

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 25 November 2019 commencing at 7.30pm.

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

In attendance: Cllrs Doyle, Gibson, and Sutton. Mr C Robson (Town Clerk) and one member of the public.

Actions

The Chairman informed Members that item 8 would be deferred to the next committee meeting or the meeting of Full Council. This was to give time to fully review and understand the implications of the proposed agreement which had only just been received.

Admin

The Chairman informed Members he would take item 6 ahead of item 5 as a member of the public was present to speak on the item

1 Apologies for absence (74-2019/20)

There were no apologies for absence.

2 Declarations of interest (75-2019/20)

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Public Participation Session (76-2019/20)

The Member of the public present was in attendance to speak on agenda item 6, the Keech grant application.

4 Minutes of previous meeting (77-2019/20)

RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee held on 14 October 2019 and to approve them as a correct record of proceedings.

5 Financial Reports (78-2019/20)

- i) Members considered a balance sheet and detailed financial report showing income and expenditure against the revenue budget for October 2019. The Chairman went through each page of the budget report and Members considered expenditure. It was **RESOLVED** to note the financial reports for October 2019.

The Clerk informed Members that he had spoken with the Scouts who had said a full repayment for the Council's loan would be forthcoming. The Scouts did not anticipate that there would be much profit from the event due to lower turnout than usual as a

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result of inclement weather.

It was noted that the rent for the Cricket Club was outstanding. the Clerk confirmed that this had been paid and would show in next month's accounts.

- ii) Members received a budget overview report for October 2019. It was noted that the water rates were still high, which the office was continuing to investigate. However, there does appear to be a cost increase for water across all sites.
- iii) Members scrutinised a schedule of payments made since the previous meeting.

A Member asked about a payment made for a cricket scoreboard and how that would be reimbursed. The costs of the scoreboard were paid to the supplier directly by the Town Council and reimbursement from CBC Sc106 was received in October 2019.

A Member asked about a payment for wetpour. The Clerk explained that it was for repair work to the surfacing of a play equipment safety matting.

A Member asked about a payment to a R Munns. The Clerk explained that this was for two months storage costs. The Member stated that the description stated electronic ledger payment and not storage. This was due to the way the accounts system records entries and prints reports.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Schedule.

- iv) It was **RESOLVED** that the Chair check and approve the bank reconciliations and statements.

6 Grant Applications (79-2019/20)

Members received and considered a grant application from Keech Hospice Care. In the last financial year, Keech Hospice Care were awarded a grant of £200.

Members commented that the work done by the charity was very valuable.

It was proposed and seconded that a grant of £200 be awarded.

A Member asked whether the three families supported in Sandy were over the course of a year or at any one time. Ms. Davies from Keech explained that this was the number of children from Sandy supported in the last financial year.

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Admin

RESOLVED to approve a grant of £200 to Keech Hospice Care.

Ms. Davies invited Members to contact her if they wished to take a look round the facility and the work they do. The Chairman commented that he had visited in the past and encouraged Members to do so if they were able.

7 Action List (80-2019/20)

Members received and noted the action list. It was commented that there are still some snagging issues with the new depot cladding and the installation of the gates needs to be completed. However, equipment is now to be moved in.

8 Electric Car Charging Points (81-2019/20)

The item was deferred to a future agenda due to receiving a lengthy proposal close to the meeting date. Providing more time to fully review and understand the document will mean the Council can fully appreciate its implications.

9 Photocopier Contract (82-2019/20)

Members received and considered a report on the current photocopier contract and the recommendation to change. **RESOLVED** that the Council exit its current photocopier service contract early to enter a new contract with an alternative supplier which provides savings and covers costs associated with leaving the current contract.

Admin

10 10 Cambridge Road Clock (83-2019/20)

Members received and considered a report from the Town Clerk on the public clock at 10 Cambridge Road. Members discussed the matter at length.

A Member commented that the clock would not have had any work carried out to it since it was put up there but that he did hope the clock would be maintained in the future. The Council should press ahead and get alternative quotes.

A Member responded that the Council should not have a broken clock on the turret but questioned why it would pay for two clocks. The Council already maintains the Church clock, which is more visible to the community and considered the 'town clock'. This was echoed by other Members. It was suggested the clock could be removed and replaced with artwork or the STC logo to help show that the Council was located in the building.

The Chairman commented that the question was whether the Council felt it needed a clock on the roof of the offices and if so, do we go ahead

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with the costs of investigation and repair work.

A Member suggested that if the Council were to repair the clock, it should be updated to be radio controlled.

A Member stated that it was unrealistic to take a decision on the future of the clock tonight and that some money should be spent investigating what is wrong with the clock before deciding whether to proceed with any work. As the clock is not easily accessible, there will be a cost to having someone come out to investigate the fault.

RESOLVED to carry out further investigations on work required to the clock and bring back a report to the committee.

Town
Clerk

11 Rural Services Network (84-2019/20)

Members received and considered correspondence from the Rural Services Network. Several Members expressed reservations about joining this new body. The Council was already a member of NALC and there were other organisations, such as the LGA which represent the interests of Town and Parish councils. It was unclear what would be gained by joining this new body and what we would get out of it which we weren't receiving from other bodies.

Some Members suggested that it was an unknown but that given the challenges communities and town centres are facing, it should be something the Council participates in for 12 months and then reviews effectiveness and whether it will continue to stay a member.

It was suggested that if the Council does become a member it should ensure it is represented at both the proposed meetings of the body.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the Council becomes a member of the Rural Services Network at a cost of £150 per year. That the Council review the benefits it has received from being a Member after a 12-month period.

Town
Clerk

12 Scale of Charges (85-2019/20)

Members considered the 2020/21 Scale of Charges. The Chairman took each page of charges one at a time.

Page one

A Member queried whether the marking out of football pitches was included in the amount clubs paid to book pitches at Sunderland Road. The Clerk confirmed it was.

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The Chairman explained that the marking out of pitches was a charge applied for Bedford Road and was payable to the Council by the Sandy Football Club, who have a lease for the site.

A Member stated that the Sandy Football Club and the Sandy Colts had merged and questioned why the Scale of Charges still stated 'Colts'. It was explained that the youth teams were still known as Colts.

RESOLVED to approve the first page of the scale of charges.

Page Two

There were no comments.

RESOLVED to approve the second page of the scale of charges.

Page Three

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** to increase the following charges;

Interment of a body exceeding 12 years	£462.00
Cremated Remains in earthen grave 2ft x 2ft	£102.00
Cremated Remains in earthen grave 4ft x 2ft	£204.00

RESOLVED to approve the fourth page of the scale of charges

Page Four

Delete 'Transfer of ownership' as this is a duplication of a charge covered elsewhere.

RESOLVED to approve the third page of the scale of charges.

Members discussed the Council's rates for burials, and it was commented that the charges are far lower than many other authorities and represent a small amount of the costs for a funeral. It was agreed that the cemetery working group would review the cemetery charges as part of a review of the regulations and bring back a recommendation on future charges.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the 2020/21 scale of charges.

Councillor Doyle left the meeting.

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13 2020/21 Precept and Budget (86-2019/20)

- i) Members received and considered the latest 2020/21 budget report from the Town Clerk. The Clerk informed Members that the amount repayable on the internal loan from the Fallowfield Reserves should be £12,000 not £10,000 as currently budgeted. This would result in an overall precept increase of 1.97% or £2.85 per band D property.

Members reviewed the budget page by page and the following comments were made;

Budget 402 4024 (subscriptions) needed to be increased by £150 to represent the proposed membership of the Rural Services Network.

It was noted that the accountant had recommended that the transfer of £15,000 from Fallowfield reserves to the revenue budget be reduced to £7,500. This was to represent a gradual reduction in the impact on the revenue budget so that there is not the need to lose £15,000 from revenue in one year, which would have a big impact on the precept amount. It was previously agreed that funds from Fallowfield Reserves would be transferred into the revenue budget each year to support the Council's revenue costs of services and maintenance. Reducing the figure will ensure that the funds remain available for a longer period and the EMR continue to be topped up from the repayment of the internal loan. The Clerk was asked to bring a document showing how long the EMR account would last, based on the proposals.

Town
Clerk

A Member asked whether the Christmas Illumination budget could be used to install more icicle lights around the Market Square. The Clerk explained that the cost of additional icicle lights and their installation would require an increased budget. The current budget covering Christmas Lights is £14,000. It was agreed that the Clerk would get costs and options for more icicle lights which could be reviewed as part of a report from the FOSCL following the event and a discussion on how the lights could be enhanced next year.

Members noted the budget document which would be looked at again at the next PF&R meeting and a recommendation would be put to Council.

- ii) Members received and considered a report on the 2020/21 capital budget.

A Member commented that it was a good exercise to look at this

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and that it was a stark reminder of the level of funds required each year.

A Member questioned where the allowance was for trees, which the Council had agreed to plant. Although there were four mature trees to be planted this year, this was nowhere near good enough and the Council needs to do more. The Clerk stated that the four trees were purchased at a cost of £1,200 which was significant expenditure from this year's revenue budget. There is a budget of £6,000 in revenue for tree maintenance and planting. The Member felt that this budget was predominantly for maintenance and a separate capital allowance should be allowed for new tree planting.

It was commented that the Council had agreed to audit its sites to see where trees could be planted and how many. It was hoped this would allow an application to go forward to the Urban Tree Challenge. This would require some Match Funding but at present it was not sure how much. The Clerk would look to building this into capital costs for the next meeting of the committee.

A Member reminded the committee that there would still be some significant costs on landscaping for the new cemetery and laying of paths.

Members discussed the potential need for a community plan and commented that it might be prudent to include some funds in the capital budget for the start of a plan.

Members noted the report.

14 Chairman's Items (87-2019/20)

The Clerk provided Members with information on an ongoing insurance claim.

15 Date of next meeting (88-2019/20)

It was noted that the next Policy, Finance and Resources Committee meeting will be on 6 January 2020.

16 Consultation Request, Sandy Station, Bedfordshire (89-2019/20)

Members received communication about proposed works to the pedestrian rail bridge at Sandy station. Members welcomed the work but wished to submit the following comments to the consultation;

- Upgrading the bridge to a covered footway would prevent future damage and create a safer bridge.

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- The walkways on the southern side leading to the platform need to be cleared regularly and kept safe.
- It is very dark on the proposed temporary route and could some temporary lights be installed to provide safety?
- There is not adequate place on the southern platform side for cars to drop people off. It is likely people may try to drop passengers off on the southern side which could create dangerous traffic movement. Could temporary parking be created on vacant land on this side of the track?
- The path over the road bridge which will be used as a temporary route is very narrow and poses a danger, especially with the number of HGVs that use the road. Sixteen weeks is a long time and the Council would like to urge that the work is completed in as quick a time scale as possible.
- Work should take place in spring or summer when the mornings and evenings are lighter.
- Could a temporary ticket machine be installed on the southern side?