

Sandy Town Council

Minutes of the advisory meeting of Sandy Town Council held virtually via Zoom on Monday 28th June 2021 at 7.30pm

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

Absent: Cllrs S Sutton, N Thompson and CBC Cllr S Ford

In attendance: CBC Cllrs C Maudlin and T Stock, Mr C Robson (Clerk), and Mrs C Baker-Smith

Action

1 Apologies for Absence (53 -2021/2022)

Apologies had been received from Cllrs S Sutton, N Thompson and CBC Cllr S Ford.

Admin

2 Declaration of Interest and requests for dispensations (54-2021/22)

There were none.

3 Public Participation Session (55-2021/22)

There were no members of the public present. The Clerk informed Members he had received communication from a resident asking what Councillors thought about the state of grass cutting in and around Sandy. There is a mix of grass cutting responsibility in the town, with STC directly cutting some areas and CBC cutting others. CBC contractors cut some of STC's areas 15 times during the cutting season as part of a contract. The Clerk said that he had asked the Outdoor Team to do an additional cut on Beeston Green due to concerns raised about the length of grass. The weather does have an impact, with grass growing quickly this year and difficulties cutting in wet weather. Most areas in and around the town are cut by CBC's contractor and concerns have been raised with them about the quality of cutting. After discussion, it was agreed that Members should email their concerns and specific examples into the office, and these would be collated and registered with CBC altogether.

4 Sandy Safeguarding Group (56-2021/22)

The Clerk said that the intended speaker had not responded to further invites and was therefore not present at the meeting. The Chairman moved on to the next item.

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5 Minutes of previous Town Council Meetings (57-2021/22)
Members considered the minutes of the advisory meeting of Sandy Town Council held on Monday 24th May 2021 and an extraordinary advisory meeting held on 14th June 2021 and **RESOLVED** to approve them as a correct record of proceedings.

6 Minutes of Committees and Recommendations therein (58-2021/22)
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 held on 7th June 2021.
- ii) **RESOLVED** to receive and note the minutes of the Community Services and Environment Committee held on the 7th June 2021.

RESOLVED that an uncommitted £7,000 EMR received from the Tempsford Solar farm be allocated to the skatepark project.

iii) **RESOLVED** to receive and note the minutes of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee held on the 14th June 2021.

RESOLVED that the Council adopt the 2020/21 Unaudited Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2021. It was noted that this matter had been dealt with at a legally held extraordinary meeting that met in the Council chamber at 5pm on 28th June 2021.

RESOLVED that the Annual Report be approved and adopted by the Council with a few typo amendments.

7 Appointment of Complaints Committee (59-2021/22)
It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** that Cllrs Gibson, Hewitt, Lock, Scott and Sharman be appointed to the Complaints Committee. This would be ratified at the next meeting of the Full Council held in the Council Chamber.

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8 Reports from Central Bedfordshire Councillors (60-2021/22)

i) CBC Cllr Stock reported that:

The COVID cases are dropping in Sandy but there is a rise in cases amongst 20-30-year-olds and data is being analysed to see why. A Member asked that CBC Comms send out a communication to all under 30's encouraging them to get the vaccination.

At a meeting of the Winchester Road Regeneration Group today, good progress was being made and work will start in August and be completed in September/October. On completion, a Pride of Place Day is planned where white goods and flytipping will be collected and Community Safety Officers and a member of the fire service will attend to answer any questions and give advice. The tree planting will also commence in September/October.

A new single point of contact has been set up between the Town Council and Central Bedfordshire Council. The day-to-day contact will be Sarah Morgan. Cllr Maudlin showed Sarah around Sandy and explained issues of importance to her. A Member asked that as Sarah's time would be spent between Sandy and Biggleswade, how much of her time would be spent in Sandy? Cllr Maudlin did not know.

Cllr Stock has called in the planning application for 30 Market Square, Sandy. Members will be kept up to date. She added that the planning application for 90 London Road had also been called in.

The Community Asset Grant application scheme closes on Thursday 1st July and Sandy Town Council has submitted an application for the skate park project.

The next Town & Parish Conference will be on the 30th September 2021.

There will be a Greensand Country Conference on the 30th July 2021 between 9.30am - 1pm.

ii) Members received notes from the first quarterly meeting between CBC Ward Members and the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Sandy. Members noted the notes of the meeting and commented as follows;

- Pleasant Place: A Member asked who would lead on discussions with shop owners and residents about tidying

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up Pleasant Place. Cllr Stock indicated that Cllrs Hewitt and Maudlin would assist her and arrange to visit the shops.

- Structural Works around St Swithun's Way and Kings Road: A date for works is still awaiting and Cllr Stock is putting pressure on Highways.
- Disability Access in and around the town centre and neighbouring areas: Cllr Pettitt is meeting a resident this week and afterwards will consult and decide whether the appropriate next step would be to write to CBC Cllr Delgarno. A Member added that there were no dropped kerbs in Rectory Close and asked if this could be included in any list of issues or priorities.
- Fly Tipping: The Clerk reported that flytipping with an address had been found on the Pinnacle Field and had been reported to CBC for them to take action.
- Skatepark Project: Cllr Paterson reported that the project was pushing ahead, and that the Council's tender document was now online. The closing date was 26th July 2021.
- Electric Charging Points: The Clerk reported that he had discussed provision of electric charging points with CBC's Stephen Mooring and Sandy could look to include its car park in a CBC tender for provision within Central Bedfordshire. A formal letter will be sent to the Council for consideration in July 2021.
- A1/New Road: CBC Members, STC representatives and SG19 representatives had met with Highways England. Notes from that meeting are on the agenda. Cllr Stock wrote to Richard Fuller MP following the meeting to express her disappointment and a potential course of action. Cllr Stock will circulate her email to Richard Fuller MP to Members.

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- iii) Members received and noted notes from a meeting between representatives of Sandy Town Council and Central Bedfordshire Council as part of developing a 'single point of contact' with the Unitary Authority.

Members noted the topics which had been covered as part of the update from CBC and made the following comments;

- Concerns were raised over the future of SPA and Members felt CBC needed to put out a clear message to residents that no decisions had been made on what will be happening with the site, but that a process was to be followed to get the site released from the DfE.
- A Member asked as it was two years since the SPA site closed, had a caretaker been maintaining the buildings? Cllr Hewitt said that CBC had informed her that a caretaker was checking the buildings and ensuring there were no maintenance issues.
- It was noted that CBC do not feel there is a demand for educational use of the site. The Town Council needs to consider what it would like the future of Sandye Place to be with this in mind. A Member commented that the definition of 'educational use' was not clear.
- The application to the DfE to get the site released is a step forward which will allow CBC to hold discussions with the Council and community on the future of the site. CBC Comms has put out further messaging, which will be passed to the Clerk for information.
- CBC are aware of the Town Council's thoughts on the site from previous communications and submissions. There doesn't appear to be any way STC can accelerate the current process, which must be followed as set out by the DfE.
- It was agreed that the Council should respond to a letter received from CBC asking for any comments on demand for educational use of the site. Members agreed that they were not aware of mainstream educational demand for the site and would support DfE releasing the site so discussions on future use could be progressed.

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RESOLVED to write to CBC's agent reviewing educational demand for the site to confirm that the Town Council is not aware of a need for educational use, but that the site has huge potential for community use in the future. The letter should emphasise that the site is an important integral and iconic part of Sandy's heritage.

Town
Clerk

Future Meetings: The Clerk stated that Sarah Morgan was the 'single point of contact' and would act as the day-to-day CBC contact for STC. Members discussed future meetings stating that they would like meetings to be on a regular basis. The Clerk was asked to write to CBC's Ian Berry with suggestions for regular quarterly update meetings on all projects, with additional ad-hoc meetings related to specific project matters as needed.

9 Council Insurance (61-2021/22)

Members received and considered a report on changing the Council's insurance provider for the forthcoming year.

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the Council exit its insurance agreement with RSA at the end of the second year and enter a new agreement with the Military Mutual via the Council's independent insurance broker, WPS. The new agreement will save the Council £1,658 while still providing the same coverage as the existing agreement, as required by the Council.

10 Action List (62-2021/22)

Members received and noted the action list.

A Member said that Richard Fuller MP's article in the Biggleswade Chronicle on the East/West Rail Link did not accurately convey the Town Council's views. The Chairman said that he would read the article and if appropriate, write to the MP to set out Sandy's position.

11 Street Audit (63-2021/22)

Members received and noted an update from Cllr Pettitt on the street audit.

Cllr Pettitt said that this was moving forward well, and four Members had offered to complete the initial stage of the process by visiting parts of Sandy that had so far not been audited.

12 Meeting with Highways England Representative (64-2021/22)

Members received notes from a meeting of representatives from Sandy Town Council, CBC Ward Members and SG19 with Highways

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England, as facilitated by The Hon Richard Fuller MP. It was commented that Mr Fuller had pushed Highways England for resolutions on matters and stated that inaction is no longer an option. Members expressed their frustration that the same issues ran on over the years without ever getting addressed. A new road strategy is due to come forward, but the Council should push for short term improvements.

At the meeting, Highways England had made it clear that they felt that the current set up at the New Road/A1 junction was the best solution and that they would not consider any realignment or line marking. Members expressed confusion as to why this was the case, and that it had not been properly explained as to why marking the same way as other similar junctions, could not be put in place at the New Road gap.

Cllr Stock suggested that if the only short-term option H.E will consider is the closure of the gap, then an informal consultation with residents to find out their feelings could be held. Some Members expressed caution. A Member stated that they would not support closing of the gap until the traffic implications for the rest of Sandy were fully understood.

No consensus was arrived at, and it was felt that the subject needed further thought to take it forward. The Chairman stated that a further response would be awaited from Mr Fuller's office to Cllr Stock's and his own emails.

It was noted that Mr Fuller had asked that STC look to get a consensus between groups, including Biggleswade Town Council. A Member stated that BTC's issues are different to STC's and it would be hard to reach a consensus.

13 Neighbourhood Development Plan (65-2021/22)

Members received and noted a report from the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. Cllr Gibson said that this was in fact the 5th report from the group. She said that a questionnaire had been placed in all Members' trays in the office for them to complete and return and that 200 questionnaires had already been returned. The survey would finish at the end of August.

The Chairman expressed thanks to Cllr Gibson and the Steering Group for the report and all the hard work they had completed so far.

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14 Correspondence to Receive (66-2021/22)

Members received and noted correspondence from Central Bedfordshire Council. The correspondence related to Sandye Place and had been dealt with as part of discussions under agenda item 8.

15 Consultations (67-2021/22)

Members noted that the Boundary Commission for England are consulting on parliamentary constituencies in England from 8th June to 2nd August 2021.

16 Leisure Services (68-2021/22)

The Clerk said that a consultation would be going out on Tuesday 29th June 2021. A discussion would be held with interested parties after 19th July 2021. The working group considered a draft lease and were awaiting comments. A further draft of the proposed community use agreement was awaited from Sandy Secondary School. The public were concerned about the use of the school sports hall and a communication was awaited from the school also.

17 Reports from Councillors on Outside Bodies (69-2021/22)

Members received and noted a report from Cllr M Pettitt on the Sandy Sports and Leisure Association (SSLA) committee.

18 News Release (70-2021/22)

It was agreed to issue news releases on the following matters:

- SSLA works to take place in the school holidays
- Leisure consultation

Admin

19 Chairman's Items (71-2021-22)

The Chairman did not have any items.

20 Date of Next Meeting (72-2021/22)

Meeting of Full Council - Monday 9th August 2021.