

Sandy Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Community Services and Environment Committee of Sandy Town Council held in the Council Chamber at 10, Cambridge Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire on Monday 4 November 2013 commencing at 7.30 pm

Present: Cllr Aldis (Chairman), Ali, Butterfield, Jackson, Runchman, Smith, Sutton and Walsh. Cllr Osborne was present as substitute for Cllr Lynch.

Absent: Cllr K Lynch, Cllr Maycock

In

attendance: Cllr Pettitt, Town Clerk

1 Apologies for absence(C32/2013-14)

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Lynch and Maycock and Cllr Walsh had given apologies for her anticipated early departure.

2 Declarations of interest and requests for dispensations (C33/2013-14)

- i) Declarable Pecuniary Interests - None
- ii) Personal Interests – Cllrs Aldis, Sutton and Jackson drew attention to their membership of Sandy Enhancement Group in connection with item 10 on the agenda.

3 Minutes of previous meeting (C34/2013-14)

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of a meeting of the Community Services and Environment Committee held on Monday 23 September 2013 as a correct record of proceedings.

4 Groundworks (C35/2013-14)

Diana Hedley of Groundworks attended the meeting and gave a short presentation about the work currently being undertaken by her organisation in the Sandy area. Groundworks is an environmental charity working with different agencies and young people to develop parks, woodlands, play areas, skate parks etc as well as working with young people on employment opportunities, environmental skills and green land based skills, growing food locally and sustainably and providing youth activities. Six months previously the charity had been commissioned by Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) to provide youth work in East Bedfordshire and was now working in Arlesey, Stotfold, Shefford, Sandy and Biggleswade as part of a 2 year contract. A youth club was provided 3 times per week in Sandy, Monday and Friday were drop in youth club nights and on Wednesdays 6 week projects were being offered such as DJ skills, virtual baby project etc. During the day needs-led work was being undertaken in Sandy eg NEETs

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workshop fostering employability skills. Projects with specific groups of young people at Sandy Place Academy and Sandy Upper School/Barnfield Academy were also being developed. Ms Hedley answered questions from members confirming that their work in Sandy was all being funded by CBC. She invited all members to attend the youth club to see for themselves the work currently being undertaken.

The Chairman thanked Ms Hedley for her attendance and for providing useful information about the work of her organisation.

Cllr Pettitt left the meeting.

5 CBC Leisure Services Strategy (C36/2013-14)

Members discussed chapters one to three of CBC's Leisure Services Strategy which was to be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document following a period of public consultation closing on 8 November 2013.

RESOLVED to make a response to Central Bedfordshire Council's Leisure Services Strategy consultation in the following terms.

Chapter One – STC noted that the strategy included the provision of a new leisure centre in Flitwick, refurbishment of Tiddenfoot Leisure Centre, refurbishment of Saxon Pool and Leisure Centre, refurbishment of Dunstable Leisure Centre and development of a new leisure centre in Houghton Regis but did not include development of any new facilities in Sandy. The chapter referred specifically to provision of a new sports hall with four courts in the east area of Central Bedfordshire (which was understood to refer to new facilities in Biggleswade) and STC questioned why this provision could not be made in Sandy.

Chapter Two - Sandy Town Council noted that the accessibility standards for small amenity spaces, children's play and facilities for young people, allotments and informal recreation areas were ambitious. In particular STC noted the aspiration that allotments should be accessible to all residents within a 10 minute walk and approximately 15 plots per 1000 population was the adopted standard which would suggest Sandy needed over 180 plots. It was hoped that adoption of the new strategy meant that CBC would be working with STC to achieve this goal.

Chapter Three - the Town Council was encouraged by the commitment to protect artificial grass and natural grass pitches but noted that the commitment to secure formal agreements for the use of school sites which was mentioned with regard to football could be strengthened with regard to other sports and other pitches/facilities. This was a consideration for the whole of the strategy because many school facilities which were of great value to the community for recreation and leisure in practice seemed to have become less accessible to residents because of the move towards academy status. Finally, Sandy Town Council was keen to see the strategy include a stronger commitment to supporting and retaining the important

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assets of the Athletics Track and artificial grass pitch at Sandy Sports and Community Centre.

6 Trees at Bedford Road Recreation Ground (C37/2013-14)

The committee noted further information about possible tree work to be undertaken at Bedford Road Recreation Ground which had been provided in a report from the clerk circulated in advance of the meeting. The Town Clerk explained that since the last occasion when this matter had been considered (23 September 2013) Cllr Maudlin and the Tree and Landscape Officer at CBC had been further involved in investigating options with a resident who remained concerned about the loss of light etc to her property at Albion Court caused by a tree owned by Sandy Town Council. The resident was willing to make arrangements for work to be done at her own expense and had now received slightly differing advice from the Tree and Landscape Officer than on the previous occasion.

RESOLVED to make no changes to the Council's previous position that the trees in Bedford Road Recreation Ground continue to be monitored by the Town Council staff and that the Planning Department of Central Bedfordshire Council is contacted in 2015 to ask them to arrange for an inspection of the trees. The committee refused permission for tree work to be undertaken earlier at the resident's expense as suggested in the Clerk's report. The reasons for this decision was that permission for the work requested could set a precedent for other members of the community who did not agree with the council's tree maintenance schedule.

7 S106 Arts Funding (C38/2013-14)

RESOLVED to withdraw this item from the agenda in view of the absence of all members of the relevant working group.

8 Community Orchard at Beeston (C39/2013-14)

A report on progress with the development of a community orchard at land owned by Central Bedfordshire Council had been circulated in advance of the meeting and this was discussed.

RESOLVED to recommend to Town Council that a minimum sum of £1,000 to meet the planning/legal fees of the project is included in the 2014/15 budget and that officers are authorised to continue work on this project.

9 No Cold Calling Zone (C40/2013-14)

Members debated the value of introducing additional signs to Sandy to enhance the existing No Cold Calling Zone as requested by Cllr K Lynch. Cllr Lynch, who had stated he was not acting in his capacity as a Town Councillor, had ordered 10 signs costing £50.00 per unit (supplied and fitted) from Trading Standards at CBC to be introduced to the Pinnacle Ward of Sandy. CBC Officers had contacted the Town Council for their views about whether more signs were needed at present.

RESOLVED that Sandy Town Council did not support the introduction of

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more NCCZ signs at this time because there was a proliferation of street signs already in the town which could be a distraction to drivers, there were sufficient NCCZ signs already and because community effort and resources should be concentrated into activities designed to promote knowledge of the scheme amongst vulnerable people eg provision of more stickers for residents, more publicity, articles and information packs for the benefit of householders rather than street signs to deter cold callers themselves.

10 Sandy Enhancement Group (C41/2013-14)

RESOLVED to grant permission for Sandy Enhancement Group to plant donated hedging plants around the play area in the Limes, Beeston and if any hedging plants were remaining when this work was completed to use these to plant a copse at Fallowfield, Sandy. The community would be involved in the planting of these whips.

Cllr Walsh left the meeting.

11 Winchester Road (C42/2013-14)

A report and proposals for actions in the Winchester Road area of the town had been written by Cllrs Aldis and Ali and had been circulated before the meeting. Members discussed the report and the environmental challenges faced by residents in Engayne Avenue, Winchester Road, Maple Road, Wesley Road, College Road, Kingsley Court and Cauldwell Court. Concern was expressed that this area of the town was becoming increasingly visually unattractive because of lack of maintenance and this had an effect on the quality of life of many residents by encouraging anti-social behaviour, neighbour disputes, fly tipping etc. Members noted that over the years several initiatives had been tried to improve the appearance of the estate eg removal of play area at Mushroom, provision of parking area at end of Wesley Road etc

RESOLVED to invite social landlords and other interested stakeholders (eg Bedfordshire police, STC, CBC, NW etc) to a meeting designed to re-examine the problems in this area and to seek solutions to them.

12 The Riddy and The Pinnacle (C43/2013-14)

A report from the Deputy Clerk on maintenance plans for the Riddy Nature Reserve and the Pinnacle Hill and field had been circulated in advance of the meeting and this was discussed along with minutes of an officer meeting containing recommendations for the 2014/15 budget for these areas.

RESOLVED to approve continuation of the Riddy Management agreement at a cost of £6,039.15 plus £500 contingency amount for 2014/15 and to recommend to Sandy Town Council that the sums of £6,539.15 and £3,200 are included in the estimates for the financial year 2014/15 for the purpose of managing these assets.

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13 Estimates Process (C44/2013-14)

Members discussed potential additional recommendations which should be made to the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee for the 2014/15 estimates process as a consequence of the work of the Community Services and Environment Committee. In particular additional funds for the Christmas Lights and to assist with replacement of Skate Park equipment were considered but no recommendations were proposed.

14 News Release (C45/2013-14)

None