

Sandy Town Council

Minutes of the meeting of Sandy Town Council held in the Council Chamber at 10 Cambridge Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire on Monday 28th October 2019 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs P N Aldis, P Blaine, S Doyle, A Gibson, J Hewitt, A M Hill, W Jackson, T Knagg, R Lock, M Pettitt, M Scott (Chair), P Sharman, S Sutton

Absent: Cllrs C Osborne and N Thompson CBC Cllr S Ford

In attendance: Mr C Robson (Clerk), Mrs V McFarlane (Administrator), CBC Cllrs C Maudlin and T Stock. No members of the public were present.

	Action
<p>1 Apologies for Absence (100-2019/2020) Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs C Osborne and CBC Cllr S Ford. Apologies were accepted from Cllr Nick Thompson for the next three months; however it was noted Councillor Thompson hoped to attend Full Council meetings during this time.</p>	Admin
<p>2 Declaration of Interest and requests for dispensations (101-2019/20)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">i) <i>Disclosable Pecuniary Interests</i> - Noneii) <i>Non-Pecuniary Interests</i> – Noneiii) <i>Dispensations</i> – None	
<p>3 Public Participation Session (102-2019/20) There were no members of the public present, but a Member raised a couple of concerns on behalf of a member of the public.</p> <p>1) A resident had contacted a councillor to say there seems to be an increased amount of traffic around the upper school area now that the middle school has closed. Some drivers have been seen pulling up near the school and leaving their car engines running. They have, however sometimes been quite argumentative about this when approached. There also seems to be a rise in the number of pupils from the upper school seen walking in the middle of the road. The resident asked if the Council would support finding a solution to the issue and whether there is a possibility of having a footpath on the north side of Medusa Way to help alleviate the problem.</p> <p>A Member commented that children should be encouraged to walk or cycle to school.</p>	

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CBC Cllrs Maudlin and Stock responded to these issues. It is unlikely that a footpath will be agreed to due to the need to prioritise works to existing paths in Sandy, but the suggestion will be fed back to Highways. Cllr Stock will liaise with the school and PCSO Ann Jeeves will be contacted to ask for the police's support. The children are already encouraged to walk to school, but the problem could be that there are now younger children attending the school where parents feel they still need to drop their children off.

- 2) When will there be any feedback forthcoming following the recent parking survey? Answer: responses have been put together and will be delivered to residents this week.

Cllr
Doyle/
Town
Clerk

4 **Minutes of previous Town Council Meeting (103-2019/20) RESOLVED to:**

Receive the minutes of the meeting of Sandy Town Council held on Monday 16th September 2019 and to approve them as a correct record of proceedings.

5 **Minutes of Committees and Recommendations therein (104-2019/20)**

To receive and note the minutes of the meetings of the following committees and sub-committees and (if applicable) to approve recommendations therein which do not arise elsewhere:

- i) **RESOLVED** to receive and note the minutes of the Development Scrutiny Committee meetings held on 23rd September and 14th October 2019.
- ii) **RESOLVED** to receive and note the minutes of the Community Services and Environment Committee held on the 23rd September 2019.

RESOLVED that an additional Town Council representative be sought to attend the Police Hub meetings.

- iii) **RESOLVED** to receive and note the minutes of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee held on the 14th October 2019.

RESOLVED that the Council adopt the Freedom of Information Policy.

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6 Financial Matters (105-2019/20)

- i) Members noted a balance sheet and detailed financial report showing income and expenditure against the revenue budget for the year to October 2019 (previously circulated and scrutinised at a meeting of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee on 14 October 2019).
- ii) Members noted a budget overview report (previously circulated and scrutinised at a meeting of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee on 14 October 2019).
- iii) Members noted a list of payments made since the last Town Council meeting (previously circulated and scrutinised at a meeting of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee on 14 October 2019).

7 Reports from Central Bedfordshire Councillors (106-2019/20)

- i) Members received reports from Sandy's Central Bedfordshire Councillors. Cllr Stock apologised for the late update of the October Ward Briefing Notes this month due to an admin oversight, and although there was an event mentioned within it that had already passed, a separate invitation for this should have been sent out.
- ii) Members received notes from a quarterly meeting between CBC Ward Councillors and the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Sandy Town Council. These notes were discussed in detail and a few issues and questions arose.

A Member asked about verge parking and if CBC still have a policy in place for this and whether it has been taken forward. Verge Protection Orders have been brought in, but the order has to be placed on each particular verge. CBC Members asked that Councillors inform them of any areas they have concerns about and this will be put forward to Highways.

As part of the Winchester Road regeneration, the proposal of trees replacing bollards to stop verge parking also produced much discussion. CBC Councillors stressed that bollards are expensive and not very green, and CBC are currently looking at what type of trees to put in. The type of tree was discussed, with some Members saying that fruit trees were not a good option due to the mess that could be created. Another Member raised concern that any tree could be vandalised or ripped out and therefore spending £300 per tree may not be the best use of funds.

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Bollards are more effective and will last. If trees are to be used instead they will need to be mature.

Members queried the timescales for the work and CBC Cllr Stock said she would chase this up. Cllr Maudlin added that a detailed plan of the area is what takes the time, and we need to get it right in order to utilise funds in the best possible way.

Members discussed Highway matters and asked if double yellow lines are seen as an option in Willow Rise and Woolfield, after formal consultations have taken place, how will this be enforced? This question will go back to Highways, and Cllr Stock will chase for a timescale. Cllr Stock will also check the timescales for line marking work on Swan Lane and West Road.

The CBC Councillors also mentioned that a reminder has gone out for the Town & Parish Conference on 13th November which will look at the CBC 2050 Vision. This helps provide an insight into what residents want for the future in terms of updating the Local Plan, community enforcement officers, schools for the future and so on. If any Members have any passions or areas of concern, please feed back any ideas. The Clerk added that if any Members wished to attend the Town & Parish Conference, then to let him know.

Finally, the air quality and traffic levels are still being monitored at the Sandy roundabout. The results of the Air Quality Action Plan are on the website but Councillor Stock would get more up to date figures for this.

8 Action List (107-2019/20)

Members noted the Action List.

East West Rail Link: The decision on the route is due to be announced in November/December but this may not tell us where the line will be located, as some corridors are narrow and some are wide, so it might not be clear as to where the line will eventually go.

A1 – Local Issues: Cllr Pettitt reported that Alistair Burt MP put a firm case forward for improvements on the A1 around Sandy at a debate in Westminster Hall. The response from the DfT's representative gave him some cause for optimism on for example, the implementation of average speed cameras on the A1.

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The Clerk has also received a letter from Mr Burt asking for a summary of local issues of importance to be handed over to his successor. Chairs of all committees would meet to complete a response to Alistair on the issues likely to face Sandy and the Council over the next two years.

Town
Clerk

Cllr Maudlin added that the Leader of CBC Council was passionate about any issues around the A1 and he will do his best to keep pushing these issues forward.

Sandy Place Academy: There were no comments from Members, however the Mayor mentioned that the meeting with Tony Keaveney on SPA matters on 18th November 2019, will commence at 6.30 pm. CBC Councillors hope to be there if possible.

9 **Days Inn, Sandy (108-2019/20)**

Members received and considered information from Central Bedfordshire Council on their purchase and future use of the Days Inn, Sandy.

There was a lengthy discussion amongst Members about the future use of the hotel, with the main areas of concern including:

- Increasing the chances of more people crossing the A1 to get into Sandy. There are no footpaths and lack of public transport.
- How will children get to school if they have no access to a car?
- How can the consumption of any alcohol be monitored and policed?
- No plans have been made for the conference centre which is a loss of an amenity.
- There is a concern over the safeguarding of children and vulnerable people – again how can this be managed or policed?
- Sandy has also lost its only hotel.
- Who will be monitoring the CCTV – especially at night?
- The electric car charging point was to remain connected, but the Clerk has subsequently been informed that these will be taken out.

Councillor Maudlin said she would take these concerns back to Ms Begum – the Lettings and Transitional Accommodation Manager at Central Bedfordshire Council, and if any other concerns or questions come to light, Members were encouraged to forward these to herself or to the Clerk to then send on to Ms Begum. A more

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comprehensive report will then be provided based on these concerns ahead of a planning application being received for the former hotel.

10 **CCTV (109-2019/20)**

Members received and considered a recommendation from the CCTV Working Group. The Deputy Mayor thanked the Clerk for putting this item forward.

A Member suggested that CCTV footage should be downloaded every 28 days, as Council may not know that there is anything of significance unless footage is looked at. The Clerk confirmed that this could be considered as part of the Council's CCTV policy.

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the Town Council agree the solution put forward by Company B and engage the company for the provision, installation and maintenance of new CCTV cameras.

Admin

11 **Village Hall Section 106 (110-2019/20)**

Members received a report from the Town Clerk on an application for Section 106 funding. It was agreed that there was some urgent works that need to be done to the village hall, and the Clerk asked that the CBC Councillors pass on his thanks to Sarah Hughes at CBC for her work on this.

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the Town Council agree the proposal for Section 106 funding for works to be done at the Village Hall.

Town Clerk

12 **Neighbourhood Plan Briefing Document (111-2019/20)**

Members received and considered a briefing document from the Town Clerk on Neighbourhood Plans, to enable them to decide if completing a Sandy Neighbourhood Plan is the right thing for the Sandy community at this time.

The Clerk informed Members that an officer from CBC and the Mayor of Biggleswade, who are currently going through their Neighbourhood Plan process offered to speak with Members about their experience.

Members discussed the report and commented that:

- A neighbourhood plan has been rejected in the past as it produces a lot of work, can be an expensive exercise and be very long-winded, taking up to two years to complete.

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- There are no plans for housing developments in Sandy at the present time, so there doesn't seem to be a need to embark on this at the moment.
- There is currently a lot of uncertainty as to the Brexit situation and also what government will be in power. Different governments change the importance and processes around such plans and the significance of neighbourhood plans may well change in the same way previous town plans did.
- It would not necessarily protect Sandy against decisions made in the national interest, such as East West Rail.
- There is no clarity at the moment as to the route that the east-west rail link will take and what impact this will have on Sandy.
- Central Bedfordshire Council's Local Plan has still not been approved.

However, Members also commented that:

- A neighbourhood plan could state where Members do not want housing to go and could better protect those areas from unwanted development.
- A Plan could also provide a way of showing where sustainable benefits could fit into Sandy and show that Sandy is not against development carried out in the correct way.
- It could allow us to encourage developers to build what we believe our community needs and wants. It can also state how buildings should be designed and fit into a community.
- A Plan could provide a valuable way of engaging the public on planning matters.
- A Plan could be about specific issues, such as protecting green spaces, so may not need to be too extensive.

It was agreed that the Town Council was minded to produce a Neighbourhood plan, but that the current major unknowns around the Local Plan, the A1 and East West Rail made this difficult.

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the development of a Neighbourhood Plan would be further considered immediately after a decision or clarity on the route of the East West Rail Link, adoption of the Local Plan or changes to the A1 were announced.

13 **75th Anniversary of VE Day (112-2019/20)**

Members received and considered an event proposal and funding request from the Events Working Group. The event proposed is to be held on Friday 8th May 2020 to mark the 75th anniversary of VE Day – a time when the nation celebrated the end of the war in

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Europe, with street parties across the country. The events group wishes to emulate this by holding a 'street party' in Sandy Market Square on the 8th May, which is a bank holiday. The aim is also to work with local businesses to encourage footfall and promote the town centre.

It is proposed that the street food market that came to Sandy during the summer, also attend to provide the main food offering at the event. On Saturday 9th May, the public can be encouraged to hold their own street parties and there will be a service marking the event on Sunday 10th at St Swithun's church.

A Member was concerned that this event looked to be larger than the Christmas Lights Switch on Event, which is run by volunteers and with a lot of help on the day and the lead-up. He suggested that a lot of the work for this event will fall to the office staff and therefore will take a lot of man hours.

Cllr Gibson said that the VE Day event would not be replicating the Christmas switch on event, as there will be no stalls to organise, gazebos to set up and the organisation of the entertainment is mostly local and is well underway. The Clerk added that any help from any Councillor would be greatly appreciated. The street food market will have their own responsibility for setting up and dismantling stalls, so staff and/or volunteers will not need to get involved with this and the stage will be erected and taken down by the staging company.

Other points or areas of concern included:

- The grounds team is down by one person which could cause difficulty or pressure.
- A PMR licence will be needed if there is to be any canned music.
- It is disappointing to note that VJ Day has not been mentioned.
- Have the ATC been approached to help?

Dealing with these queries in order:

- The grounds team will be needed to put the barriers and tables out and put the bunting up. Any volunteer help would be appreciated.
- The PMR licence was noted.
- There has been no notification as yet of any VJ celebrations.
- The ATC have been approached and have confirmed their willingness to help but this could not be formalised until the event was approved.

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It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** to approve the VE Day celebrations put forward by the Events Group on 8th May 2020. That expenditure of £1,025.70 is incurred from the current year events budget and a budget of £2,282.84 is allowed for in the 2020/21 budget calculations.

14 Police Priority Setting Meetings (113-2019/20)

Councillors discussed the appointment of an additional Member to attend the Police Priority Setting meetings as a representative of Sandy Town Council and considered how that Member would identify priorities. A Member suggested that there is currently a group of Councillors looking at the column figures of crime figures released, and it would seem logical for one of those Members to attend the Police Priority Setting meetings.

It was proposed and seconded and **RESOLVED** that Cllr Knagg and Cllr Blaine attend the meetings. It was noted that the next meeting will be at 6:30pm to be held on 8th January 2020 at Kempston Police HQ.

15 Reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies (114-2019/20)

- i) Members received and noted a report from Cllr M Hill on the Sandy Twinning Association Anglers' Exchange Visit
- ii) Members received and noted a report from Cllr M Hill on the Sandy Twinning Association and Remembrance Day
- iii) Members received and noted a report from Cllr M Hill on the Talk of the Town Minibus
- iv) Members received and noted a report from Cllr Gibson on the PCC AGM
- v) Members received and noted a report from Cllr Gibson on the Sandy Carnival AGM
- vi) Cllr Pettitt provided a verbal report on his recent attendance at the annual NALC meeting where he stated that having talked to a couple of council members from Sussex, he noted how they cross examine and question annually their local PCC on police performance.

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- vii) Cllr Pettitt provided a verbal report on SSLA following their meeting on 8 October. The SSLA is still awaiting correspondence from CBC Officer, Mr Neil Cartwright to move forward with renewal of leases and licences. CBC Cllr Mrs T Stock offered to intervene by contacting Mr Cartwright direct. In the meantime, Dr Iain James, appointed consultant, visited the site on 11th October and will produce a report for the next meeting to be held on Tuesday 12th November. This is expected to confirm that it will be entirely feasible for the refurbishment work to proceed on schedule, meaning the all-weather pitch will be closed for six to eight weeks during next summer.

The Mayor thanked all Members for their work in producing their reports.

16 Mayor's Engagements (115-2019/20)

Members noted the Mayor and Deputy Mayor's engagements.

17 News Release (116-2019/20)

- STC have worked together with CBC to secure S106 funding for urgent repairs to Sandy Village Hall.

18 Chairman's Items (117-2019/20)

Thanks have been received from the warden at St Swithun's church for organising and funding the recent repair of their church clock.

19 Date of Next Meeting (118-2019/20)

Monday 9th December 2019

Town
Clerk