

Sandy Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of Sandy Town Council held in the Council Chamber at 10 Cambridge Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire on Monday 7 April 2014 commencing at 7.30 pm

Present: Cllr J Ali, N Aldis, C Butterfield, A Jackson, M Pettitt, M Scott, K Sharpe, D Sharman, S Sutton and M Runchman

Absent: Cllr C Osborne, R Smith and S Walsh

In attendance: Two members of the public and the Town Clerk

1 Apologies for absence (01-2014/15)

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Osborne, Smith and Walsh. PCSO Ann Jeeves had also sent her apologies for absence as had Central Bedfordshire Cllr N Sheppard.

2 Declarations of interest and requests for dispensations (02-2014/15)

- i) Declarable Pecuniary Interests - none
- ii) Personal Interests- none
- iii) Dispensations - none

3 Minutes of previous Town Council meeting (03-2014/15)

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of a meeting of Sandy Town Council held on Monday 24 February 2014 as a correct record of proceedings. It was noted that the draft minutes did not state that Cllr Scott had given his apologies for absence but the copy in the minute book had been amended.

4 Public Participation Session (04-2014/15)

A member of the public expressed his concern that the public participation session of the council meeting had been reduced to 15 minutes and wished to know by what power this had been done. The Mayor advised that the time of 15 minutes allotted on the agenda was in line with the Town Council's new standing orders.

A resident of Orchard Road who had lived at his address for 38 years had given a letter and photographs to Cllr Scott concerning the condition of the road. The letter was not read in full at the meeting although Cllr Scott summarised the resident's concerns about the surface of the road, its unsuitability for HGVs and the safety hazards it presented. The letter was passed to the Town Clerk for response and Central Bedfordshire Cllr Nigel Aldis promised to bring the issues raised to the attention of the Area Technician on the next walkabout.

5 Police Matter (05-2014/15)

PCSO Jeeves had provided a written report on policing in Sandy which was tabled at the meeting.

RESOLVED to note the police report.

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Cllr Scott drew attention to a threatening sign in New Road and the Clerk agreed to inform the planning authority and the police.

6 **Casual Vacancies (06-2014/15)**

The council noted the recent resignations of members for Fallowfield and Pinnacle wards. An election had not been called for the casual vacancy arising in Fallowfield ward. The time period for an election to be called to fill the casual vacancy arising in Pinnacle ward would elapse on 11 April 2014.

RESOLVED to invite applications from candidates for co-option for Fallowfield to be considered at the annual meeting of the town council on 19 May 2014 and to follow the same procedure in the event that the Pinnacle casual vacancy was to be filled by co-option also. (In the event of two co-options candidates would be able to decide to stand for one or both vacancies.)

7 **Financial Matters (07-2014/15)**

i) A summary report on progress to date against budget for the financial year 2013/14 had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

RESOLVED to note the report.

ii) A list of payments made since the last meeting of the council had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

RESOLVED to note the list of payments.

8 **Minutes of committees and recommendations therein (08-2014/15)**

The minutes of committee meetings held since the last town council had been circulated in advance and these were considered.

i) **RESOLVED** to note the minutes of a meeting of the Development Scrutiny Committee held on 17 February 2014.

RESOLVED to note the minutes of a meeting of the Development Scrutiny Committee held on 10 March 2014.

RESOLVED to note the minutes of a meeting of the Development Scrutiny Committee held on 31 March 2014.

ii) **RESOLVED** to note the minutes of a meeting of the Community Services and Environment Committee held on 10 March 2014.

RESOLVED to approve the recommendation contained within the minutes (item 4) to that a maximum of £2,000 should be allocated towards the Sandy Green Wheel project as a combination of funds and in kind contributions.

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Policy finance and resources committee meeting

A member of the public addressed the council about the recommendation to approve a draft policy for dealing with vexatious complainants and unreasonable behaviour which had been made at a meeting of the Policy Finance and Resources Committee on 31 March 2014 (minute ref 83-2013-2014). The member of the public noted that most councillors were at that meeting and so would have heard the debate and the objections raised by members of the public on that occasion. He also drew attention to a letter in the Biggleswade Chronicle on Friday 4 April which he hoped all councillors had seen. The resident objected to the draft policy stating that Sandy Town Council held meetings behind closed doors eg recent meeting with Highways and was introducing the policy to stifle debate. He argued that the policy did nothing to protect the interests of the public. He went on to allege that a former councillor had been sent away from the highways meeting because he was not on the invitation list and argued that this was not a permissible practice as all members of the council were entitled to attend all meetings. The Town Mayor advised that no-one had been asked to leave the highways meeting, a former councillor had chosen to leave but there were numerous witnesses to the fact that at no time was he asked to leave the meeting.

Members moved on to debate the recommendation to approve the draft policy and varied views were expressed. A recorded vote was requested.

- iii) **RESOLVED** to approve the draft policy on dealing with vexatious complainants and unreasonable behaviour.

Cllrs Ali, Aldis, Jackson, Pettitt, Scott, Sharman, Sutton and Runchman voted to approve the recommendation. Cllr Butterfield voted against the recommendation. Cllr Sharpe abstained from voting.

RESOLVED to approve a recommendation that the CCTV camera at Sunderland Road be decommissioned and the fibre link from that site to the Sandy hub be removed.

RESOLVED to defer approval of the recommendation to decommission the redeployable camera at Cauldwell Court until 28 April 2014 and to allocate sufficient funds from the budget to permit this.

RESOLVED to note the minutes of the meeting of the Policy, Finance and Resources committee on 31 March 2014.

9 Licence for Pym's land (09-2014/15)

Details of a licence agreement between Sandy Town Council and UK Power Networks enabling that company to utilize an area of land adjacent to their primary substation at Pinnacle Wood for the purposes of temporary parking, welfare and storage for a period of 13 months commencing in June 2014 had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

RESOLVED to approve the licence agreement.

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10 **Dog Control Order Consultation (10-2014/15)**

Details of Central Bedfordshire Council's consultation with Town and Parish Councils on Dog Control orders had been circulated before the meeting and these were discussed in some detail. It was agreed that the problems of dog fouling in Sandy were not as bad as in previous years but there were still significant problems in many parts of the town. Whilst members were in favour of increased powers to introduce dog control orders and appoint authorised officers to undertake enforcement of penalties concern was expressed about the resources needed to introduce the orders to Sandy.

RESOLVED to welcome the consultation and the possible introduction of dog control orders and to authorise the Town Clerk to complete a response to the consultation on behalf of the council.

The Town Mayor noted that individual councillors could also submit an individual response to the consultation if they wished (as Cllr Ali had done).

11 **Mayoral Nominations (11-2014/15)**

The Town Mayor reminded members that nominations for Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor could be submitted at the meeting in anticipation of the annual meeting to be held on 19 May 2014 at which the Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor will be elected. It would still be possible for additional nominations to be made at the annual meeting.

Cllr Scott nominated Cllr Jackson as Town Mayor and Cllr Sutton seconded this nomination. Cllr Scott nominated Cllr Sharman as deputy Town Mayor and Cllr Aldis seconded this nomination. Both nominated councillors expressed their willingness to serve if elected.

12 **Mayoral Communications (12-2014/15)**

The Mayor and Town Clerk apologised that a list of the Mayor's engagements had not been made available before the meeting. The Town Mayor noted that she had attended four civic services in the previous month. The Town Mayor noted that she and Cllr Maudlin had attended the High Sheriff's Awards evening on 4 March 2014 at which Jamie Bate of Sandy had received an award. On 7 March Cllr Sutton had attended the Women's World Day of prayer at Sandy Methodist Church. On 19 March the Town Mayor had attended the schools cross country relay and in the evening a British Legion meeting in Sandy at which she had reported on the Town Council's plans to commemorate the centenary of the first World War. On 3 April 2014 Cllr Sutton and several other Town Councillors had been honoured to attend installation of Cllr Osborne as High Sheriff of Bedfordshire which had been lovely occasion and the Mayor expressed the council's congratulations to the new High Sheriff.

The Deputy Mayor advised that he had attended one civic service and several mayoral fundraising events during the preceding month.

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13 **Reports from Representatives (13-2014/15)** **CBC Ward Councillors**

A report from the Ward Councillors of Central Bedfordshire Council has been tabled. It was stressed that it was not proposed to knock down Allison House but to find alternative sites for extra care homes, one site in Biggleswade and one in Ampthill. Changes in the way social care is being taken forward meant that the buildings did not have all the facilities needed for provision of extra care. Cllr Aldis reported that Biggleswade hospital was vastly underused and a review was ongoing as it had been for the last 12 months. Cllr Aldis noted that Sandy Upper School had been visited by Ofsted and the impact of the current leadership had resulted in good reports but it was not now clear whether the senior management team would remain in post. Cllr Maudlin reported that CBC was preparing a consultation on route 73 for residents of Fallowfield, the problem of finding a place for the bus to reverse safely remained and at present the option involving removal of the bollards in Medusa Way was still being considered. Two residents from Cambridge Road had asked one of the Town Councillors why a roundabout could not be created at end of Engayne Avenue? This had been in the local area transport plan but was subsequently rejected on grounds of cost because of the multiplicity of services close to ground level. Cllr Aldis suggested this decision could perhaps be revisited. Cllr Maudlin asked that the Town Council continued to stress the importance of keeping the land at the bottom of Ivel Road within the Sandy Green Wheel if it believed this was important. The Assets team at CBC was still considering development on this land.

Reports from Representatives

There were no reports from Town Council representatives on external bodies. The Town Clerk explained that the minutes from the Highways meeting organised by CBC with STC and the Highways Agency on 19 March had originally been on the agenda for the meeting but had been removed because of pressures of time. The minutes would be on the website within the next 48 hours and would be reported to a subsequent meeting.

Cllr Aldis asked that an item about the state of pavements in Sandy went on to a future agenda.

14 **Staff Restructure (14-2014/15)**

Members noted that decisions concerning the implementation of the Town Council's staff restructure had been delayed in view of the Deputy Town Clerk's resignation. A discussion meeting of the HR Advisory group had been held on Tuesday 1 April 2014 and a further meeting would follow on 17 April 2014. It was anticipated that recommendations would then be brought to an extra meeting of council on 28 April 2014.

15 **News Release (15-2014/15)**

None

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