

Minutes of the Town Council meeting of Sandy Town Council held in the Council Chamber at 10 Cambridge Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire on Monday 21st October 2024 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs N Aldis, S Baker, B Blackley, A Effiong (until 20.52), J Hewitt (Chairman), R Lacey, S Lee, A Lock, R Lock, M Pettitt, C Osborne, M Scott, P Sharman, and S Sutton.

Absent: Cllr N Thompson

In attendance: Mrs. N Sewell (Clerk), Ian Reed Deputy Clerk, Ward Cllrs Bell and Pashby.

	Action
<p>1 Apologies for Absence (100-2024/2025) Apologies were received from Cllr Thompson and Ward Cllr Ford.</p>	
<p>2 Declaration of Interest and requests for dispensations (101-2024/2025) i) <i>Disclosable Pecuniary Interests</i> – None ii) <i>Non-Pecuniary Interests</i> – None iii) <i>Dispensations</i> – None</p>	
<p>3 Public Participation Session (102-2024/2025) No members of the public were present during this item. An email regarding drainage at Sunderland Road referring to an article from <i>Grounds Management</i> magazine was sent in by a resident. The email asked Members to consider the article before making a decision to agree a spend of £15,000 to clear the culvert at the site, as recommended by the Community, Services & Environment Committee and subsequently by the Policy, Finance & Resources Committee. The email and article were circulated to Members separately before the meeting. It was agreed that the matter be addressed during item 5.</p>	
<p>4 Minutes of Meeting of Town Council (103-2024/2025) Members received the minutes of the meeting of Sandy Town Council held on Monday 2nd September at 7.30pm and approved them as a correct record of proceedings.</p>	
<p>5 Minutes of Committees and recommendations therein (104-2024/2025) Members received and noted the minutes of the meetings of the following committees and sub-committees: RESOLVED: i) to receive and note the minutes of Community Services & Environment Committee held on 16th September 2024. The following recommendations were dealt with under the recorded items:</p>	

- that the quotation for a stainless-steel double width and extended play slide with platform along with the cost of a soft play surface included in the price of £11,759.69 be accepted from Contractor B subject to the addition of a scheme to provide an access path that would take wheelchair and other users up to the slide. The cost of the additional scheme is to be discussed at the Full Council meeting (**see item 7**).
- To further discuss budgetary requirements to work with the Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (**see item 8**).
- The recommendation to provision for £15,000 in the budget to fund drainage works at Sunderland Road was deferred after Members received an update from the Clerk informing them that the utility company that had quoted for the work was no longer trading. As such it was **RESOLVED** that further quotes be sought and the discussion deferred to the next meeting of CS&E or PF&R as appropriate. In addition, comments made by a resident on the subject of drainage at the site also be taken into consideration during that discussion.
- A recommendation from CS&E to agree to contract Company A to undertake repairs to the Depot Roof was brought to Members who **RESOLVED** to accept the quote at a cost of £3,750.

ii) to receive and note the minutes of Policy, Finance & Resources Committee held on 30th September 2024.

RESOLVED to agree the following recommendations:

- The approval of costs to repair the roof of the Banks Pavilion for £9,256.03 covering costs using the Capital Fund.
- That Full Council covers the cost of a Fire Risk Assessment for the Town Council's Offices and Depot at a cost of £870 + VAT as an overspend to come from budget line 4036.
- That Full Council covers the cost of a general workplace risk assessment for the Town Council's Offices and Depot at a cost of £650 +VAT as an overspend under budget line 4020.

RESOLVED

iii) to receive and note the minutes of Development Scrutiny Committee held on 9th September and 23rd September and note the meeting planned for 14th October 2024 took place on 21st October at 6.30pm in order for a reception event to be held in the Council Chamber to celebrate Cllr Osborne's 50th Anniversary of being a Member.

RESOLVED

iv) to receive and note the minutes of the Human Resources Committee held on 23rd September 2024

The following recommendation was dealt with under the recorded item:

- That Full Council provisions for £8,580, as quoted for by Company A, in the Budget for 2025/26 to enable the Council to contract a cleaning company to undertake the cleaning of Offices at 10, Cambridge Road (**see item 6**).

RESOLVED to agree the following recommendations:

- The Town Council approves the provision of sick pay to cover the hours not worked during an employee's phased return to work, but limit that pay to a maximum of 6 weeks.
- That the Town Council adopt a Phased Return to Work Policy that clearly sets out the following requirements regarding entitlement to sick pay across the Phased Return Period:
 - A medical professional or occupational health advisor recommend the phased return.
 - The duration of the phased return and sick pay coverage is limited to a maximum of 6 weeks.
 - c) The arrangement is reviewed every two weeks by a representative of the HR Committee and the employee's line manager to ensure progress and prevent unnecessary prolongation.
 - d) A clear return-to-work plan with specific milestones must be agreed upon before the phased return begins.
 - e) Sick pay during the phased return will be calculated in accordance with the Green Book policy, based on the employee's length of service and previous sick leave.
 - f) The council reserves the right to suspend sick pay if there is evidence of abuse, as per section 10.10 of the Green Book policy.
 - g) Employees must adhere to the conditions for reporting sickness and claiming benefits as outlined in the Green Book policy.
 - h) Only one claim for Sick Pay under a phased return can be made in a 12-month period.

Members noted that further updates regarding sick pay entitlement would need to be reviewed once the new Labour Government published its requirements.

6 Office Cleaning Contract (105-2024/2025)

Members received a report regarding changes to the current office cleaning contract and recommendation from the Human Resources Committee to consider hiring a Cleaning Contractor to undertake the cleaning of the offices going forward.

RESOLVED to accept the quote from Company A to contract a cleaning company at a cost of £8,580 and for the set amount to be provisioned for in the budget setting process for 2025/26.

7 Replacement Slide at Bedford Road (106-2024/2025)

Members considered a report from the Deputy Clerk outlining costs for a new slide and pathways to be installed at Bedford Road Recreation Ground.

Deputy
Clerk

RESOLVED to go ahead with the purchase of a new slide at a cost of £11,070.17 but that further costs to install a special pathway and surface at the same site to be further discussed by the Playground Provisions Working Group in order that they take a recommendation back to the next possible CS&E Committee meeting.

8 CS&E Budget Referral Discussion for Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity Services (107-2024/2025)

Members received a report from the Deputy Clerk regarding expected fees from the Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) for Wardening Services at the Pinnacle and Riddy, maintenance of Sandy Green Wheel and set up and management of Community Gardens at Beeston.

RESOLVED

- to agree the suggested 4% increase for the Wardening of the Pinnacle and Riddy areas at a cost of £4,589.40 and £6,205.29 respectively.
- to note a request by BRCC to increase in the Town Council's contribution to the Sandy Green Wheel by £500.
- to note costs quoted by BRCC for the establishment of a community garden at between £5,000 to £6,000, the community gardens would include raised beds for social prescribing at a development in Beeston. The Deputy Clerk was asked to clarify with BRCC if the quoted costs were a one off requirement or an annual fee. Members also wanted to understand any legal cost implications for STC as it would effectively be subletting the site to BRCC if the project went ahead.

Deputy
Clerk

9 Reports from Central Bedfordshire (108-2024/2025)

Ward Cllrs Bell and Pashby were both present at the meeting. They stated that there was nothing to report at this time, although a response to Cllr Sutton's query about proposed improvements to the roundabout at the junction of St Neots Road and Endgayne Avenue at the last meeting of Council had been sent directly to her. That response was as follows:

"Unfortunately, the proposed idea was not as straightforward as hoped. An outline design had taken place, but this highlighted various utilities cables/pipes/etc in the location, that would make the construction work very expensive due to the relocation/re-mapping of these assets that would be required. The prohibitive cost against benefit means that the work will not be immediate.

"Progression of the scheme will require further assessment and discussion with our contract designers, and I will update should I receive further information."

Questions from Cllr Aldis had been submitted too late for a response at this meeting, Cllr Bell explained that they had to give CBC officers at least 3 clear days to respond to queries and as such it took time to get answers. She promised that a full report would be ready for the next full council meeting in December.

10 Sandye Place Update (109-2024/2025)

Members received an update from the Mayor regarding the status of Sandye Place and agreed next steps for the Sandye Place Working Group. A report from the working group would be circulated to Members at the next Full Council meeting in December.

Cllr Hewitt told Members that she would be pursuing further information regarding the site from Central Bedfordshire Council and a copy of the valuation shared with Members at its informal meeting in July to discuss the matter further. Clarification on how the valuation was constructed, what it included and what it was based on was vital if the Town Council were to consider any further steps on the matter.

She added that if purchasing the land was an avenue the Town Council wished to pursue it was worth considering setting up a charity/not for profit structure to do so, in order to access funding from Charitable Trusts/Foundations that would not be made available to a Local Authority, this would be an arrangement set up on a similar premise to agreements that the Town Council has with the Village Hall and Sandy Sports and Leisure Association.

11 Planning Application (110-2024/2025)

Members considered the following application submitted for comment by Central Bedfordshire Council; all planning applications are available by visiting <http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/planning-register/> and entering the planning application reference.

<p>CB/24/00362/REG3 Sandy Service Station, Tower Hill House, New Road, Sandy SG19 1NY</p>	<p>Erection of 35 affordable dwellings with associated parking and landscaping. The Town Council considered this application at its meeting held on 4th March 2024 and resolved to agree Development Scrutiny Committee’s recommendation supporting the initiative and submitting the following comments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome development of this brownfield site with affordable and supported living housing for local people • Employment with 20 jobs being created. • Concerns over access to the site
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Town Clerk

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extension of the 20mph speed limit past the site • Lights controlled crossing required as no footway on station side as land not in ownership of the developer • SIDs required with Slow Down and flashing warning lights • Request buildings will be completed to highest energy efficient standard with Solar panels and/or communal heat pump system • EV charging points in car park areas be available • Heat provided from waste facility • Adequate bin storage areas • Triple glazing on railway fronting habitable rooms • CBC to promote Traffic Management Orders on residents parking areas <p>The number of parking spaces is reviewed.</p> <p>RESOLVED to endorse the Town Council's previous position and approve the application as Members want to see the site developed. Other comments Members wished to submit to Planning included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns raised about the access to the site and safety of road crossing in the area • The need to see the right landscaping on the site • Members welcomed changes to the parking provision • Following the recent flooding of New Road, what plans was CBC making to mitigate a re-occurrence? • Members would like to see a Road Traffic Warden allocated to the site
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	to prevent commuters utilising residential parking spaces.
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Town Clerk

12 Reinstatement Cost Assessment (111-2024/2025)

Members considered costs for undertaking a Reinstatement Cost Assessment for the Town Council’s properties as required by the Town Council’s insurance company for insurance purposes at a cost of £1,010 +VAT. The valuation will be valid for 3 years.

RESOLVED to agree the cost as an overspend on the insurance budget line.

13 Christmas Raffle Contribution (112-2024/2025)

Members received a request from the Events Working Group for a sum of £150 to be offered as a prize for the raffle set up to raise funds for the Christmas Light’s Switch-on event in 2025. Members were also asked to donate a bottle for a combined drinks prize from a shopping list that would be provided.

RESOLVED to agree for £150 cash prize to be provisioned for from the Events Support budget.

14 Action Plan (113-2024/2025)

Members reviewed and agreed Full Council Action Plan for 2024/25.

RESOLVED to note the Action List.

15 Reports from Councillors on Outside Bodies (114-2024/2025)

Members received the following reports from Council representatives on outside bodies:

- i. Sandy Sports and Leisure Association - Cllr Pettitt
- ii. Sandy Twinning Association – Cllr Pettitt

RESOLVED to note the reports

16 Correspondence (115-2024/2025)

Members noted correspondence received by the Town Council since the last meeting of Full Council and any actions arising from such items. All correspondence circulated to Members separately.

RESOLVED to note the correspondence.

17 Mayoral Events (116-2024/2025)

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

18 Press Releases (117-2024/2025)

- Cllr Osborne’s 50th Anniversary as a Member of the Town Council
- Volunteers for Remembrance Sunday Parade
- Sponsorship of Lamppost poppies

- Sponsorship of Lampposts for Christmas Lights Event.

19 Chairmans Items (118-2024/2025)

Cllr Hewitt mentioned that the Clerk was still trying to organise a date for Code of Conduct Training and asked Members to confirm their availability for 11th December.

Members were reminded that they needed to set up their new .gov.uk email addresses and if there were any problems to contact the Clerk.

Cllr Hewitt requested that all Members support the Christmas Lights event by selling raffle tickets, which were available to take that evening. In addition, she would be asking Members to staff stalls at Tesco and in the town during the run up to the event and that a rota would be circulated once Members had confirmed.

Volunteers would also be needed to help at the Christmas Light Switch On event, which was always a busy day. Again, Members were asked to confirm their availability on the day by responding to an email that Cllr Hewitt would circulate to all Members.

On Thursday 24th October the Bedford Association of Town and Parish Councils will be holding its AGM. Each town is allowed to have three voting Members, alongside Cllrs Aldis and Pettitt it was agreed that Cllr Sharman attend the event in order to enable Sandy to have its full quota.

20 Date of Next Meeting

09.12.2024

Meeting Ended at 21:12