

Minutes of the Extra Ordinary Town Council meeting of Sandy Town Council held in the Council Chamber at 10 Cambridge Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire on Monday 24th June 2024 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs N Aldis, B Blackley, A Effiong, J Hewitt (Chair), R Lacey (until 20.35), A Lock, R Lock, C Osborne, M Scott, P Sharman and S Sutton.

Absent: Cllrs S Baker, M Pettitt and N Thompson

In attendance: Mrs N Sewell (Clerk) and six members of the public.

Action

The Chair led all present in a minute's silence in remembrance of former councillor, Michael Bartlett, who had recently passed away.

1 Apologies for Absence (36-2024/2025)

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Baker, Pettitt and Thompson, and Ward Cllrs Bell, Ford and Pashby.

2 Declaration of Interest and requests for dispensations (37-2024/2025)

- i) *Disclosable Pecuniary Interests* - None
- ii) *Non-Pecuniary Interests* - None
- iii) *Dispensations* - None

3 Public Participation Session (38-2024/2025)

Six members of the public were present.

One resident said they had come to speak on behalf of several businesses and some residents in regard to the Town Centre car park and the removal of the car park barrier. Concern was raised about the amount of parking available for businesses and visitors to the town, including predicted further pressure on parking spaces from town centre development and additional use of spaces throughout the day by commuters, who were choosing the free parking in the town centre rather than paying for parking at the Station car park.

They made three suggestions to alleviate the problem:

1. Restrict parking in the car park to 3 hours
2. Provide parking permits for businesses that already hold a pass for the rest of the year (free of charge)
3. Sell a limited number of annual permits to residents.

Cllr Osborne commented that the Town Council had already raised issues with Central Bedfordshire Council's planning department over the lack of parking in the town, but plans for further development had still gone through.

Cllr Scott said he had concerns over how the car park was being managed and added that when the EV charging points were installed a further 16 spaces would also potentially be lost.

The Mayor thanked the resident for their input and added that the Car Park Working Group had been created to look into these issues.

4 Minutes of Extra Ordinary Meeting of Town Council (39-2024/2025)

Members received the minutes of the Extra Ordinary meeting of Sandy Town Council held on Friday 31st May 2024 at 6.00pm and approved them as a correct record of proceedings.

5 Minutes of Committees and Recommendations therein (40-2024/2025)

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 the Development Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 10th June 2024.

The Chair of DS raised a query regarding whether the DS Committee should continue to review larger planning applications in order to make a recommendation to Full Council, or whether these applications should only be considered at Full Council. The matter would be discussed at the next Council meeting.

- ii) to receive and note the minutes of the Policy, Finance & Resources Committee held on 17th June 2024.

The following recommendations were dealt with under the items noted:

- The Council adopt the 2023/24 Unaudited Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2024 (see item 9).
 - Full Council agree the figures set out in Section 2 of the AGAR (see item 8) as an accurate record.
 - For Council to Adopt the new NALC Financial Regulations (see item 17).
 - To review a proposal from CDS for the next stage of the Cemetery Development Project and associated costs of £7,785 plus a contingency fund for the next phase of work (see item 18).
- i) to receive and note the minutes of the Community Services and Environment Committee on 10th June 2024.

6 Year-End Accounts 2023-2024 (41-2024/2025)

Members received a report from the Town Clerk on the year end accounts process.

It was **RESOLVED** to receive and note the report.

7 Annual Governance & Accountability Return 2023/2024
ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2023/2024
(42-2024/2025)

In accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations, Members were requested to consider the Internal Auditors Report for the year ending 31st March 2024, and the completed Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24 attached to the Annual Return.

It was **RESOLVED:** To note the report.

8 Annual Governance & Accountability Return 2023/2024
SECTION 1 – ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT
(43-2024/2025)

In accordance with the Council's Financial Regulation, Section 1 of the Annual Return, Annual Governance Statement, for the year ended 31st March 2024 was attached for consideration and approval. As Chair of the meeting Cllr Hewitt started to read out the Accounting Statements 1 – 9 in turn for Members to agree. Cllr Osborne as Chair of PF&R proposed that as Section 1 of the AGAR had already been considered at the PF&R Committee meeting on 17th June, the recommendation by that Committee should be taken forward (**PFR 11-2024/25**). The Clerk completed the statements accordingly.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) Part 3 for 2023-2024 and the statement was duly signed by Cllr Hewitt as Chair of the meeting and N Sewell as Clerk.

9 Annual Governance & Accountability Return 2023/2024
SECTION 2 – ANNUAL ACCOUNTING STATEMENT
(44-2024/2025)

- i) Members received and checked the year-end unaudited financial statements for the year ending 31st March 2024.

RESOLVED: to approve the unaudited Financial Statements for the year 2023-2024.

- ii) Members received and checked the Accounting Statement (Section 2) of the 2023-2024 Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) Part 3. The Clerk, as Responsible Financial Officer, had signed to certify that the Accounting Statement had been prepared following guidance in Governance & Accountability for smaller Authorities.

RESOLVED: To approve Section 2 of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) Part 3 for the year 2023-2024 subject to external audit and duly signed by Cllr Hewitt as Chair of the meeting.

10 Annual Governance & Accountability Return 2023/2024
EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS (45-2024/2025)

Following the Council's approval of Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR, the Clerk confirmed the commencement date for the exercise of public rights would start on Wednesday 26th June 2024 with the Notice of the Exercise of Public Rights to be published on the website and in noticeboards on Tuesday 25th June 2024.

RESOLVED that The Annual Return be published on the Council's website on Tuesday 25th June 2024 along with the Notice of the Exercise of Public Rights, with the period of Exercise of Public Rights commencing on Wednesday 26th June for a period of 30 working days.

11 Reports from Central Bedfordshire Council (46-2024/2025)

No reports were received, no Ward Councillors present at the meeting.

The Chair moved item 20 to be discussed at this point.

12 Neighbourhood Plan Sign Off (47-2024/2025)

Members received the Neighbourhood Plan for agreement and adoption by the Town Council (circulated to members separately). **RESOLVED** to adopt the Neighbourhood Plan. *Cllr Osborne commended the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group for all the hard work that had gone into collating such a comprehensive and informative document. He added it was important that the Town Council ensured the required engagement at the Referendum stage. Cllr Hewitt added her thanks to the Steering Group for their commitment to and hard work on the plan. The other Members of the Council gave the Steering Group a round of applause.*

13 Community Engagement at Sandy Carnival (48-2024/2025)

Members received a report from the Mayor following engagement with Sandy residents at the Sandy Carnival held on 15th June in the grounds of Sandye Place.

RESOLVED to note the report.

Cllr Sutton added that she was surprised to learn at the event that some of the CBC Executive Members that had been due to consider a paper on Sandye Place had not even visited the site and suggested that STC invite all Members of CBC to do so, before any decision by the Council was taken. Cllr Hewitt confirmed she had already suggested the action to the leader of the Council Cllr Adam Zerny. Cllr Aldis added that it would be important that the Town Council fought to ensure Sandy Carnival could be held in the grounds of Sandye Place, not just for next year but beyond.

(See also Chairmans Items)

14 Action Plan (49-2024/2025)

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

RESOLVED to note the action plan and make the following updates:

- Jenkins Pavilion Development - construction phase be updated to show Sept 2024
- Sandye Place Academy – to update timeline
- Allotment Beeston Village Site – to include a discussion between Cllr Hewitt and Stephen Mooring (date TBC)
- EastWest Rail, A1 and Blackcat Roundabout – to add that the Council would contact National Highways requesting Traffic Lights be added at the roundabout on the junction of the A1 and Bedford Road and report safety issues at the Junction with New Road, where vehicles are increasingly undertaking dangerous U turns at Beeston, due to the closure of the central reservation on the A1 opposite Caldecote.

15 Planning Applications (50-2024/2025)

Members considered the following applications submitted for comment by Central Bedfordshire Council.

<p>CB/24/00999/OUT Land North of Biggleswade, Biggleswade, SG18 0HB</p>	<p>Outline Application: Erection of up to 416 dwellings including affordable housing, green infrastructure accommodating landscaping, allotments, community orchard, public open space, children's play space, new roads, car parking, cycleways and footways, associated infrastructure including a sustainable drainage system, and vehicular accesses from Furzenhall Road and from the roundabout at Potton Road and Baden Powell Way. All matters reserved except for access.</p> <p><i>Objections raised by Biggleswade Town Council circulated to Members separately for reference.</i></p> <p>RESOLVED to object on the following grounds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not want to see a creeping development North of Biggleswade that will coalesce with Sandy • Access to the site is inadequate • The lack of current services in Biggleswade would have an adverse impact on services in Sandy as it would have to take up the slack, particularly in the
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	provision of schools, dentists and doctors.
CB/24/01362/FULL 2-6 High Street, Sandy, SG19 1AH	<p>Conversion of former bank building to, two Class E (Commercial, Business and Service) units and four self-contained flats. External alterations and extension to the building.</p> <p>RESOLVED that while the Town Council welcomes the revised plan, which include retail units, it has concerns over the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of sufficient fire exit (the cycle store would currently obstruct safe exit here). • Safety concerns for e-cycle storage in the unit • Lack of parking provision • No access to outside amenity space, in contradiction of CBC's Design Guide Section 11.11.1

16 Girtford Bridge Conference Centre (51-2024/2025)
Members received correspondence from CBC regarding the sale of Girtford Bridge Conference Centre.
RESOLVED to note the correspondence and only take up the Head of Services invitation to meet should it become necessary.

17 NALC Financial Regulations (52-2024/2025)
Members received NALC's new Financial Regulations for adoption as recommended by PF&R. *Circulated to Members separately*
RESOLVED to adopt NALC's new Financial Regulations.

18 Cemetery Extension Update and CDS Costs (53-2024/2025)
Members received a report from the Clerk regarding a proposal from CDS for the next stage of the Cemetery Development Project and associated costs of £7,785 plus a contingency fund for the next phase of work.
RESOLVED that the Council would go ahead with a Section 73 Application to Change of Conditions to Condition 15 (Approved Plan). The Clerk was asked to seek further details behind the quote offered by CDS so that Members could fully understand how each task had been costed. In addition, the Clerk would approach the RSPB for advice on the purchase and placing of Bat and Bird boxes on the site.

Admin

Town Clerk

The Clerk advised Members that while keeping costs down was important, the Town Council would also need to recognise that the required specialist knowledge and project management needed to complete such an essential development for the town, as the new cemetery facilities would be, required the appropriate financial investment.

19 Reports from Councillors on Outside Bodies (54-2024/2025)

- Members received a report from Cllr R Lock on Sandy Community Children's Centre.

RESOLVED to note the report. Some suggestions were made regarding possible storage for a baby bank, but these needed to be more fully explored.

20 Request to use Fallowfield for sporting activity (55-2024/2025)

Members received a request from the Aisle O'var Academy of Arms to hold a small private event on Fallowfield and also to receive an invite for the Mayor to award the Trophy and Medals at the event. **RESOLVED** that the event be allowed to take place at Fallowfield. The event organiser handed copies of the event's Risk Assessment to the Clerk at the meeting.

21 Correspondence (56-2024/2025)

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.

22 Press Releases (57-2024/2025)

- Call submissions for Co-option onto the Council

The Clerk was asked to look into whether a Home Page takeover on the Town Council's website would be possible to make the call for applicants more visible.

23 Chairman's Items (58-2024/2025)

Cllr Hewitt addressed Members stating it was important that the Town Council now took its next steps regarding Sandye Place to be able to take the Council's requirements for the site to CBC. It was agreed that an informal meeting be held to discuss ideas, where no idea would be off the table.

Cllr Hewitt added that Cllr Steven Watkin had offered to join the next Town Council meeting, but by a narrow majority it was felt that the next meeting on 8th July would be too soon and that the Town Council needed a prior meeting to collate ideas first. The Clerk was asked to send Members suggestions for when that meeting could take place.

24 **Date of Next Meeting**
Monday 8th July 2024

The meeting closed at 21.35