

# Sandy Town Council

**Minutes of the meeting of Sandy Town Council held in the Council Chamber at 10 Cambridge Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2023 7.30pm**

**Present:** Cllrs N Aldis, P Blaine, J Hewitt, R Lacey, A Lock, R Lock, C Osborne, M Pettitt (Chair), M Scott, P Sharman, S Sutton, and N Thompson.

**Absent:** Cllrs J Ivanciu-Wilkinson and L Ivanciu-Wilkinson

**In attendance:** Mrs. N Sewell (Clerk), Ward Councillor Ford, Mr. Ian Reed (Deputy Clerk), Mr. Stephen Mooring, Mr. John Bray President of the Allotment Association and two members of the public.

*The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming Cllr Thompson back from an extended leave of absence.*

## **Action**

### **1 Apologies for Absence (182–2022/2023)**

Admin

Apologies were received from Cllrs J Ivanciu-Wilkinson and L Ivanciu-Wilkinson and Ward Councillors Maudlin and Stock.

### **2 Declaration of Interest and requests for dispensations number (183 - 2022/2023)**

Admin

- i) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests – None*
- ii) Non Pecuniary Interests – Cllr Osborne declared an interest to item 8 as his wife is the Chair of Governors at St Swithuns School.*
- iii) Dispensations – None*

### **3 Public Participation Session (184 - 2022/2023)**

Cllr Thompson submitted a question from a resident not present, raising concerns about the amount of antisocial behaviour and obvious drug related activity taking place at Fallowfield Park. He reported the resident had spoken to the PCSO about the matter and asked what the Town Council was doing to help reduce drug use.

Cllr Hewitt commented that she meets regularly with the Safer Central Team and would raise the matter with them. Cllr Thompson agreed to email the relevant details to Cllr Hewitt to facilitate this.

Mr John Bray, president of the Allotment Association stated that

his primary aim for attending the meeting was to pose questions to CBC Councillors, and Ward Councillor Maudlin in particular. She had informed him before the meeting that she would not be present.

Town Clerk

He commented that in the minutes of Town Council meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> December Sandy Town Council said it was keen to see the planting [of the community woodland at Beeston] commence if adequate provision of land is made available for allotments. He added that while the planting of the Community Orchard had commenced no provision for allotments had yet been forthcoming.

He reported having spoken to Cllr Maudlin at the Sandy Conservative Club AGM the previous Friday about the change of commitment from the Beeston Woodland Project, which had initially provisioned land for allotments at the site and his concerns that this was now not to be offered to the Town Council. She had requested he forward the email he'd sent to her on the matter on to Mr. Stephen Mooring. He reported Cllr Maudlin had commented that while fields 1 & 2 of the Beeston Community Woodland plan are now well underway with planting, that field 3 could still possibly be used for allotments. He added that he had also spoken with Richard Fuller MP at the AGM, having cc-ed him into the original email sent to Cllr Maudlin and requested Mr. Fuller read the email over the weekend. Mr. Fuller's response had been to confirm that contacting CBC councillors on the issue was the correct course of action.

Mr. Bray added that if answers were slow in coming forward, he would be requesting an appointment at Mr. Fuller's surgery on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> of March 2023 at Sandy Conservative Club.

**4 Minutes of previous Town Council Meeting (185 - 2022/2023)**

Admin

**RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the previous meeting of Sandy Town Council held on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023 and to approve them as a correct record of proceedings.

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## 5 **Minutes of Committees and recommendations therein - (186-2022/2023)**

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 the meeting of Development Scrutiny Committee held on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

ii) **RESOLVED** to note the minutes of the meeting of Policy, Finance & Resources Committee held on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2023 and approve the following recommendations:

- To adopt the amended Financial Risk Assessment (item 17).

iii) **RESOLVED** to note the minutes of meeting of Community Services and Environment Committee held on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2023 and approve the following recommendations:

- a) That the Council proceeds with the picnic based Big Lunch event to be held at Sandye Place on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2023.
- b) Cllr Sutton reported that the hire of a big screen was no longer required. Due to lack of funding this element of the celebrations had been taken out of the equation.
- c) Spending from Council funds on the Coronation Event not to exceed £5,000.

## 6 **EV Charging Points (187-2022/2023)**

Due to personal circumstances Tom Price, Senior Sustainable Transport Officer was not able to attend the meeting and the EV Charging Point discussion was deferred to the next meeting of Community, Services and Environment Committee to be held on 27<sup>th</sup> March.

Clerk

## 7 **New Woodland Beeston update (188-2022/2023)**

Members received a verbal update from Stephen Mooring, Head of Sustainability at CBC regarding the new Community Woodland at Beeston.

He reported that tree planting in fields 1 and 2 was nearly completed and should be finished by the end of the week. This would result in 33,000 trees in total being planted with an additional 100 fruit trees. He added that 96 of these fruit trees had already been planted by BRCC as part of their "green social prescribing" programme, which helps provide opportunities for environmental volunteering as a way of supporting those in need of health support (both mental and physical).

The community planting day had taken place the previous Saturday, when 15 people, including Cllr Aldis, had turned up to help with the planting.

Mr. Mooring thanked Councillors for providing suggestions for the names of the new woodlands which were being considered.

He reported that while it had originally been hoped that field 2 would accommodate an allotment site, archaeological investigation there had now ruled this option out.

Mr. Mooring reported the following issues regarding the archaeology on site:

- Advice had come from the Archaeology manager at CBC who worked with FOMV to interpret the nature of the archaeology on site that informed the shape and scheme of the woodland design. Given the history of Sandy, it was unlikely to be a surprise that archaeology might be a constraint.
- Crop marks and the geophysical survey show what is very likely to be archaeology in the area.
- It's not clear whether the allotments will require planning, however the supporting infrastructure, such as car park, drainage, trackways, security fencing will.
- A planning application will trigger both further archaeological surveys and likely result in a proper ground investigation.
- Whilst allotments may not be as destructive to archaeological remains as something like a housing development, it is entirely possible for the repeated action of digging to disturb archaeological deposits.
- Sandy Town Council would be aware of issues with archaeological issues at allotment sites as it was the reporting of archaeological material from the allotment holders at what is now the cemetery extension on Stratford Road that the Team were interested in the site in the first place.
- In rural areas, archaeological deposits can be anywhere between about 250mm and 800mm below the present ground surface, this means that even a spade depth excavation could potentially disturb remains.
- The ground works needed for the parking, provision of services and erection of structures including fences would have a detrimental impact.
- Further to this the area is also constrained by a gas pipeline running across it, which would significantly limit what goes where.
- The entrance on to Vinegar Hill would require Highways

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improvements/modifications given the speed of the road.

Mr. Mooring stated he was still happy to continue to explore alternative sites for allotments with the Town Council and requested STC supply the following information to facilitate that:

- A full specification for the allotment site including number of allotments, plot size, details of pathways and other provisions such as parking facilities and security measures.

Members expressed their disappointment that despite pursuing different options for allotment sites over the years there always seemed to be obstacles in the way that prevented the Town Council from being able to take things forward.

Cllr Osborne urged the new Town Council when it is formed in May to make allotments a top priority in the next four years.

## 8 **Zebra Crossing Consultation (189-2022/2023)**

Members received details from CBC regarding the proposed site for a zebra crossing on the High Street.

**RESOLVED** to support the planned site for the crossing and urge CBC to get on and complete the project with no further delays.

## 9 **Reports from Central Bedfordshire Council (190-2022/2023)**

Members received and noted a report from Ward Councillor Simon Ford.

### Sandye Place

He reported that more than 100 comments from residents about Sandye Place and its future had been received by CBC and these had all been passed on to the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to include in their own research.

An inspection of Sandye Place and surveys had been undertaken and several trees would be felled as a result in March. He said that all Ward Councillors would continue to talk to Iain Berry Assistant Director of Assets about the future of the site. Initially CBC would be looking to demolish any buildings on site that are not listed but he confirmed that any changes to buildings on site would be subject to the usual planning requirements.

Cllr Osborne proposed that plans for Sandye Place be placed on the agenda for the next CS&E Committee meeting.

Cllr Hewitt added that funding had been applied for and agreed to enable the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to look at plans for the site and that any further discussion around this that the Town

Deputy  
Clerk

Admin

Deputy  
Clerk

Council had must be aligned with that work. Cllr Lacey supported the need for plans to be aligned.

### King's Coronation

Cllr Ford continued by saying that any residents wishing to hold street parties would need to apply for road closures by 20<sup>th</sup> March. STC agreed to publicise this.

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### SID

A double sided SID sign is to be installed on Sunderland Road on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> March which would be fully funded by CBC. Members were delighted by this development while being rather dumbfounded such a quick turnaround on this decision had been made with no prior communication with the Town Council particularly as STC had campaigned over a long period of time for a SID to be placed in this very location. Sandy Town Council had been turned down by CBC on numerous occasions due to the location not meeting the necessary requirements.

Cllr Ford said that new Rural Match Funding was available and asked the Town Council to pursue other suitable locations for further SIDs in the town. He had already requested one to be sited at Bedford Road.

### Fireworks

After several years where the Town had not hosted community fireworks Cllr Ford reported that Sandy Lions Football Club would be organising a Fireworks and Laser display for the community on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> October. The event would be held in the grounds of Sandy Secondary School and the organisers were working to keep the cost of tickets down.

### Antisocial Behaviour

Cllr Ford said he regretted reporting that there had been a high number of incidents of antisocial behaviour in the town, particularly around the town centre. He had been working with the local PC and PCSO to tackle this but one unfortunate result was the need to place a security guard at the library.

Some culprits had been identified through video doorbell footage, but this would be ongoing work he added.

## **10 Legal Costs (191-2022/2023)**

Members received a quote for additional legal costs from Woodfines Solicitors for ongoing work regarding Land Registry

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applications due to numerous unforeseen queries.

**RESOLVED** to discuss the matter during items 19 and 20 along with further legal fee quotes for related matters.

## 11 **Action List (192-2022/2023)**

Members received and noted updates to an action list on Full Council items.

### East West Rail Link

The next meeting of the EWR Co Sandy, Tempsford and St Neots Local Representatives Group (LRG) would be on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> March. Cllr Blaine to attend and report back.

### A1 Local Issues

Cllr Pettitt reported that he, along with Cllr Hewitt, and the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Biggleswade, had met with Richard Fuller MP on 28<sup>th</sup> January to discuss several matters including concerns over the A1. He added he had not written a report as there was nothing new to report.

Cllr Pettitt added that he and Cllr Hewitt had also had an opportunity to speak at another event to Richard Holden MP Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Transport and that concerns about the A1 were raised on this occasion to him also. Mr. Holden responded by saying he would take the matter up with Mr. Fuller.

## 12 **Grant Application (193-2022/2023)**

Members received a grant application from MAGPAS Air Ambulance for £500 towards costs for its helicopter.

**It was RESOLVED** to agree to pay £500 to MAGPAS Air Ambulance from the community grants budget.

## 13 **Correspondence (194-2022/2023)**

Members noted correspondence which had been circulated to them via email prior to the meeting.

## 14 **Reports from Councillors on Outside Bodies (195-2022/2023)**

i) Members received and noted a verbal report from Cllr Pettitt regarding the Sandy Sports and Leisure Association Committee. The Committee had met on the previous Tuesday, also attended

Clerk

by Cllr Scott. It was a routine meeting, and the minutes of that meeting would be circulated in due course.

ii) Members received and noted a verbal report from Cllr Pettitt on the Sandy Twinning Association. He reported plans were underway for their visit between 28<sup>th</sup> April and 1<sup>st</sup> May, with an Anniversary Dinner to be held on Sunday evening, 30 April being organised. Cllr Pettitt added he was unsure what the future of the Twinning Association would be as following the UK leaving the European Union, European Local Authorities were no longer subsidizing the costs for tours to people visiting the UK.

iii) Members received and noted the minutes from the AGM of Civilian Committee for 22 (Sandy) Squadron held on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2023. Cllr Sutton added that the Squadron continues to flourish, largely thanks to numerous online activities that had taken place over lock down keeping people engaged.

## **15 Sandy Sports and Leisure Association (196-2022/2023)**

As sole trustee to the Sandy Sports and Leisure Association Members received and noted the following required reports:

- i. The Annual Reports and Account for the 2022/23 as required by the Charities Commission.
- ii. The Independent Examiners Report on the Accounts

**It was RESOLVED** to approve The Annual Reports and Accounts for the 2022/23, which were duly signed.

**It was RESOLVED** to approve The Independent Examiners Report on the Accounts.

Both documents would now be lodged with the Charity Commission and would be available for public scrutiny on their website.

## **16 Member absenteeism (197-2022/2023)**

Members received a report from the Clerk regarding Member absence.

**It was RESOLVED** to note the report.

Cllr Thompson thanked members for their patience and grace and said it was a joy to be back. He added that he was now in a very different place than before and was continuing to recover and make progress following his accident.



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## 17 **Financial Risk Assessment (198 -2022/2023)**

Members received the updated annual Financial Risk Assessment as recommended by the PF&R Committee.

**It was RESOLVED** to adopt the updated version of the Financial Risk Assessment.

Town Clerk

## 18 **PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND THE PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** that in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and by reason of the confidential nature of the remainder of the business, the Press and the Public be excluded from the Meeting. **(199 -2022/2023)**

## 19 **Beeston Green Allotment Lease (200-2022/2023)**

This item was deferred to a future meeting as no lease had been forthcoming from CBC for review.

## 20 **First Registration Queries (201-2022/2023)**

Members received a report from the Town Clerk regarding queries that had been raised by the Land Registry on three plots of land owned by the Town Council:

- i. Bedford Road Recreation Park  
**It was RESOLVED** to take the solicitors suggested action forward and agree costs of £850+ VAT for the works.
- ii. Sandy Town Council High Street Car Park  
**It was RESOLVED** to continue this work with first registration for this site.
- iii. Land by Berwick Way and Skipton Close  
**It was RESOLVED** that the Town Council would like to take on ownership of the areas of land outlined in the plan on the following conditions:
  - There is no charge by Taylor Wimpey for the land
  - The council would still like the parcels marked A-G removed from the restrictions of the Open Spaces Act. Although the current council has no plans to develop the area, they do not want to take that ability away for any future council.
  - Taylor Wimpey has not been maintaining the land and as such the area has become severely overgrown. Sandy Town Council would require Taylor Wimpey to rectify this and bring the areas up to a satisfactory standard - satisfactory to the Town Council - before it would take possession of the land.

Clerk

**21 Staffing Matters (202-2022/2023)**

Members received an update from the Clerk regarding Financial Procedures.

**It was RESOLVED** to note the report, adopt the suggested changes to the Financial Regulations and undertake all the recommended actions.

**22 PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 RE-ADMITTANCE OF THE PRESS AND THE PUBLIC RESOLVED** that the confidential business having been concluded, the Press and Public be re-admitted to the meeting.  
**(203 - 2022/2023)**

**23 Sandy Town Council and SSLA Lease Amendment (204-2022/2023)**

Members received and considered a proposed amendment to Sandy Sports and Leisure Association's Lease with Sandy Town Council which was renewed and took effect on 20th July 2020.

**It was RESOLVED** to agree to the amendment, instruct our solicitors to take the matter forward and request that this work be undertaken at no cost to the Town Council.

**24 Mayoral Engagements (205 -2022/2023)**

Members noted the engagements undertaken by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

The Mayor thanked all who had been involved in organising the Civic Service particularly the Deputy Clerk. He also thanked Members and staff who had attended the event.

He added that despite listing the tree planting event on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> March and noting it was due to continue until 4pm when he arrived on site at 2pm he found work had been completed and no one else remained on site.

**25 News/Press Release (206 -2022/2023)**

- Civic Service
- Support for the Zebra Crossing
- Woodland Planting and a request for CBC to continue to commit to looking to provide land for allotments.

**26 Chairman's Items (207- 2022/2023)**

The Mayor reminded Members of the upcoming nomination period for those wishing to stand for Council again in May.

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**Date of the next meeting:** 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023

The Annual Town Meeting will be held on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2023 in the Theatre Hall at Sandy Secondary School starting at 7pm.

The meeting closed at: 21:48