

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 21 November 2016 commencing at 7.30pm.

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

In attendance: Mr C Robson (Town Clerk)

Actions

1 Apologies for absence (65-2016/17)

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

2 Declarations of interest (66-2016/17)

- i) Declarable pecuniary interests – None
- ii) Non pecuniary interests – Cllrs Scott declared a personal interest as a vice president of the Sandy Football club, in case matters of the football clubs budget should be discussed under agenda item 7.

3 Public Participation Session (67-2016/17)

There were no questions received from members of the public.

4 Minutes of previous meeting (68-2016/17)

RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee held on 10 October 2016 and to approve them as a correct record of proceedings.

5 Financial Reports (69-2016/17)

- i) A balance sheet and detailed financial report showing income and expenditure against the revenue budget for year to 30th September 2016 had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

Members scrutinised the financial report.

A Member queried the low level of tourism income compared to the budgeted amount. The Clerk informed Members that the budget level of income from tourist information was high as it was based on previous year's income which was generated by sale of stock. Following the closure of the Tourist Information Office the Council no longer generates an income from the sale of stock. Income within this budget line is primarily from Council run walks and talks and the

Sandy Town Council

proposed budget for 2017/18 lowers expected income to reflect this. Income from two more Council run talks will hit the budget code in November 2016 and January 2017.

A Member queried the Councils online banking security and the checks and balances involved. It was agreed that the Clerk and Cllr. Aldis would run a check on balance transfer security and report back to the committee.

Town
Clerk/Cllr
Aldis

RESOLVED to note the report.

ii) Members received and reviewed a budget overview report.

A Member queried the underspend on staffing which seemed odd considering temporary staff had been recruited during the year. The Clerk explained that this was due to an over budget for the 2016/17 financial year.

RESOLVED to note the report.

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

RESOLVED to approve the schedule of payments.

v) 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 (70-2016/17)

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

The Clerk informed Members that the War Memorial Trust had deferred the Council's grant application and wished to make site visits to assess the Memorial and proposed works further. Members expressed their disappointment that the restoration works had not yet been completed and their desire that this be made a priority so work can be carried out well before November 2017. It was agreed that the site meetings should be arranged as soon as possible and Cllr Pettitt offered to attend the site meeting. To avoid the project start date extending further, a decision on the likelihood of Sandy receiving a grant should be pushed.

Town Clerk

The Clerk informed Members that he had not received any further

Sandy Town Council

feedback from Central Bedfordshire Council's legal team in regards to the Jenkins Pavilion contract and STC submitted comments. The Clerk stated that he would chase updates and discuss the matter with CBC's management team in a meeting scheduled later that week.

Town Clerk

7 2017/18 Draft Budget (71-2016/17)

Members received initial draft budget papers for 2017/18. Members reviewed the summary and budget papers, reviewing each budget line and commented as follows;

The proposed increase in the pension budget seems high. The Clerk stated that he has requested a copy of the calculations to clarify the increase and whether the budget for the next financial year can be lowered from the proposed amount.

The Clerk clarified that 408 – 4007 'Health and Safety' was a budget to cover the annual checks of the Council owned defibrillators.

408 – 1235 CCTV monitoring income. The Clerk informed Members that Aragon Housing had decided that they no longer want to contribute towards the cost of running the mobile CCTV camera. As such the Council will not get the £833 income received in previous years. Clerk to remove from budget.

509 – 4402 / 602 4702 – Members discussed the Christmas lights Switch on Event budget and the proposed new £2,000 community event support budget. Members considered whether the budget levels were appropriate and whether they should be combined or kept separate.

A Member stated that they would like to see the Christmas Light Event budget remain separate from the event support budget. Based on the current running of the event it appears that this may become a Council run event.

A Member commented that the budget for the Switch on Event was large considering the event was only for one day. The Chairman of the Christmas Lights Committee and the Clerk would be reviewing the event and bring a report to Council with proposals about how it could be managed in future years, which could include a reduction in the budget to allow for greater support of other community events.

Members agreed there needed to be a greater understanding of what the Community Events Support budget was intended for and guidelines on what was to be classed as an event under this budget.

Sandy Town Council

As well as supporting regular external community events the Council intended to run its own such as specialised markets and a dog awareness day.

It was **Agreed** that the Clerk would provide further information to the committee on potential community event costs based on previous grant applications and proposed future Council events.

Town Clerk

Members discussed the proposed precept level and potential cap on precept increases which may be applied to Town Councils. It was acknowledged that the above changes and clarification points would need to be completed before the precept level could be discussed further.

Town Clerk

RESOLVED that the Clerk amends the proposed budget in line with Members comments and seeks clarification on questions raised. That the budget be reviewed again at the next committee meeting.

8 **Tree Surveys (72-2016/17)**

Members received a report and recommendation from the Town Clerk. Members reviewed the report and the three quotes for tree survey work at Beeston Green, the Church Yard, Bedford Road and the Cemetery.

It was Proposed and Seconded that the recommendation be approved.

The Chair stated that he expected the surveys may highlight the need for a lot of tree work at Beeston Green and this will need to be considered during the Council's 2017/18 budget setting.

RESOLVED to approve the recommendation that Company C be awarded the contract to carryout tree inspections and surveying. That the tree surveys are carried out during this financial year and funded from the rolling capital fund.

Admin

9 **Community Benefit Payment Receipt (73-2016/17)**

Members received and noted a report from the Town Clerk on a Community Benefit Payment of £7,000 to be granted to the Town Council. The payment was as a result of the Local Planning Authority approving an extension application by the Waterloo solar farm. The part of the site to which the application relates is within the boundaries of Sandy parish. The terms of the community benefit payment are that funds must be applied towards projects that will benefit the communities of the Town Council.

Sandy Town Council

The Chair stated that the Council needs to consider and decide how the payment should be applied and that a report should come back to committee following receipt of the payment.

RESOLVED to note the report and bring the matter back to committee for further consideration once the community benefit payment is received.

Town Clerk

10 Section 106 Funding (74-2016/17)

Members received and noted a report from the Town Clerk on section 106 (Sc106) applications and uncommitted funds held by Central Bedfordshire Council.

A Member noted that the Martial Arts Club did not appear on the list of clubs contacted and asked that they be included.

A Member stated that the Sc106 funds seemed to only benefit sports groups, rather than arts and other community groups. It was queried whether such groups could also be made aware of available funds.

The Clerk informed Members that the Sc106 funds are held under spending categories, of which outdoor sports is one. There was not a suitable sc106 fund, on which the Town Council can draw down on, that would provide funding for arts and other community groups.

A Member commented that the problem is that other community groups/needs are not featuring in sc106 agreements and the planners must be engaged with to include funding for arts and culture as part of the planning agreement process.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk raise the Council's concerns with Central Bedfordshire Council.

Town Clerk

11 Sale of Section of Cemetery Land (75-2016/17)

Members received a report from the Town Clerk.

Members stated that the suggested measurements of the land for sale are too large and that this should be reviewed. The sale of the land will impact on the burial capacity of the cemetery and the proposed area was considered too large compared to what was originally proposed.

A Member queried whether there were any main sewage connections in the vicinity which could make the cess pit redundant and open up the potential of development on the land. A Member stated that any

Sandy Town Council

sale agreement must include restricted use of the land and that it will be used only for a garden/cess pit area.

It was **RESOLVED** that the terms of the sale put forward are accepted subject to the inclusion of a restriction on land use and a decision by the Cemetery Working Group on the actual size of the land the Council wish to sell.

Town Clerk

12 Co-option Policy (76-2016/17)

Members received a report and copy of the Co-option Policy from the Town Clerk. Members reviewed the process in light of the recent co-option of a councillor.

A Member stated that the recent co-option highlighted that there are potential problems with the requirement for candidates to get sitting Councillors to nominate and second them ahead of the Council's meeting to hear from and vote on candidates. This was evident in the recent co-option process where one candidate had no nomination as part of their application, one candidate had been nominated and seconded by Councillors who were not present on the night, while the third had been nominated and seconded by Councillors who were present.

A Member stated that while asking candidates to get a nomination during the application process might encourage them to contact councillors, it may also discourage some people from applying, especially those who do not know any councillors. Nominating a candidate within their application form is also no guarantee that a the same councillor will nominate that candidate at the meeting if they feel there are better candidates applying.

A Member stated that it should not be necessary to get a proposer and seconder and it should not be down to the Council to propose a candidate. Each candidate should be treated equally and take part in the process on a level footing, voting should then be considered by paper ballot as previously agreed.

A Member advised that Central Bedfordshire's Monitoring Officer had advised that there must be a proposition and resolution to move candidates to the voting stage and as such a nomination was needed.

Cllr Cole proposed that the requirement for candidates to get a proposer and seconder while completing their application forms be removed from the application process and that the wording of the policy be changed to clarify that candidates need to be nominated

Sandy Town Council

and seconded at the meeting.

The Chair thanked Cllr Cole for her work on the policy and stated that he felt the proposed amendments made the policy clearer. Other Members echoed the Chairs comments.

It was proposed and seconded that the wording of points within the policy be amended as follows;

5. All eligible candidates **will** be invited, by letter, to attend the next full Town Council meeting following the application deadline. **If candidates are unable to attend, this meeting will not be rearranged. The co-option will still take place and voting on this vacancy will be subsequently based on this meeting and the candidate application form.**
7. An agenda item **will be** set aside for candidates to make a brief verbal presentation to members, outlining their relevant skills and experience. Each candidate will be allocated a maximum of three minutes. **After presentations, members may ask candidates questions if considered necessary.** These presentations **and questions** will be open to the public.
8. **The Chair will then request those councillors present to nominate any or all of the candidates for co-option. As co-opting any person to the Town Council has to occur by resolution, candidates will require a proposer and seconder to progress to the voting stage.**
9. The Chair will then place the names of **nominated** candidates in alphabetical order and proceed to vote.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the Council amends the Co-option Policy to remove the requirement for candidates to get a proposer and seconder as part of the advance application. That the Policy wording be amended as proposed to clarify the co-option process.

13 Metal Detecting Policy (77-2016/17)

Members received a draft Metal Detecting Policy from the Town Clerk. The Clerk explained that the need for an agreed policy arose while working on the Village Green Management Plan.

Members discussed the policy. It was noted that there was an error in 2.2 and "to the satisfaction of the asset manager" should be

Sandy Town Council

removed. It was also noted that the review date in section 2.4 needed updating.

Members briefly discussed the Treasure Act 1996 and the need for anyone who makes a find to report to the relevant authorities.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the Town Council adopt the proposed metal detecting policy with effect from 2 January 2016.

14 Fireworks (78-2016/17)

Members received a brief report from the Town Clerk which stated that the 2016 Fireworks event had been a success. The event was well attended and the Scouts were able to raise significant funds to support their activities. The funds provided by the Council to support the event have now been reimbursed by the Scouts. Total attendance figures are still being calculated.

Members discussed the Council's role in future fireworks events and the need for increased communication and partnership working between the Scouts and the Council, if the Council is to take the financial risk of the event in the future. It was suggested that the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Clerk arrange a meeting with the Scouts once full figures of this year's event are known.

Town
Clerk/Clr
Osborne/Clr
Scott

15 Chairman's Items (79-2016/17)

There were no Chairman's items.

16 Date of Next Meeting – 9 January 2017 (80-2016/17)