

Sandy Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee of Sandy Town Council which was held in the Council Chamber at 10 Cambridge Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire on Monday 13 February 2017 commencing at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllrs P N Aldis, T Cole, W Jackson, C Osborne, M Pettitt, M Scott (Chairman) and P Sharman.

In attendance: Cllrs T Knagg, J Sparrow and Mr C Robson (Town Clerk)

Actions

1 Apologies for absence (94-2016/17)

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs P Blaine, M Hill, D Sharman and CBC Cllr Stock.

2 Declarations of interest (95-2016/17)

- i) Declarable pecuniary interests – None
- ii) Non pecuniary interests – None

3 Public Participation Session (96-2016/17)

There were no questions received from members of the public.

4 Minutes of previous meeting (97-2016/17)

RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee held on 9 January 2017 and to approve them as a correct record of proceedings subject to the amendment that Cllr W Jackson was present at the meeting.

5 Financial Reports (98-2016/17)

- i) A balance sheet and detailed financial report showing income and expenditure against the revenue budget for the year to 31st December 2016 had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

Members scrutinised the financial report and made the following comments:

A Member noted that the Council did not have a great deal in reserves considering the projects it will be looking to complete in the coming couple of years. Another Member asked how the Council was going to fund the Cemetery development considering the low level of reserves available for projects. It was clarified that the Council had previously agreed that the costs of the cemetery development would be taken as a loan from the Fallowfield Reserves and paid back each year at a rate of 4%.

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A Member queried an income of £500 under the Town Centre (408 1309). The Clerk informed Members that this was received from CBC as part of the Market Town Match Fund to cover the costs of Town Centre Bench Mark Training.

A Member queried the over spend on the xmas light switch on event. The Clerk informed Members that part of the expenditure would be reallocated to the illuminations line to correct a miscode. This would bring the event expenditure down. The Member queried the shortfall in income, the Clerk confirmed it was unlikely the income would increase much further. It was confirmed that a detailed breakdown of expenditure on the event would come back to the committee with a report on the event itself.

Town Clerk

The Clerk informed Members that invoices for fencing work in the Riddy and the annual Riddy management fee had now been received.

RESOLVED to note and approve the report.

ii) Members received and reviewed a budget overview report.

Cost Centre 500 - A Member noted that the Council had already agreed that a budget transfer from the Fallowfield reserves into the budget should go ahead each year. This was to cover costs associated with maintaining Fallowfield. This transfer would need to be made again this year.

RESOLVED to note the report.

iii) Members scrutinised a schedule of payments made since the previous meeting.

A member queried a large expenditure for 'Seavolution Conditioner'. The Clerk informed Members that this was related to the Bowls Club but that the amount was incorrectly invoiced with a large over charge. The Council has since received a credit of £800 + VAT to rectify which will show up in the January accounts.

A Member queried a £15 refund for a stall at the Christmas Light Switch on Event. The policy was that refunds would not be given. In this instance a stall holder had sent a cheque for £30 asking for two stalls, as only one stall could be allocated to them they were refunded the cost of a second stall.

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RESOLVED to approve the schedule of payments.

iv) Bank reconciliations and statements.

RESOLVED that Cllr Scott scrutinise the bank reconciliations and statements and sign these as approved at the end of the meeting.

Cllr Scott

6 Action List (99-2016/17)

The Town Clerk presented the Action List which identifies actions from previous meetings and their status.

The Clerk informed Members that tender submissions would be brought to the next committee meeting for both a new Streetlight contractor and a photocopier/printer contract.

Admin

The Clerk informed Members that he had held a meeting with CBC's Contract Manager to discuss the Jenkins Pavilion contract and discuss concerns over the management of the pavilion. The Clerk had been presented with an amended contract following the Town Council's submitted comments. The Clerk will review the draft contract with Cllrs Scott, Pettitt and Hill. CBC would like to get a rolling contract signed and in place with STC by April 2017.

Town Clerk

7 Earmarked Reserves (100-2016/17)

Members received a report from the Town Clerk on allocating Earmarked Reserved funds for the purpose of supporting potential election costs.

RESOLVED that the Council commit £6,000 of Earmarked Reserves to 'Earmarked Election Costs' and that underspend of £3,000 in the 'Election' budget for the current financial year is rolled into 'Earmarked Election Costs' at the end of the financial year.

8 Scale of Charges (101 -2016/17)

Members received a report and budget papers from the Town Clerk.

The report recommended an RPI increase (1.2%) for interment costs and cremated remains.

It was proposed and seconded that the recommendation in the report be resolved.

It was proposed and seconded that the recommended costs be rounded to the nearest pound.

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RESOLVED that the 2017/18 fee for the Interment of a body of a person whose age at the time of death exceeds 12 year be set at £430. This represents an increase of 1.2%.

RESOLVED that the 2017/18 fee for Interment of cremated remains be set £127. This represents an increase of 1.2%.

9 Car Park Line Marking (102 -2016/17)

- i) *To consider a request from Kings Road Surgery to change car park line markings to support the relocation of the surgery to Shannon Court.*

Members received a report from the Clerk summarising the applicant's requested changes to the car park, which if approved would involve remarking areas of the car park and a small reduction in the number of available standard spaces.

The Clerk informed Members that the Council had received correspondence from a member of the public outlining their concerns about the proposed changes. Members confirmed they had received and read the correspondence.

Members comments included the following:

With the health service provision in this town at a critical level the Council needs to support the applicant and its relocation and expansion. There is a lot of pressure on the surgery and the proposed relocation will go some way to helping relieve that pressure and satisfying some of the demand placed upon health care in the town. The Council has supported the principle of the surgery moving for some time and welcomed the relocation in October 2015.

The relocation of the surgery could be good for the town centre and trade. It will bring more people into the centre and increase the turnover in the car park due to increased short term parking.

Members expressed concern that the NHS was unable to cover the cost of the proposed changes and as a result the cost would fall on the tax payer. The majority of Members did not feel this was appropriate.

A Member commented that a doctor's surgery is vastly different to other businesses and that the majority of its users will see it as a public service, not a for-profit business.

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A Member stated that as the Council has a policy to charge for barrier pass cards (required for early morning parking) there would be some income generated by cards purchased for the surgery which could offset the costs of any car park alterations.

Members commented that the changes proposed were needed to support the applicant in its relocation and ensure its success for the community, but that the applicant should cover the costs involved not the tax payer.

A Member commented that he could not support a proposal where the applicant was asked to pay for the work. The applicant is a doctors' surgery and is considered a vital service.

Members addressed each of the proposed changes in turn:

- Emergency Vehicle (Ambulance bay)

That the disabled bay closest to the entrance to Shannon Court be converted into an ambulance bay.

It was noted that not all ambulance call outs are classed as emergency and that some will be of a more routine nature. It was noted that the surgery would need a spot to ensure an ambulance could park if it was collecting patients.

Proposed, Seconded and **RESOLVED to RECOMMEND** that a disabled bay be converted into an emergency vehicle (ambulance) bay.

Town Clerk

- Disabled Bays and Reserved Parking for Doctors

To increase the number of disabled bays from 3 to 5 and to reserve 2 to 4 parking bays for doctors use only.

A Member commented that there was a need for doctors to have some spaces available, as they may be called out and need to ensure they can reach their cars quickly.

A surgery is different to other businesses in the town and Members felt two reserved bays in this special case are justified.

It was noted that the disabled bays were for general use and not for surgery patients only. It was felt necessary that there should be an increase in the number of disabled bays.

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The Clerk informed members that the measurements of the current row of parking including the existing 3 disabled bays could be converted to 1 ambulance bay, 4 disabled bays and two standard bays.

It was Proposed, Seconded and **RESOLVED to RECOMMEND** that the current row of 3 disabled bays and 6 standards bays is converted into 1 ambulance bay, 4 disabled bays and 2 reserved doctor's spaces.

Town Clerk

It was Proposed, Seconded and **RESOLVED to RECOMMEND** that the cost of the work be shared 50/50 between the surgery and the Town Council.

Town Clerk

- Cross Hatch Marking

To cross hatch the area outside the entrance to Shannon court to stop cars using the area for drop offs.

Members did not feel that there was a need for the proposed cross hatching. Members commented that if the applicant felt it was needed the Council should approve the work but the applicant would need to cover the costs involved.

Proposed, Seconded and **RESOLVED to RECOMMEND** that the Council approve the Cross Hatch marking on the condition the applicant cover the cost of the work.

Town Clerk

ii) Line Marking Request from Ivel Funeral Services

Members received a request from Ivel Funeral Services, which is in the promenade of shops within the car park.

- Members discussed the request for two parking places to be reserved for "Ivel Funeral Service".

Members commented as follows:

Although sympathetic to this request bearing in mind the nature of this business granting the request would result in further requests by other businesses and if all were granted an overall reduction in the number of spaces available for the public to use would obviously result.

RESOLVED to decline the request for two reserved parking bays to be used by the applicant's business.

Town Clerk

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- Members discussed the request for cross hatching and 'Keep Clear' wording to be placed outside the applicant's side entrance.

Members commented that it must be clear that if cross hatching is placed at the requested area it is not to be used as parking by the business.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND the approval of cross hatching and 'Keep Clear' markings be painted in the area outside Ivel Funeral Services side entrance, subject to the applicant paying for the work to be carried out and that the area will not be used by the business to park vehicles.

Town Clerk

10 Conversion to LED Street Lights (103 -2016/17)

Members received and considered a report from the Town Clerk on the cost of converting the Town Council's stock of street lights to LED. It was noted that the Council had three types of street light columns and that each type would cost a different amount to convert.

Members comments included the following:

Members queried the quality of light. It was noted that the light was brighter and clearer, but the spread of LED lanterns was more limited than the current. This creates patches of darkness between the light columns. A Member commented that the new LED lighting she had seen did create a good spread of light over the area situated.

A Member asked what the advantages of converting to LED were. The costs to convert all the street lights would be large and the potential saving would not balance this out. At present the Council has an electricity bill of approx. £5,000. Led lighting could result in an 80% saving. If all street lights were converted it could potentially save £4,000 per year and take 25 years to recoup the outlay costs of converting.

It was noted that LED lanterns will also reduce maintenance costs due to the extended length of life of bulbs.

A Member commented that conventional lights are not going to always be available and that at some point the Council will need to convert to LED. It will be more prudent to do this on a gradual basis over the long term.

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A Member commented that replacing the current lights with LED lanterns as they fail would be the most cost effective and sensible approach, coupled with a programme of an agreed number of conversions for the financial year 2018/19.

A Member commented that it would be better to agree a financial limit rather than specific number of streetlights.

It was proposed and seconded that the Council initially replace failing sox lights with LED lanterns on an ongoing light by light basis.

It was proposed and seconded that an amount of £10,000 be committed to LED street light conversion in the financial year 2018/19.

RESOLVED that the Council replace failing street lights with LED replacements as and when individual lights fail and that a programme of LED street light conversion is agreed from the 2018/19 financial year with a limit of £10,000 per annum.

Town Clerk

A Member noted that there were 5 or 6 redundant columns at the Sunderland Road Recreation Ground and asked that the street light contractor provide costs for removing these.

Admin

11 War Memorial Work (104-2016/17)

Members received a report from the Town Clerk and scheduling work to be carried out on the War Memorial.

RESOLVED that refurbishment work to the War Memorial be carried out in May/June 2017 and that the cost of the work not covered by the grant received from the War Memorial Trust be funded from the Rolling Capital Fund.

Town Clerk

A Member asked that disabled access be considered in addition to the refurbishment works to the Memorial and that a ramp and hand rail be installed. Members agreed that this was a good idea but had some concerns as to whether it would be possible to install a ramp that met required regulations due to the location and size of the Memorial. It was also noted that as the Memorial was listed there may be rules around the changes which can be made.

Town Clerk

It was agreed that the Clerk would get guidance from a contractor and Historic England.

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12 Memorial Policy (105 -2016/17)

Members reviewed the proposed policy and commented as follows:

Members discussed the proposed charge of £100 for 10 years' maintenance. One Member commented the amount was low, while other Members indicated that they would not be happy with an amount being charged at all. If a bench was donated to the Council, it should be maintained by the council for its serviceable life.

It was commented that it needs to be clear if the bench is town council's or remains in the ownership of the purchaser. The Clerk advised that the bench should become a Town Council asset.

Members commented that the policy should outline what benches could be installed and whether the town council would purchase them or the applicant. It was agreed that the policy needed further consideration.

RESOLVED that the Clerk amend the policy and bring back to the committee for further review.

Town Clerk

13 Complaints Policy (106 -2016/17)

Members reviewed and discussed the Council's adopted complaints policy. The following comments were made:

There was some concern about oral complaints as a paper trail is needed. It was agreed that section 2 should clarify that any oral complaint must be followed up in writing by the applicant.

Section 5 should include a timeframe of 10 days in which the Clerk will respond to the applicant informing them of when the Complaints Committee will be meeting to deal with the complaint.

Section 7 should include a timeframe. It was also noted that section 7 crossed over with section 4 and that these points required further clarification.

Members discussed the need for the complaints committee to be able to exclude press and public when considering complaints of a sensitive nature.

RESOLVED that the Chair, Vice Chair and Town Clerk meet to review the document and amend accordingly. That the document be brought back to the next committee meeting for agreement.

Cllrs
Scott/Cole
and Town
Clerk

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14 Freeman/Woman of the Town Policy (107-2016/17)

Members reviewed the adopted policy.

RESOLVED to readopt the Freeman/Woman of the Town Policy.

15 Chairman's Items (108-2016/17)

There were no Chairman's items to note.

16 Date of Next Meeting (109-2016/17)

It was noted that the date of the next meeting is 27 March 2017.

Admin