services and Environment Committee held on Monday 10 December 2012 as a correct record of proceedings.

4 Sandy Market

A report from the Deputy Clerk had been circulated before the meeting and the Chairman gave an oral report on a meeting which had taken place that day between himself, the Deputy Town Clerk and the Chairman of the Town Team (TT). The TT wanted to increase the number of stalls at the Farmers Market and planned to produce flyers promoting this. The Chairman of the TT had been advised that any leaflets or flyers promoting the Farmers Market must include the Town Council contact details as STC would be retaining responsibility for management and supervision of the Farmers Market. The TT also wished to hold a Continental Market on the second Saturday of each month and a "Have a go" market on the third Saturday of each month.

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A wide ranging discussion followed and different views were expressed on the future of the Friday market, positioning of the market, signage, the need for a salaried part-time Town Centre Manager and so on. The committee expressed its willingness to work with the TT through a joint working group or committee and explore new initiatives but agreed that it was unrealistic to hold a continental market and a "Have a go" market every month. The Committee had concerns about legislative compliance, costs and provision of additional markets when the existing markets were so poorly supported. It was felt further discussion with the TT was needed.

It was resolved to recommend to Town Council that Sandy Town Team be authorised to hold a specialist continental market in April 2013 on a Saturday and Sunday (date to be determined) to be located within the Town Centre car park.

5 Sandy Enhancement Group

Reports from the Town Clerk and Sandy Enhancement Group (SEG) had been circulated before the meeting and these were discussed in some detail.

It was resolved to recommend to Town Council that SEG should become an independent organisation taking over responsibility for its own bank account and administrative arrangements and retaining the funds currently allocated to it and unspent in the 2012/13 budget. (The Town Council would wish to retain an official representative on SEG.)

The reasons for this recommendation being:

- to reduce the impact on Town Council workload and costs
- to permit SEG to apply for grants not available to the Town Council
- to allow SEG to work in closer partnership with other community groups

6 Sandy Cemetery

A report from the Clerk had been circulated before the meeting and this was discussed.

Remapping

The Committee noted the work to be undertaken on remapping the remaining burial plots and agreed that this work was a priority.

Cremated Remains in Section K

Following discussion of problems relating to access to memorial tablets in Section K of the cemetery which is devoted to plots for interment of ashes **the committee resolved** to make no alteration to size of memorial tablet permitted within the existing burial regulations but **to**

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recommend to Town Council that this area of the cemetery is also remapped to permit fewer interments of ashes with a slightly wider gap between plots to permit improved access to memorials.

Grave goods

The committee spent time carefully considering issues arising out of the common practice of placing toys, solar lights, wind chimes, and other artifacts on graves within the cemetery. These items are not permitted within the current burial regulations. The reasons for the regulations are partly aesthetic and partly to facilitate appropriate maintenance of the plots and to reduce the risk of injury to groundstaff and visitors to the cemetery. It was recognised that opinions about what is appropriate in a cemetery are subjective and enforcement of the burial regulations is a difficult but necessary part of maintaining the cemetery to a high standard of appearance and safety for all sections of the community.

It was resolved that no amendments to the burial regulations would be recommended at the present time, the staff would be supported to enforce the regulations despite the difficulties and sensitivities involved and the booklet containing the burial regulations would be amended to include an explanation of why the regulations had been adopted. **It was resolved** that the Committee's commitment to supporting the staff in sensitive enforcement of the regulations would be reported to Town Council for endorsement.

Extension of Cemetery

The Committee discussed timescales and implications of developing the cemetery extension plans which had been outlined in the Clerk's report. It was noted that delays in developing the planned cemetery extension impacted on changes to the yard and depot. Also, dedicated parking for visitors to the cemetery was desirable; this could also not be achieved until the extension plans were implemented.

It was resolved to recommend to Town Council that the Clerk be authorised to pursue the next stage of the cemetery extension planning ie the random sampling of the allotment land for potential contaminants and an extended desktop study to allow the Council to obtain confirmation from the Environment Agency that the land is suitable for burials. The cost of this work was quoted at £1,500 in 2011.

7 Allotments

Cllr Aldis left the meeting for this item of business.

A report and recommendations from the Clerk had been circulated before the meeting and were considered by the Committee. It was noted that the Council had a statutory duty to provide allotments if

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there is demand (Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908). There is no legal obligation to act as a burial authority. The Clerk noted that the land currently used for allotments had originally been purchased for cemetery use. It seems the Council originally took the decision to use some of this site for allotments until a new site was found and/or capacity in the cemetery necessitated development. The Clerk was asked whether, given the duty to provide allotments, the use of the land for a cemetery extension could be subject to a legal challenge and the Clerk advised that a qualified legal opinion should be obtained. The practicality of providing existing tenants with a further 12 month extension to their tenancies was discussed. The Committee noted that available plots were not now being let until a decision had been reached about when the site would be closed.

It was resolved to ask the Town Clerk to obtain additional information including establishing how much of the cemetery extension preparation and planning could be done with allotment tenants still in situ meanwhile available plots were not to be let.

Cllr Maycock left the meeting as he was feeling unwell. Cllr Aldis returned to the meeting.

8 Review of Committee Arrangements

The Clerk apologized that staff input to this item had not been provided but the comments that staff had made to the questionnaire about previous committees applied to this committee; there were no other issues that were pertinent only to Community Services and Environment. The Committee agreed the following responses:

Name of Committee: Community Services & Environment Committee Chairman: Cllr Jackson	
1	Committee Size Committee size appropriate but system of substitutes not working effectively, better use of substitutes could be made if there was no requirement for 3 days' notice.
2	Terms of Reference/Delegated Decision making Role and Terms of reference clear, recommendations followed and some decisions made on behalf of TC, some overlap with PF&R committee on specific items eg scale of charges but some overlap inevitable. No sub-committees.
4	Frequency and timing of Meetings Cycle of meetings not working completely, too few committee

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	meetings to feed into Town Council effectively. If held on same day as DSC an earlier start time for DSC necessary.
5	Management of Meetings Same problems with room, public participation etc as noted by other committees. Nothing new
7	Any other issues No

9 Snow clearing report – Good Neighbour Scheme

Cllr Lynch did not attend the meeting and therefore a report on the Sandy Jubilee Task Force and the snow clearing work done in January 2013 was not available.

The Clerk reported on a number of issues which had arisen out of the use of temporary volunteers on several projects over recent months. The committee discussed the development of a Good Neighbour Scheme which could potentially provide a pool of regular community volunteers.

It was resolved to recommend to Town Council that the Town Clerk and Cllr Lynch should continue to work with BRCC to test the potential for a community driven Good Neighbour Scheme in Sandy by providing publicity and information etc. It was noted that such a scheme, if considered viable, could be promoted at the Annual Meeting in April 2013.

10 Communications

- i) It was noted that additional volunteers had come forward to fill the rota for councillor surgeries, the Clerk was asked to write to all those members who had not yet volunteered.
- ii) The Clerk reported that the website was available for preview though not fully complete. An additional report would follow at Town Council on 11 February 2013.
- iii) The Committee discussed last year's arrangements for production of the Annual Report of Council and **it was resolved** to produce the newsletter internally in similar format for the year 2012/13. The Committee noted the benefit of moving the Annual Town Meeting later in the year and **resolved to recommend** to Town Council that the Annual Town Meeting for 2014 should be held in May.