

Sandy Town Council

Minutes of the meeting of Community Services and Environment Committee of Sandy Town Council held in the Council Chamber at 10 Cambridge Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire on Monday 21st November 2022 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs N Aldis A Lock, R Lock, C Osborne, M Scott, and S Sutton (Chair)

Absent: J Ivanciu-Wilkinson, L Ivanciu-Wilkinson, and N Thompson.

In attendance: Mrs N Sewell (Clerk), and Cllr P Sharman

- | | Action |
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| 1 Apologies for Absence (44-2022/23)
Apologies were received from Cllrs J Ivanciu-Wilkinson, L Ivanciu-Wilkinson, and N Thompson. | Admin |
| 2 Declaration of Interest and requests for dispensations (45 -2022/23)
i) <i>Disclosable Pecuniary Interests</i> – None.
ii) <i>Non-Pecuniary Interests</i> – None
iii) <i>Dispensations</i> – None. | |
| 3 Minutes of previous Meeting (46-2022/23)
RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the Community Services & Environment Committee held on Monday 26 th September 2022 and to approve them as a correct record of proceedings. | |
| 4 Public Participation Session (47 -2022/23)
No members of the public were present. | |
| 5 Action List (48 -2022/23)
Members received and noted the action list. | |

Allotments & Community Orchard at Beeston:

The clerk had received an email from the Town Council's solicitors that morning and forwarded a copy to all members. The lease will be reviewed at the Town Council meeting in December.

Use of Former Days Inn Conference Site

Mr Tony Keaveney attended the meeting to give an update on this and other sites (see item 6).

SID Sign Locations and Installation

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No progress had been made on this with no volunteers for Speedwatch forthcoming. A further round of publicity would be undertaken following the Christmas Lights Switch on Event. Ward Councillor Maudlin had put out a plea to Members to volunteer for the scheme at the previous week's Town Council meeting.

Admin

EV Charging Points

Tom Price Senior Sustainable Transport Officer at CBC was in attendance and gave an update under item 7.

Queen's Jubilee – Commemorative Artwork

Cllrs Sutton and Hewitt and the Clerk had held a meeting with Carolyn Blake to take the project forward. It was agreed that comms would be sent out to schools prior to Christmas and that an event day be planned for the February half term. The Lord Lieutenant was to be asked if they could attend an unveiling event in April (date to be confirmed). Initial materials were to be sent by Carolyn Blake and the new Community Engagement Officer will take the work forward when they start on 28th November.

AMP Battery Pods

AMP Clean Energy had emailed STC to report that an application to place battery pods in the Town had failed due to prohibitive costs to connect to the Grid, which made them financially unviable for the company. They would, however, consider Sandy going forward for other projects.

It was RESOLVED to remove this item from the Action List.

Beeston Green Drainage

The IBD had informed the Town Council that it had missed the window to undertake the work this year and as such this work would be undertaken in March/April 2023.

6 Former Days Inn Conference Site (49 -2022/23)

Mr. Tony Keaveney, Assistant Director, Housing Services CBC was present at the meeting and gave Members a verbal update on this site and others around Sandy.

The Meadows

Mr. Keaveney told members that his team were currently working through a discharge of planning conditions, and that a fencing contractor had been appointed to commence work to improve the area and replace the current Heras fence on site.

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He added that they were also looking to remove the flagpole. A member questioned this decision and suggested that the prominent siting of the flagpole would make it a town asset and Mr. Keaveney said he would be happy to take that decision back to the team for discussion.

Windows on the building along the A1 side were to be replaced to improve noise reduction and it was planned for works to start early in the New Year.

The team was also looking to improve the footpaths both internally on site and those externally and were working with CBC Highways on the issue.

Finally, the team was waiting on an estimate to undertake landscaping work on site, and they had been consulting with the Greensands Country Landscape Partnership on this. The farmer that grazes his cattle on the wetlands there was also due to return next year.

Members raised the following questions:

1. Q: People must cross the A1 to get into Sandy Town Centre, what is the possibility of Bus Stops being placed here?
A: The question would need to be taken back to CBC Highways. Mr. Keaveney explained that residents had been offered the services of a taxi, paid for by CBC, to get into town but most were sharing cars to do so. When questioned further on the service he revealed that it was for use to and from Sandy Town Centre only, not further afield. Answering a question about the taxi service being available for children going to school Mr. Keaveney stated that he was not clear on the stance being taken regarding children's transport but believed this would be considered by the scheme manager and organised, as necessary.
2. Q: On passing the site one Member noticed a number of toys piled up in the car park and left outside. Could more suitable storage for the items be arranged?
A: Mr. Keaveney responded that there was storage provision at the facility and that the residents were just choosing not to put them back in storage after use.

Former Days Inn Conference Centre

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Mr. Keaveney assured members that CBC would not be undertaking any work on the site without making STC aware. He also stated that they did not intend to do anything that would have a detrimental impact on the community of Sandy.

He told members that CBC had received a number of high money offers on the building but when weighed up against any benefit the proposals would bring to the community the numbers did not stack up. There were some discussions with an organisation looking at a potential building swap with the intention of re-opening the site as a meeting venue that could be hired out.

Mr. Keaveney said that they were looking for organisations that could not only afford to buy the property but also had the means to make the facility work over the long term. He added that they remained open to ideas.

Affordable Housing at Beeston

Mr. Keveaney reported that although the development was due to go to Planning for a decision at the end of September the Internal Drainage Board (IDB) had raised an objection around the siting of the development and its proximity to a culvert. The plans had been amended but the IBD had made a second objection regarding a substation that needed to be removed. Plans have now been amended and will be resubmitted this month.

A Village Green application had gone to the Secretary of State for consideration, and they were awaiting the outcome of an objection made by the Open Space Society. CBC has offered an alternative area as a compensating piece of land which it is hoped will help move the decision on. Unfortunately, these delays would have a knock-on effect for STC and its hoped access to allotment land.

Mr. Keveaney assured Members that no plans for the area would encourage residents to park on the village green.

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7 Electric Vehicle Charging Points (50-2022/23)

Tom Price Senior Sustainable Transport Officer at CBC was present to talk about why Sandy's recent bid to have Electric Charging Points had failed and to answer questions on what to do next.

Mr. Price explained that Sandy's original bid for electric vehicle charging points had failed because of the cost of connecting to the grid.

He reported, however, that Sandy would get charging points and plans were being looked at to see how higher cost sites could be bundled together to overcome this funding issue, both in Sandy and elsewhere. They had identified the High Street car park as a prime location for starters where they would be looking to install 3 charging points. This would require an area the size of 6 parking bays, and it was a balance the Town Council would need to consider. These would be the Rapid Charging Points.

In addition, they would look to put further domestic charging points at the same location, but again this would require some sacrifice of parking bays.

Other sites had been ruled out for the following reasons:

- Market Square, because of the loss of parking bays
- Railway Station Car Park, as it is on private land
- Jenkins Pavilion (SSLA Car Park), as the perception was that the area was not accessible 24 hours a day
- Sandy Cemetery as the parking facilities on site were not suitable and the site was too out of the way.

Mr. Price also talked about other options that were being explored such as a gully to enable those who must park on the street to charge from their homes without causing a trip hazard on the pavement and utilizing street lighting columns, although these did not offer a rapid charge option. These options will be explored further next year.

In terms of Sandy, Mr. Price said the town would see installation of Rapid Charging Points taking place over the next 12 to 18 months with domestic chargers taking a further 12 months to install.

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8 Riddy Connectivity Restoration (51-2022/23)

Daniel Bolt, Conservation Officer at the Wildlife Trust was present to talk about the Riddy Connectivity Restoration project that had just received funding from Highways England.

He explained to Members that the project was about improving the existing wildlife habitats at the Riddy as well as introducing new ones. The work would include some tree planting along the River Ivel as well as new hedgerows.

He mentioned a small area by the A1 layby that had a number of gaps in it that were being filled with litter and rubbish and contaminating an area where cattle went to drink. By building up the hedgerow here this would cut down the litter nuisance and ensure safer drinking for cattle.

The planting would in the short term need to be fenced off to prevent the cattle from eating it and allow the trees and hedges to establish.

Some work would be done to rectify areas where cattle had churned up ground as they access the river for drinking and new formal cattle drink would be created to encourage them to use a different area.

They were also considering placing woody bundles in areas to create a connection to vegetation for wildlife and in particular voles. However, this work would need approval from the Environment Agency.

If all went well and approval from the EA was forthcoming work would start at the end of 2023.

9 Remembrance Parade (52-2022/23)

Members received a short report from Cllr Hewitt about the Remembrance Parade.

It was RESOLVED to note the report. A proper debrief of the event would take place at a future Events Working Group meeting.

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10 Additional Seats in the Town (53-2022/23)

Members considered a request from Cllr Aldis to install several new benches across the town as specified locations and a report from the Head of the Grounds Team on restoration and repair works that needed to be conducted across STC's open spaces.

It was RESOLVED that the Clerk and the Head of the Outdoor Team work to get the most urgent work completed as well as those jobs whose cost fell with the Clerk's delegated authority. Any work costing more than £500 would need to be agreed at Committee level.

Members considered the suggested sites for new seating to be installed.

It was RESOLVED that seating would be dealt with under the following priority level and that full costs would be presented at the next PF&R for consideration for budget setting

1. Seat at the Triangle by the Mill
2. Bus stop on Bedford Road by number 8
3. Pinnacle Field
4. CBC land between Willow Rise & Puffers, Station Road.

Clerk/Outdoor Team

It was agreed that the original suggestion of a seat at the Station Approach Bust Stop be scrapped.

11 Consultation – Draft Parking Standards for New Developments (54 – 2022/23)

Members received a report from the Clerk regarding a consultation being conducted by the Strategic Transport Department of CBC. Members receive the report.

It was RESOLVED that Cllr Sutton would draft a collective response from Sandy Town Council to include the following comments:

- STC welcomes the new and improved provisions for storing and securing cycles
- STC agrees that single garages should not count as a parking space.
- STC agrees that double garages should only be classed as a single parking space.
- STC agrees that CBC should scrap the idea of communal paths and parking as the idea does not work and planners need to go back to clearly marked parking bays and footpaths

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- STC believes that Town Centre in fill developments have not been significantly addressed and that these will continue to cause issues for the future
- STC believes that parking layouts on new developments need further consideration and care should be taken that small areas at the front of properties do not encourage more on-street parking.
- STC agrees that the use of rear courts should be avoided.
- STC believes that careful considerations need to be taken regarding access for bins and cycles. Not only its effect on parking but the street environment is not enhanced with bins permanently at the front of properties.
- STC welcomes the proposal to install EV charging points. STC has limited sites that it can offer this service to residents so consideration on new development will be important.
- STC welcomes the provision of one space per bedroom for 1 and 3 bed houses. However, we do not agree with the policy regarding 3rd, 4th, and 5th bedroom properties. To leave it to the developer to provide green/garden space for a future resident to change to parking is not the way forward for several reasons. The resident may not wish to pay for the areas to be paved and instead use the road. We would not wish to see valuable green/garden areas removed in favour of more hard standing. This is not the environmentally friendly approach we wish to have in our community. The policy states that this can only be used on private dwellings, however, housing associations do buy residential houses and unless there is a covenant covering this type of purchase then this policy is unenforceable.

12 Chairman's Items (55 -2022/23)

- A consultation request has been received regarding Cycling Routes across Sandy with feedback due back in January. **It was RESOLVED** to defer this to the next CS&E meeting in January.
- No Idling signs, the Clerk had chased CBC for its report into Engine Idling. Although a survey had been conducted and the results published no further action has been taken by CBC. CBC had promised some publicity materials when they were available.
- The Council's new electric vehicle was due to be delivered on Friday 25th November in the morning. Members were invited to meet at the depot to view the vehicle when it arrives.
- Also on Friday 25th November, Cllr Sutton would be decorating the Town Council's Christmas tree at St Swithun's Church as part

Clerk

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of the Christmas Tree Festival. Members were invited along for a photo opportunity.

13 **Date of Next Meeting (56 – 2022/23)**
Monday 9th January 2023

The meeting closed at 21.43