

Sandy Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee of Sandy Town Council which was held in the Council Chamber at 10 Cambridge Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire on Monday 11 July 2016 commencing at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllrs P N Aldis, P Blaine, T Cole, M Hill, W Jackson, M Pettitt, M Scott (Chairman) D Sharman and P Sharman.

In attendance: Mr C Robson (Town Clerk) and one member of the public.

	<i>Actions</i>
<p>1 Apologies for absence (18-2016/17) Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Osborne.</p>	Admin
<p>2 Declarations of interest (19-2016/17) i) Declarable pecuniary interests – None ii) Non pecuniary interests – None</p>	
<p>3 Public Participation Session (20-2016/17) There were no questions received from members of the public.</p>	
<p>4 Minutes of previous meeting (21-2016/17) RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee held on 23 May 2016 and to approve them as a correct record of proceedings.</p>	Admin
<p>5 Financial Reports (22-2016/17) <i>Cllr Blaine entered the chamber during this item.</i></p> <p>i) A balance sheet and detailed financial report showing income and expenditure against the revenue budget for year to 30th April 2016 had been circulated in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>A Member stated that 402 'Administration Office' on page 6 seemed high at 15% expenditure in the first month. It was queried as to what this covered. The Clerk informed Members that 402 was the Cost Centre and this included 27 budget codes. The main expenditure was for general rates and subscriptions, which are paid at the beginning of the financial year.</p> <p>RESOLVED to note the report.</p>	

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- ii) A balance sheet and detailed financial report showing income and expenditure against the revenue budget for year to 31st May 2016 had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

The Clerk informed Members that 401 4001 had been incorrectly coded to 700 4001. This had now been corrected and new sheets were provided for reference.

A Member stated that 408 'Town Centre (Including Market)' on page 14 was high. The Chair informed Members this was due to general rates which are payable at the start of the financial year.

The Chair informed Members that the Clerk would be looking into 403 4036 'Property Security' as the expenditure had exceeded the budget.

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RESOLVED to note the report.

- iii) A schedule of payments made since the previous meeting.

A Member questioned a management fee payment made to the Wildlife Trust for Riddy Management. The Clerk confirmed this was for the management and maintenance of both The Riddy and The Pinnacle and included management of grazing, landscape work and maintenance including tree planting, seeding and fixing of fences.

A Member asked about a payment for Quick Release Goal Posts. The Clerk informed Members that this was part of a Section 106 application for goal posts at Bedford Road Recreation Ground and that CBC sc106 had now reimbursed the Town Council for this payment.

RESOLVED to approve the schedule of payments.

- iv) Bank reconciliations and statements.

RESOLVED that Cllr Scott scrutinise the bank reconciliations and statements and sign these as approved at the end of the meeting.

6 Action List (23-2016/17)

The Town Clerk presented the Action List which identifies Actions from previous meetings and their status.

Members discussed the War Memorial Grant fund and the Town Clerk

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confirmed that the second stage funding application had been submitted and that the Council was eligible for up to 75% of grant funding. It was hoped work would start in late September depending on the results of the application. The Town Clerk informed Members that the grant would not cover work to create disabled access to the War Memorial and that for 2016 a ramp would be purchased as a temporary solution.

RESOLVED to note the Action list.

7 Grant Application (24-2016/17)

Members received a grant application for £550 from the Sandy Detachment of the Bedfordshire Army Cadet Force. Sergeant Instructor Greg Finlay presented the application and informed Members that;

- The grant funding would go directly to aid cadets in their training and activities, including training weekends.
- Funding was made available for the Army Cadets from the Ministry of Defense (MoD); however they are at the bottom of the pecking order and due to government cuts, receive limited funds. The MoD provides the basics but individual detachments must raise additional funds. Membership has increased by 35% with 18-26 cadets each session.
- Senior cadets are going on more and more national courses and they need to purchase suitable equipment to support their development. The grant funding would be covering the purchase of roll mats and tailored equipment for new recruits to help make them feel part of the detachment and aid their development.

The Chair invited questions from Members. Members asked a series of questions, including;

- Would the Cadets consider raising the 50p subs fee?
The Cadets would not be looking to raise subs. Subs money is used specifically for social activities and developing team unity.
- Why do the accounts not reflect the number of recruits attending?
A new payment system has been brought in to better collect subs and ensure payment by all attendees at each session.
- Do any recruits take up careers linked to what they have learnt?
The aim of the Cadets is not to recruit for the MOD, but instead provide meaningful activities and projects which build vital skills. The Cadets offer a nationally recognised Health and Safety

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qualification. Many cadets have gone on to military roles because of their enjoyment of the Cadets.

- How long will it take to hear back on the other pending grant application and if it isn't successful, will you scale down needs? Expected in November, however it is a national fund and requires detailed work. Needs would not be scaled down and other funding streams would be sourced.
- What events do the Cadets attend which benefit Sandy residents?
The aim is to get more involved in events throughout the year and have secured a place helping at the Sandy Show in 2017.

Members stated that they were pleased the organisation still exists in the town and that it does a lot of good. It is good to see the Cadets at events but their main role is to support and nurture young people. If the grant is approved the Council would like a more involved relationship with the Cadets and the opportunity to visit parade evenings.

Resolved to approve a grant of £500 to the Sandy Detachment, No 5. Company, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Army Cadet Force.

Admin

Sergeant Instructor Greg Finlay invited Members to make contact with him and visit the Cadets on a parade night, with a view to presenting awards.

8 Ivel Sprinter, East Beds Community Bus Limited (25-2016/17)

Members received a grant application for £7,000 from the Ivel Sprinter, East Beds Community Bus Limited. Mr Gerry Amsden presented the application and informed Members that;

- The service provides a hail to ride bus service across the local area, offering routes between Sandy and Biggleswade and to Cambridge, Bedford and St Neots.
- The organisation is a limited company with charitable status and is approaching 25 years in operation.
- Sandy benefits more than other towns in the area as the bus goes into housing estates and more of the internal road system than in other areas.
- The group is fundraising for a new bus as the current one is reaching the end of its life span. The funds are almost gathered. A figure of £7,000 was requested based on Sandy's size against what had been received from other Councils.

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The Chair invited questions from Members.

- A Member asked why the organisation had not applied to the Department of Transport's £25 million Minibus Fund, as this project would have fitted the criteria. The group had not received the information in enough time to make an application.
- Members queried the accounts which showed a £12,000 profit per annum. Mr Amsden said the Ivel Sprinter only ever turned over £5,000 per annum at a maximum. A Member asked about income of approx. £13,000 in the accounts and was informed this was from CBC for fare concessions.
- Members queried the pending funding applications and noted that if these come in, the organisation will have more than enough to fund the new bus. Members were informed that the Langford and Biggleswade Wind Farm application had now failed. It was noted that if all other applications are successful there would still be enough to fund the bus.
- Members expressed concern that CBC had not been asked whether they would support the new bus with funding, and asked that clarification be sought on CBC commitment to the local transport and their statutory duties regarding help to provide the service.
- A Member queried the cost and expected life span of the new vehicle. It was confirmed that the £75,000 was in line with what other community organisations had recently paid for similar buses and that the life span would be 8 years.

Cllr N Aldis proposed that it is recommended that a grant of £4,000 be made to the Ivel Sprinter, which equated to £500 a year over the eight year life span of the bus. The Proposal was not seconded.

Members commented that they were not rejecting recommending a grant payment, but wished to postpone the decision until more information was available in regards CBC's obligations and passenger statistics. The project is worthwhile and the Council wishes to support it.

Resolved that the decision be postponed and that the Town Clerk liaise with Mr G Amsden and CBC to bring back more details on CBC's

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obligations and passenger data to the next committee meeting.

Clerk

9 Closure of Lloyds Bank, Sandy (26-2016/17)

Members received an email from Lloyds Bank Public Affairs informing the Council that the Sandy branch will be closed in October 2016. The Clerk informed Members that the office had previously contacted the bank in 2014 to outline their concerns about a possible branch closure. A further letter had been issued upon receipt of the closure notification. The Clerk had spoken with Lloyds who informed him that the decision had not been taken lightly and that they were sorry for the impact the Council felt the closure would have on Sandy's high street. The decision had been based on the distance to other Lloyds' branches, which in the case of Sandy, is Biggleswade. The decision made is final and the bank will not be reviewing that decision.

10 Sandy Fireworks Display (27-2016/17)

Members received accounts from the 2015 firework event held by the Sandy Scouts. The Clerk informed Members that the Scouts had decided they were unable to hold the event this year due to the financial risk involved. There is a large outlay cost with no guarantee of a financial return to make fundraising worthwhile. The Scouts do not feel they can continue to take on the financial risks involved in the event.

Members agreed that they would not like to see the event end and discussed ways in which the Council could support the Scouts to ensure the event continued. A Member stated that he could see why the scouts would not want to carry the financial risk and that it did not seem unreasonable for the Council to assist. Insuring against bad weather should be considered and if the Council funds the event there should be a Council representative on the organising body.

Councillors acknowledge that the Council did not have the expertise or staff to put on the event and as such the Scouts would need to run the event as a fundraiser as in past years.

A Member stated that the Council should not look to make a profit from the event and should only get back what we put in from ticket sales, with the profit going to the scouts. It was commented that the level of ticket prices may need to be looked at in the future.

Resolved to Recommend that the Town Council support the Scouts by funding the firework event up to the cost of £4,000 and that this money is reimbursed from ticket sales, with all event profit above and beyond this going to the Scouts. Also that a representative of the Council sits on the fireworks organising body.

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11 Safford's (28-2016/17)

Members received a report from the Town Clerk on the Safford's trip booking service offered by the Council.

Resolved to approve the recommendation that the Information Point continues to offer this service during 2016/17 and that Members are presented with further figures for review at the end of the financial year.

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12 News Media Policy (29-2016/17)

Members received and reviewed the Council's adopted News Media Policy.

Resolved to note the News Media Policy adopted by the Council with no amendments.

13 Chairman's Items (30-2016/17)

There were no Chairman's items.

14 Date of Next Meeting – 22 August 2016 (31-2016/17)