

Sandy Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee of Sandy Town Council which was held at 10 Cambridge Road, Sandy on Monday 22 November 2021 commencing at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllrs N Aldis, P Blaine, J Hewitt, M Hill, R Lock, C Osborne (Chair), M Pettitt, M Scott and P Sharman.

In attendance: Mr C Robson (Town Clerk)

	<i>Actions</i>
1 Apologies for absence (82-2021/22)	
Apologies had been received from Cllr Jackson	
2 Declarations of interest (83-2021/22)	
Cllr Aldis declared an interest in agenda item 6 as a possible recipient of the Sandy Good Neighbours.	
Cllr Pettitt declared a possible interest as a Council representative on sporting bodies who will pay fees linked to the Council's scale of charges to be discussed under agenda item 12.	
3 Minutes of previous meeting (84-2021/22)	
It was RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee held on 18 October 2021 and to approve them as a correct record of proceedings.	
4 Public Participation Session (85-2021/22)	
There were no questions from members of the public. The Clerk had received correspondence about a payment listed under appendix III which will be reported during that item.	
5 Financial Reports (86-2021/22)	
i) Members considered a balance sheet and detailed financial report showing income and expenditure against the revenue budget for October 2021. The Chairman took Members through the report page by page.	
It was agreed to note the balance sheet and financial reports.	
ii) Members received a budget overview report for October 2021. The Chairman took Members through the report page by page.	
It was agreed to note the report.	
iii) Members scrutinised a schedule of payments made since the previous meeting.	
The Clerk informed Members that he had received communication from	

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a Member of the public regarding a payment of £800 to N D Broadwith for work undertaken by the cricket club. This payment actually covered work by both the Bowls Club and the Cricket Club on machinery.

A Member queried payments listed as 'Purchase Ledger'. It was explained that the two listed payments offset each other and related to the copier lease as detailed in a third payment.

A Member queried why rates were paid for toilets. It was noted that there was a corresponding refund listed, this follows the government's removal of rates on public toilets.

A Member asked about payments to '1st Choice'. The Clerk confirmed that this was for a temporary worker to support the outdoor team.

A Member queried car park income and the Clerk explained that the current policy was that passes were sold at a one off fee. Members raised some concerns regarding pressure on the car park, especially given the possible development of town centre flats without sufficient parking spaces. A Member asked if it was possible to have a charity run the car park to reduce rates costs. It was agreed that the matter would be brought to a future meeting for further consideration.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the list of October 2021 payments.

iv) It was **RESOLVED** that the Chair of Policy, Finance and Resources check and approve the bank reconciliations and statements.

Cllr Osborne

6 **Grant Applications (87-2021/22)**

Members received and considered a grant application from Sandy Good Neighbours Friendship Club.

It was **RESOLVED** to award a grant of £100 to Sandy Good Neighbours Friendship Club.

Admin

Cllr Aldis did not vote on the item having declared an interest.

7 **Equipment Repair (88-2021/22)**

Members received and considered costs for the repair/replacement of parts on the Council's Bethco grass cutter. Members discussed the potential value and cost of new similar equipment and that it should be remembered some funds were allowed for in the Rolling Capital Fund for new equipment when the need comes to replace the existing.

RESOLVED that expenditure of £2,205.03 on servicing and repair work to the Council's Bethco cutter be approved.

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8 Goal Post Replacement (89-2021/22)

Members received and considered a report and costs on the replacement of goal post fittings and posts at Sunderland Road Recreation Ground. Members queried the longevity of the goal posts and the Clerk explained that the existing posts had been in place for over 15 years and that new posts will have a similar life span.

RESOLVED that the Committee approve the replacement and installation of three sets of football posts at Sunderland Road Recreation Ground and that quote 1 at a cost of £4,265 is approved, to be incurred from the Council's Rolling Capital Fund.

9 Replacement Work Truck (90-2021/22)

Members received and considered a report on an electric vehicle which could potentially replace a works vehicle in need of replacement. The report was based on research undertaken by Cllrs Scott and Sharman. Members discussed merits of purchasing an electric vehicle and the potential alternatives at length.

Members commented that;

- The vehicle looked good in the trial carried out and was clearly a versatile vehicle that could benefit the work of the Council.
- Much of the decision comes down to the cost and whether now is the right time to invest in an electric vehicle. Members queried whether replacement of the diesel truck could wait another 12 months.
- Members asked if more detailed information on the savings the Council will make in fuel costs, versus the potential electricity costs could be provided. It was noted that pursuing solar panels on the depot roof could help offset electricity costs.
- Members noted that there is not a great deal on the market in terms of electric work trucks that meet the needs of the Council and offer flexibility.
- A Member stated he could not support the purchase of a new diesel truck. Another Member commented that new diesels had dramatically cut emissions compared to older vehicles.
- The purchase of an electric vehicle was in line with Sandy's ambitions to become a greener council and would put the Council ahead of the curve.
- As well as being electric, the vehicle would offer the Council far more flexibility than it currently has.
- Although mileage and speed are limited, they should be sufficient for operation within the town and Council sites. It would need to be supported by the second diesel truck for longer trips or supply runs.
- The key question was whether now was the right time to buy

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electric, or if it was better to wait.

Cllrs Scott and Sharman were asked for their views. Cllr Scott commented that the issues were environmental as well as economic. He confirmed that there were not a lot of options on the market but the vehicle proposed did fit the requirements of the Council. Modern diesels are not out of the question, but in his view it was the time to purchase the proposed Etesia. Cllr Sharman commented that another demonstration for Members would be beneficial.

While it was acknowledged that there is always the risk that new, cheaper options will emerge in the near future as technology develops, the Council must progress with its plans to ensure that it is able to meet its service provision, give greater flexibility to the team and expand our commitment to becoming a greener Council. Overall, Members were in support of progressing the purchase of an electric works vehicle.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to approve the purchase of the proposed Etesia electric truck in principle at the best price that can be negotiated. That this be subject to Councillors having further demonstrations of the truck and agreeing a timescale.

10 Electricity Supplier (91-2021/22)

Members received and considered a report from the Town Clerk on the Council's utility provider for gas and electric. The Clerk informed Members that a new supplier had been assigned by Ofgem and that the tariffs had been received. These were 130% more than previously paid. The Administration Team Leader had arranged a review of tariffs and options for suppliers with a Utility service. Work would be undertaken to review options to bring back to the Council. It is possible lower rates can be achieved to reduce the need to increase the 2022/23 budget.

Members noted the report.

11 Recommendations from the Community, Services and Environment Committee (92-2021/22)

Members considered the following budgetary recommendations from the Community, Services and Environment Committee;

- i) **RESOLVED** to agree that 9 Queen's Jubilee banners and 9 Union Jack banners be purchased from this year's capital budget and that the Queen's Jubilee banners are left in place from May to October in 2022 to celebrate this significant event, and the revenue cost of £850 for their installation be allowed for in the 2022/23 budget.

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- ii) **RESOLVED** to agree that the Council replace three play park entrance gates as identified in the external play park inspection report and the Policy, Finance and Resource committee allow for the cost of the replacement gates from the rolling capital fund. That further quotations are considered prior to approving any work.
- iii) **RESOLVED** that the Council maintain a specific budget for the costs associated with organising the annual Remembrance Parade, responsibility for which now falls to the Council. That that budget be £200 for the 2022/23 financial year based on current expenditure.

Town Clerk

12 Scale of Charges 2022/23 (93-2021/22)

Members received and considered the Council's 2022/23 scale of charges. The Chairman took Members through the budget page by page.

Members queried the charge set against casual use of mini pitches and the Clerk said he would look into this and advise Members.

It was agreed that the cost for carpark parking passes should be rounded up to the nearest 0.50p.

It was agreed that all burial and memorial costs should be rounded up to the nearest 0.50p.

It was **RESOLVED** to agree the scale of charges, subject to clarification on the cost of casual use of mini pitches and the rounding up of charges to the nearest 0.50p.

13 2022/23 Draft Budget and Precept (94-2021/22)

- i) Members received a 2022/23 draft budget update report from the Town Clerk. This included changes to the last version of the budget as recommended by the accountant or following confirmation of correct RPI levels. The Chairman took Councillors through each budget line which had changed as listed within the report.

Members discussed the £2,500 increase in the Council's Rolling Capital Fund and whether that should remain in the budget at this stage. The £2,500 represented a 0.42% increase in the amount paid by the average Band D property. Members debated the matter and **RESOLVED** that the draft recommended 2022/23 budget does not include an increase to the Rolling Capital Fund.

Members **RESOLVED** that the following budget codes be set at the level proposed by the accountant as set out in the report:

Town Clerk

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401	4001	Admin Salaries	£131,750
401	4002	Work Salaries	£115,750
401	4003	NIC	£23,400
401	4004	Pension	£61,500
401	4030	Recruitment	£350
402	4003	Tourism Income	£300
402	1201	Rent Received	£500
402	4011	General Rates	£6,950
402	4021	Telephone	£3,200
402	4026	Photocopier	£5,000
402	4027	IT Support	£3,000
403	4011	General Rates	1,900
403	4038	Consumables/Tools	£2,000
403	4043	Vehicle Fuel	£4,000
406	4011	General Rates	£4,100
406	4036	Property Maintenance	£1,000
408	4011	General Rates	£13,050
408	4036	Property Maintenance	£1,000
408	4053	Loan Interest	£168
408	4100	CCTV	£2,000
501	4046	SBC Bowling Green	£3,489
501	4047	SBC Equipment Maint.	£2,808
501	4048	SCC Cricket Square	£2,772
501	4049	SCC Equipment Maint.	£3,000
501	4060	Jenkins	£17,052
502	4060	Prof. fees Nature Reserve	£11,050
602	4042	Equip. Maintenance	£1,000

Members **RESOLVED** that the following budget codes are set as follows in line with advice from the Clerk;

402	4025	Insurance	£18,600
402	4028	Service Agreements	£5,500
403	4008	Training (Works)	£1,500
406	1227	Chapel Income	£660

Members noted that energy budgets were subject to further research on a new energy supplier and that clear tariffs and costs will be brought forward to help determine utility energy budget levels.

- ii) Members considered the latest draft 2022/23 budget and precept documents.

Members noted the current draft budget and precept figures and

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that changes would be made to incorporate the new scale of charges and budget changes agreed earlier at the meeting. An amended budget would be brought to the next committee meeting. A recommendation would then need to be made to the Full Council.

14 Social Media Policy (95-2021/22)

Members received and considered an amended Social Media Policy

It was **RESOLVED** to agree the amended Social Media Policy.

15 Chairman's Items (96-2021/22)

There were no Chairman's items.

18 Date of Next Meeting (97-2021/22)

It was noted that the next Policy, Finance and Resources Committee meeting will be on Monday 10th January 2022.