

Sandy Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
Thursday 19 August 2021 Held at Sandy Town Council Chamber
Meeting Minutes

Present: Nigel Aldis, Richard Barlow, Anne Elliott-Flockhart, Amanda Gibson (Chair), Arnold Gilpin, Joanna Hewitt, Ruth Lock and Anne Ramsay.

Joanna Hewitt sent apologies as she would be late.

The Chair informed the group that due to work commitments Gary Wearing has had to leave the group, however he would support the group as a resident of Sandy.

Apologies: Robert Baker, Tim Gardiner and Chris Patterson.

1. Review and approve the minutes from 15 July 2021

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved as a correct record.

2. 22 August Event Preparation

The market starts at 10am. The Chair had sent a revised schedule for manning the market stall. Members are welcome to come earlier or stay longer than their allotted time slot.

The Chair and Joanna had collected the display from Barclays ready for the event, and the chair has arranged to borrow a gazebo from the Council.

3. Business Engagement Update

The business questionnaire has been launched via Linktree.

We still need a letter with the QR code. **Arnie** is happy to deliver to businesses on Sunderland Road, the **Chair** will deliver to High Street businesses and **Richard** will deliver to Co-part, Frontier, Sand Lane Industrial Estate and the care homes. **Arnie** will make a note of the businesses as a record for future use.

The **Chair** will liaise with **Joanna** and get the letter done by the end of next week.

We think we will need 150 copies. **Anne EF** will check if it's ok to print at the Council offices.

The deadline for responses will be the end of September.

4. Social Clubs and Community Groups Engagement Update

Members have contacted the following groups so far:

- Sandy Historical Research Group,
- Sandy Allotment Association,
- Sandy Horticultural Association, and
- Sandy Probus Club.
- The Pinnacle Newsletter
- The Kingfisher Players
- Sandy Guild
- The Rotary
- WI
- Sandy Carnival

The following clubs will be contacted during the coming month:

- Good Neighbours Group
- Good Neighbours Friendship Group
- Sandy History Society
- Sandy Enhancement Group
- Rotary
- Churches via The Pinnacle

The council list of community groups is incomplete, but we still need to contact the following:

- Hockey Club
- Football Clubs
- Other sports clubs
- Flower Club
- Twinning
- Sandy Youth Club & Youth Voice (Joanna)
- Sandy Astronomical Society
- School PTA groups

The **Chair** will liaise with **Joanna** and arrange a letter to community groups that we don't have personal contacts with. The letter should include the QR code and ask that the letter is circulated to members of their group. The letters need to be circulated as soon as possible with a deadline of the end of September for responses.

Sandy Upper School included a piece in their newsletter. **Anne EF** will circulate for members information.

A piece has also gone in Inside East Beds Magazine. This article can be used as the basis of email communications or a letter to community groups.

5. Initial Engagement Survey Analysis, Development of Vision & Aims

There was some discussion as to whether to wait until the deadline for the questionnaires before we start the analysis or whether to do some preliminary analysis.

It was suggested that 3 people go through the responses we've had so far to set up a template for the most popular topics. **Richard, Arnold** and **Nigel** volunteered to have a look at this.

The **Chair** will talk to **Tim** and **Rob** to see how the online and manual spreadsheets can be merged to ensure that all the current data is available and how further responses can be added to it without creating double work. We need to start from the same set of data and record our methodology as this is part of our evidence gathering and will be scrutinised. We agreed no analysis to start until this has been clarified.

The **Chair** will ask BRCC how much detail we need to go into for analysis. For example, do we need to know how many 16-year-olds want a skatepark or just how many people want a skatepark?

The business survey will be analysed separately.

6. Housing Survey

The Chair had contacted BRCC for a quote for a Housing Needs survey.

The quote was £5297.40 + VAT. Which includes

- Questionnaire – delivered to every house in Sandy with a freepost envelope for returning
- Online questionnaire
- Analysing data
- Report – which can be used in the Neighbourhood Plan

Currently Sandy has no allocation for housing in Central Bedfordshire Council's Local Plan. There were very few mentions of housing in the questionnaire responses we have received so far, but neither are there any questions specifically about housing.

CBC data shows that there are a lot of people who would like social housing in Sandy. The Estate Agents are also reporting that there is little available housing stock in Sandy.

So, although there is no allocation it was felt that we should still do a Housing Needs survey as the current obstacles to housing in Sandy may change in the future.

A member asked if we needed to have a specific percentage response for the housing needs survey to count. The **Chair** will check with BRCC but she didn't think we did.

A member thought that the quote was high and wondered if we could do our own. Another member wondered if it would count for the NP if we did do our own. Someone else noted that there are grants available from Locality and that members of the group don't necessarily have the time or the expertise to carry out these surveys.

The Chair noted that the Locality grant is up to £9000 for the entirety of the plan but Sandy Town Council has also allocated funds, there are also additional specific technical grants available If we decide to allocate land for housing or create specific design codes.

Nigel will do some research into conducting our own housing needs survey and will look for 2/3 other companies to give quotes for undertaking the survey on our behalf.

7. Green Infrastructure Plan Update

BRCC have quoted £3300 +VAT to undertake a Green Infrastructure Survey. This includes:

- Running workshops
- Mapping
- Writing reports
- Assessments that need to be done to designate local spaces

It was felt that this is a particular important piece of work that needs to be done.

BRCC can build on the existing Green Infrastructure plan, Sandy Town Council's Environmental Plan and any responses we've received so far which almost all mention green spaces as a priority.

We will need to target local groups that have an active interest in this area to be involved. **Nigel** will let Anne EF have details for hydro electric companies who work in the area.

The **Chair** will start the process. **Anne R** will take the lead for this workstream and will liaise with BRCC on this once we have an agreement in place.

8. Structure of Plan / Timeline Review

Nigel had looked through some other plans and made a table for comparison, with some suggestions for what could be included in our

plan. A copy of this document was circulated at the meeting and the **Chair** will put a copy on Dropbox.

It was suggested that everyone takes a look at this document ahead of the next meeting. Then we can decide which sections can be started.

Members agreed with Chris' suggestion that three months are added to the timeline as we are making slower progress than we had anticipated.

It was felt we needed to be more disciplined with actions, who and an expected deadline to be added to minutes.

9. Communications Strategy

Anne EF talked the group through her ideas for a communications strategy.

- Social Media - we need to be scheduling regular posts on our social media accounts. We have a number of posters that we haven't used yet that can be shared.
- Newsletters /Press Releases – we should be doing a brief newsletter/press release after each meeting that can be shared on social media, the website, and sent to people who have given us their emails to be updated.
- Website – we don't want to overcrowd the website but we do need to decide what needs to be included on it. We should have links to the current questionnaires or the linktree link should be easy to follow with a button.
- Other – we need to create a database of emails that we have been given for people who would like to stay updated about our progress, this needs to be protected to comply with GDPR, any direct contact should be through one mailbox.

The **Chair** will do a press release after our event on Sunday. She will also talk to **Rob** and **Tim** about being on the communications working group with herself and **Joanna**.

10. AOB

The Chair gave an update on the grant application we made for the High Street & Social Infrastructure Fund. We made it through to the second stage which was a phone call to discuss the application, which had taken place that day.

There was a huge response so only those that were relevant went through to the second stage. Our application is definitely relevant. Locality will be making a recommendation on valid plans to MHLGC who will be making the final decision and we should expect to hear if we've been successful by the by the end of October. There are other grant packages that we

may be able to apply for if we are unsuccessful that could support our proposals.

11. Next meeting 16 September 2021 at 7pm at STC