

Sandy Town Council

Minutes of the meeting of Sandy Town Council held in the Council Chamber at 10 Cambridge Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire on Monday 20th January 2020 at 7.30pm

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). One member of the public was present.

Action

1 Apologies for Absence (145-2019/2020)

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr N Thompson and CBC Cllrs S Ford, C Maudlin and T Stock.

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2 Declaration of Interest and requests for dispensations (146-2019/20)

i) *Disclosable Pecuniary Interests* – None

ii) *Non-Pecuniary Interests* – Cllr Aldis declared an interest on agenda item 12 as a Member of Blunham Parish Council, the parish in which a development is linked to the request for an advertising board on STC land.

iii) *Dispensations* – None

3 Public Participation Session (147-2019/20)

Cllr G Fage of Biggleswade Town Council was present to speak on agenda item 22, planning application CB/19/04301/OUT. Cllr Fage would speak later in the agenda when this item is taken.

**4 Minutes of previous Town Council Meeting (148-2019/20)
RESOLVED to:**

Receive the minutes of the meeting of Sandy Town Council held on Monday 9th December 2019 and to approve them as a correct record of proceedings.

5 Minutes of Committees and Recommendations therein (149-2019/20)

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:

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- i) **RESOLVED** to receive and note the minutes of the Community, Services and Environment Committee held on 16 December 2019.
- ii) **RESOLVED** to receive and note the minutes of the Development Scrutiny Committee held on 16 December 2019 and 6 January 2020.
- iii) **RESOLVED** to receive and note the minutes of the Human Resources Committee held on 17 December 2019.
- iv) **RESOLVED** to receive and note the minutes of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee held on 6 January 2020.

The Chairman spoke on the committee recommendations.

RESOLVED that the Council accept the internal audit 2019/20 interim report.

RESOLVED that a grant of £1,000 for the Ivel Sprinter (East Beds Community Bus Ltd) be included in the 2020/21 budget proposition.

RESOLVED that £1,757 be included in the 2020/21 budget to cover the costs of planting five trees with commemorative plaques.

Members considered the committee's recommendation that £3,000 be included in the 2020/21 Community Events budget to support the Events Working Group in discussions over future support for a firework display to be held in 2020.

The Chairman informed the Council that he and the Chairman of the Events Working Group had met with representatives of the Scouts to discuss whether they may be able to continue with the fireworks in 2020 with the Council's assistance. The Scouts confirmed they would not be running a firework show in 2020 and this position would not change.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that the proposed £3,000 to support a fireworks event would not be included in the 2020/21 budget as a result of the Scouts decision.

RESOLVED that the proposed budget be approved with a precept request of £594,768 which equates to a 2.36% increase of £3.42 per Band D equivalent. That underspend in 2019/20 revenue be

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transferred to the rolling capital fund and that £50,000 from the Council's General Reserve be transferred to the rolling capital fund.

RESOLVED that repair works are carried out on the public clock at 10 Cambridge Road at a cost of £2,200.

6 Financial Matters (150-2019/20)

- i) Members noted a balance sheet and detailed financial report showing income and expenditure against the revenue budget for the year to November 2019 (previously circulated and scrutinised at a meeting of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee on 6th January 2020).
- ii) Members noted a budget overview report (previously circulated and scrutinised at a meeting of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee on 6th January 2020).
- iii) Members noted a list of payments made since the last Town Council meeting (previously circulated and scrutinised at a meeting of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee on 6th January 2020).

7 Planning Application – CB/19/04301/OUT

Cllr Fage thanked the Clerk for circulated communication sent to the Town Council from Biggleswade Town Council (BTC). Cllr Fage explained that BTC were objecting to the proposed development of 416 homes south of Biggleswade Common in the strongest possible terms and were asking for Sandy Town Council's support in doing so as the implications of the development would have an impact on Sandy and its residents.

Cllr Fage stated that Biggleswade's main concerns were;

- Worsening of the pressures placed on an already overburdened road system.
- BTC feel that the transport assessment used by the developer is inaccurate and outdated, particularly in regard to the Sainsbury's roundabout on the A1.
- The developer recognises that this development will make the road network worse but does not propose any solution, instead suggesting it will contribute to a scheme brought forward by other developers at a later date.
- The impact this development will have on the A1 and its traffic flow will impact on Sandy and its residents, many of whom access the road on a daily basis. The Sandy section of the A1 is already under pressure.

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- Concerns over encroachment between settlements. Development could continue further north all the way up to Biggleswade Common. This development could be the gateway to a far larger development.
- The traffic assessment does not allow for developments at Potton and Caldecote, which will also have an impact on the road network.

It was Proposed and Seconded that Sandy Town Council support Biggleswade Town Council's objection to the proposed development.

A Member asked where the access to the proposed site would be. Cllr Fage stated that it would be on to Potton Road, which BTC feel is already overburdened with 200 homes presently using the access.

A Member asked what BTC's view was on a relief road to the north. Cllr Fage stated that BTC did not want to see a further reduction of countryside if possible.

Members noted that more development in Biggleswade would also lead to more residents travelling to Sandy to use the station, which had an impact on parking in the town.

Members commented that it was crucial CBC got its Local Plan in place as continuous development up the A1 corridor without a proper solution by Highways England to the issues around the A1 would lead to further problems. The area cannot take this level of development until improvements to the infrastructure are made.

It was **RESOLVED** to support Biggleswade Town Council's stance and submit an objection to application CB/19/04301/OUT on the grounds of the increased pressure that will be placed on an overburdened road network and concerns over erosion of separation between settlements.

8 Reports from Central Bedfordshire Councillors (151-2019/20)

Central Bedfordshire Councillors were not present, and no reports were given.

9 Central Bedfordshire Council Budget Consultation 2020 (152-2019/20)

Members received and noted the Central Bedfordshire Council budget consultation. It was noted that the consultation was for residents to complete, rather than the Council. A Member

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commented that the questions asked did not allow flexibility and steered answers in a certain direction. To fully answer the questions, a respondent would need a good knowledge of the unitary authority's budget.

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

10 Planning Application – CB/19/04298/OUT (153–2019/20)

The Chairman of the Development Scrutiny committee spoke on a planning application for 9 houses at 91 London Road. The Chairman reminded Members that the Council had previously objected to a larger proposed development on this side of the A1. The development was ultimately rejected by CBC and many of the objections raised apply to the current application.

Members discussed the application and raised the following concerns;

- Access to the site was dangerous and a longer slip road would be needed if safety were to be improved.
- Longer acceleration and deceleration lanes from the site were needed.
- There are already too many entrance/exits to sites on this stretch. The existing situation of cars stopping to turn in on a busy road such as the A1 will only be compounded by vehicles for nine new dwellings entering another turn off.
- The other properties on this side of the A1 are historical and given the current pressures and safety concerns on this road, you should not add more properties.
- Members agreed that overall the access proposed to the site would be highly dangerous and will cause further problems for this section of the A1.
- Any new site access would require a speed reduction and average speed cameras.
- The site is isolated and difficult to reach by foot. There is no connectivity between the site and the town's services and community.
- Although the no 73 bus can be boarded on one side heading North, there is no easy connection to the bus stop on the opposite side.
- The pollution and air quality in this area is poor.

It was suggested that this was the wrong location for residential development and Proposed and Seconded that the Council object to the planning application.

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RESOLVED to object to planning application CB/19/04298/OUT on grounds of unsuitable access which would cause safety risks and compound the problems experienced on this section of the A1. Poor connectivity to the town and health implications of poor air quality.

11 Action List (154-2019/20)

Members noted the Action List.

East West Rail Link:

The Clerk informed Members that he had spoken with the EWR Head of Internal Affairs and that there was still no known date for a decision on the preferred corridor.

A1 – Local Issues:

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor were due to meet with Rt. Hon. Richard Fuller, newly elected MP for our area. They would take the opportunity to show Mr Fuller around Sandy and summarise many of the issues facing Sandy, which had previously been raised with the former MP.

The Chairman asked that if there were any topics Members felt should be included in the discussion, they should let the Clerk know.

Sandye Place Academy:

There had been no further updates from CBC since the Council's meeting with Mr Keaveney in November 2019. It was noted that another meeting was expected to take place in February 2020 and the Clerk was asked to raise this with CBC Councillors.

11 Central Bedfordshire Council Asset Grant Scheme (155-2019/20)

Members received information on the launch of Central Bedfordshire Council's Asset Grant Scheme and noted the deadlines for submission. A second submission date would be held later in the year and it was hoped the Council may be in a position to submit an application for the community orchard and allotments at Beeston and possible work to the Cemetery Chapel. Applications would be scored by CBC on a number of criteria.

Members asked that the Bowls Club be made aware of the funding, which can sit alongside Sc106 funding when considering grant applications for new equipment they require.

12 Installation Advertisement Signage on Council Land (156-2019/20)

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Members received a request for the installation of advertising signage on Council owned land. The land in question forms part of The Riddy and the advertising board is for a development in Blunham. The developer was offering a rent of £1,000 a month for the siting of the signage.

The Clerk informed Members that BRCC and the Wildlife Trust, who help manage the land would not object to the installation, as long as both organisations were involved in agreeing the sign's location and its installation. It could not go exactly where the developer had suggested due to the existence of a pond. Both organisations would like to see some of the income generated go back into the management or enhancement of The Riddy.

Members agreed that the funds would provide a valuable opportunity to benefit environmental or public realm improvement projects. Subject to some conditions, assurances that no damage would be caused to any environmental features and the BRCC and Wildlife Trust could advise on proper installation, it was Proposed and Seconded that the Council approve the installation of temporary advertising signage.

RESOLVED that the Council approve the installation of a temporary advertising sign on The Riddy by Linden Homes subject to the following conditions;

- The permission is for no more than 12 months.
- A fee of £1,000.00 per month is paid by Linden Homes to the Council.
- That the funds received are ringfenced for maintenance and improvement of public realm and green spaces in Sandy.
- That Linden Homes is responsible for obtaining all other permissions that are needed.
- The sign will be installed at a location agreed by the Wildlife Trust and BRCC.

13 2020/21 Budget and Precept (157-2019/20)

Members considered a recommended 2020/21 budget from the Policy, Finance and Resources committee. The Chairman of the PFR committee spoke on the item and reminded Members that the budget and precept setting process had been ongoing since September 2019 and that all but one Councillor had attended at least one of the committee meetings at which the budget was reviewed and discussed.

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Following the removal of a proposed £3,000 to support the Sandy fireworks, the 2020/21 precept request stands at £594,768 which is a £14,570 or 2.51% increase on the 2019/20 precept request. This equates to an annual precept of £148.43 per Band D equivalent, which is an increase of 2.36% or £3.42 per year on 2019/20.

The budget and precept were proposed and seconded.

A Member commented that he felt very comfortable with the budget which was broadly in line with inflation.

RESOLVED to approve a 2020/21 budget and precept request of £594,768 which equates to a £14,570 increase on the previous year's budget.

Councillors thanked staff and all those involved in the work which had gone into the budget setting process.

14 **Calendar of Meetings (158-2019/20)**

Members considered a draft calendar of Council Meetings for the next Council year.

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the 2020/21 calendar of meetings be approved.

15 **Consultations (159-2019/20)**

Members considered the following consultation:

The removal of BT payphones across Central Bedfordshire – Stage Two.

RESOLVED to write to Central Bedfordshire Council stating the Town Council's support for the objection to the removal of the phone on Church Path.

16 **Reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies (160-2019/20)**

Members received and noted a report from Councillor M Hill on the Sandy Sports and Leisure Association (SSLA). Concerns were raised over the pressure placed on the Jenkins facility changing rooms as a result of SSLA users no longer being able to use the school changing rooms. It was noted that when the new pitch is installed, there would need to be a discussion about its use, timetabling and ensuring suitable footwear was always worn.

Cllr Hewitt left the meeting.

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Cllr T Knagg informed Members that the Village Hall Management committee were now looking for a new bar manager.

17 Town and Parish Council Conference (161-2019/20)

Members noted the upcoming CBC Town and Parish Council conference and that the Mayor and Deputy Mayor would be attending.

18 Mayor's Engagements (162-2019/20)

Members noted the Mayor and Deputy Mayor's engagements.

19 News Release (163-2019/20)

It was agreed to issue news releases on the following matters;

- 2020/21 Budget and precept
- Clarity on the installation of advertising signage in The Riddy.

20 Chairman's Items (164-2019/20)

The Chairman informed Councillors of the sad news that Lady Isabelle Erroll had passed away. Lady Erroll was a previous High Sheriff of Bedfordshire and Members felt it appropriate a letter of condolence be sent to her family.

21 Date of Next Meeting (165-2019/20)

Monday 2nd March 2020.

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