

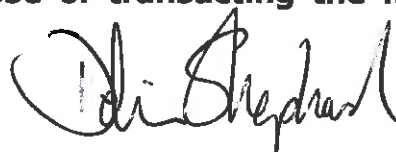
# Sandy Town Council

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To: Cllrs P N Aldis, C Butterfield, C Osborne, M Pettitt, M Runchman, M Scott, D Sharman, R Smith, S Walsh and G White

Cc Cllrs J Ali, W Jackson, K Lynch, A Maycock, S Sutton.

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee of Sandy Town Council which will be held in the Council Chamber at 10 Cambridge Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire on Monday 14 October 2013 at 7.30pm for the purpose of transacting the items of business below.



Delia Shephard, Town Clerk  
10 Cambridge Road  
Sandy  
SG19 1JE  
01767 681491  
4 October 2013

## AGENDA

### 1 Apologies for absence

### 2 Declarations of interest and requests for dispensations

*Under the Localism Act 2011 members of Council are not required to make oral declarations of interest at meetings but may not participate in discussion or voting on any items of business in which they have a Declarable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) and under Sandy Town Council's Standing Orders must leave the room for the duration of all discussion on such items. (All members' register of interests are available on the Sandy Town Council website or on application to the Clerk.)*

*This item is included on the agenda to enable members to declare new DPis and also **those who wish to do so** may draw attention to their stated DPis and also any non-declarable personal interests which they have declared under Sandy Town Council's adopted Code of Conduct and which may be relevant to items on the agenda.*

- i) Declarable Pecuniary Interests
- ii) Personal Interests

### 3 Minutes of previous meeting

To receive the minutes of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee held on 12 August 2013 and to approve them as a correct record of proceedings.

### 4 Financial Matters

- i) To consider a detailed report of performance against budget for the financial year 2013-14
- ii) To note conclusion of the external audit for the financial year 2012 to 2013 and recommend approval of the completed annual

# Sandy Town Council

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return to Sandy Town Council.

- iii) To consider a request from the Clerk to purchase additional software for the Town Council's accounts package (already approved for purchase from the 2014-2015 financial budget) before the coming year end so that the packages can be installed and working ready for the start of the new financial year.
- iv) To note advance information from Central Bedfordshire Council that it does not intend to pass on to Sandy Town Council any mitigation funding provided by central government in respect of last year's changes to Sandy's tax base as there is no statutory requirement to do so.
- v) To note future arrangements made with Sandy Football Club following previous discrepancies in billing arrangements for white-lining and electricity at the Football Pavilion, Bedford Road.

## **5 Banking Arrangements**

To consider a report from the Town Clerk on proposed changes to the Town Council's banking arrangements.

## **6 Request for amendment to parking arrangements at Bedford Road Recreation Ground**

To consider a request from Sandy Football Club to review parking arrangements at Bedford Road Recreation Ground following the imposition of double yellow lines in Albion Court.

## **7 Jenkins Pavilion**

To receive a report from the clerk regarding management of Jenkins Pavilion.

## **8 Fallowfield**

To receive a report from the Deputy clerk concerning work outstanding on the Fallowfield development and to note the implications for the Town Council workforce and budget.

## **9 Budgeting process**

To note the timetable proposed for the budgeting process for 2014/15

## **10 Review of Premises**

To receive a report from the clerk regarding potential alterations to the premises at 10 Cambridge Road

*Members of the public and press are warned that under the Public Bodies (admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended) they are likely to be excluded from the meeting for several items of business on this agenda should the committee resolve that the item involves the likely disclosure of confidential information defined as exempt information in Part 1 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972.*

# Sandy Town Council

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## REPORTS

### 4 Financial Matters

- i) To follow.
- ii) Attached.
- iii) On 29 July Sandy Town Council agreed to purchase additional software for the Town Council's accounts package together with additional training for staff in the sum of £1241 to be funded from the 2014-15 budget. The Town Clerk asks for permission for this software to be purchased before the end of the year so that it can be installed and training conducted ready for the start of the new financial year. This expenditure could be carried forward into the next financial year if this is deemed appropriate or funded from reserves. The restructure of the coding for the accounts is planned for the second quarter of 2014-15 and so expenditure need not be brought forward.
- iv) Letter attached.
- v) The Town Clerk met with the Treasurer and Chairman of Sandy Football Club on Monday 19 August 2013 to discuss practical arrangements for calculating the proportion of the electricity costs for Bedford Road Football Pavilion to be paid by the Club and the Council respectively as the Club had notified the Council that it had overcharged for some electricity. It was agreed that an initial reading would be taken on 2 September 2013 and that all future usage of electricity in the public conveniences would be calculated using the second meter in the public conveniences which records specific usage and all sums calculated would be based on the Club's existing variable day rate tariff from Eon plus VAT. The Town Council would not be charged for electricity during the early part of 2013 and Sandy Football Club waived their right to a refund on an overcharge which Sandy Town Council had made in respect of pitch marking for the previous season. Both parties were satisfied that this arrangement equalised the financial position and provided a sound basis for future charging. Members are asked to note this report.



Tel: +44 (0)23 8088 1700  
Fax: +44 (0)23 8088 1701  
DX 2008 Southampton  
www.bdo.co.uk

411  
F1/A1  
Arcadia House  
Maritime Walk  
Ocean Village  
Southampton SO14 3TL

RECEIVED  
18 SEP 2013

Mrs D M Shephard  
10 Cambridge Road  
Sandy  
SANDY  
Bedfordshire  
SG19 1JE

15 September 2013

our ref: 2013/F1/SAND27/FINAL

Dial: 023 8088 1700

Email: councilaudits@bdo.co.uk

Dear Mrs Shephard

**Sandy Town Council - Audit for the year ended 31 March 2013**

We have now completed the above audit. Please find enclosed the following documents;

- Fee Note
- Notice of Conclusion of Audit
- Notes regarding the advertisement of the Conclusion of the Audit
- Date selection form for 2013/14
- Contact details
- Survey 2012/13
- Annual Return

There were no matters which came to our attention which required the issuing of a separate additional issues arising report.

The enclosed annual return should be presented to the council/body/board, now that our audit opinion has been given, and a minute should be made to show that the annual return has been approved and accepted by the council/body/board. The annual return and notice of conclusion of audit should be displayed in a conspicuous place(s) for 14 days as soon as reasonably possible and before the 30 September 2013.

If you have any questions please contact Louise Nyland in the first instance.

Yours sincerely

Paul Bricknell  
For and on behalf of BDO LLP

Enc.

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## Section 4 – Annual internal audit report 2012/13 to

The council's internal audit, acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with relevant procedures and controls expected to be in operation during the financial year ended 31 March 2013.

Internal audit has been carried out in accordance with the council's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of the council.

Internal control objective	Agreed? Please choose only one of the following		
	Yes	No	Not covered
A Appropriate books of account have been kept properly throughout the year.	✓		
B The council's financial regulations have been met, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C The council assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D The annual precept requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with council approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.	✓		
J Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, were supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records, and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K Trust funds (including charitable) The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			n/a

For any other risk areas identified by the council (list any other risk areas below or on separate sheets if needed) adequate controls existed:

Name of person who carried out the internal audit: Haines Watts Chartered Accountants  
 Signature of person who carried out the internal audit: Haines Watts Date: 25/6/13

**\*Note:** If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).  
**\*\*Note:** If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned, or, if coverage is not required, internal audit must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).



To Clerks to Town & Parish Councils  
 To Chairmen of Town & Parish Councils

**Your ref:**  
**Our ref:** MJ/th  
**Tel:** 0300 300 4031  
**Date:** 19 September 2013

Dear Colleagues,

### **Budget Process for 2014/15**

I'm sure you will already be preparing your budget plans for next year and wanted to advise you as soon as possible about our timetable here at Central Bedfordshire Council, and our proposed approach to engagement with you and the allocation of Council Tax Support grant in future.

### **Critical Milestones for 2014/15 Budget Setting**

At our Executive meeting last month, we agreed key stages of decision making for CBC, including the presentation of our draft budget to Executive on 10<sup>th</sup> December.

Whilst it is by no means certain that by this date we will have received notification of the final Local Government settlement for next year from Central Government, we are working on the assumption that this will have been delivered. This would enable us to draft a relatively robust draft budget.

Following consultation with our own Overview and Scrutiny Committees, other stakeholders and the public, the revised budget will be presented once again to Executive on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2014 in advance of formal approval by full Council on 20<sup>th</sup> February.

### **Critical Milestones for Town and Parish Councils**

Following your helpful feedback on our Precept Request forms, we have revised the format of these and intend to circulate these to you during November 2013. The revised format has been designed to make as explicit as possible the full effect on Council Tax of your proposed precept.

We will be seeking your return of the Precept Request forms no later than 24<sup>th</sup> January to ensure we are in a position to conclude the budget process fully and accurately by 20 February.

/ Cont'd .....

Central Bedfordshire Council  
 Priory House, Monks Walk  
 Chicksands, Shefford  
 Bedfordshire SG17 5TQ

**Telephone** 0300 300 8301  
**Email** [customer.services@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:customer.services@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)  
[www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

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### **Council Tax Support Grant (CTS Grant)**

You will recall that as a result of national changes to the benefits system, in May 2012 the Government issued a consultation on the funding arrangements for localising Council Tax Support.

This consultation acknowledged the potential impact on the Council Tax base that would arise as a result of changes to the benefits system, and provided indicative amounts for a Council Tax Support Grant which might be applied to local authorities to help offset these impacts. It did not, however, specify how local authorities should distribute any grant that it would receive.

Whilst a number of Councils decided not to redistribute any Council Tax Support Grant, this authority took a one off decision to allocate from its resources the Council Tax Support grant to Town and Parish Councils in order to alleviate the impact of the system changes and ease the first year of transition to the new regime.

Looking ahead to next year, the Government has issued a provisional Settlement for 2014/15. This did not separately identify any amount for CTS Grant and overall the Settlement amount for Central Bedfordshire Council was £5.438m, or 7.7%, lower than that for 2013/14.

Since publication of the provisional Settlement, the June Spending Review outlined a further 1% cut to Local Government funding. There are also other changes to funding currently being discussed, the impact of which is not yet known, but which may also be adverse for Central Bedfordshire Council.

In view of this and the continuing considerable pressures we face to fund the increasing demands for Children's Services and Adult Social Care, at this point we do not anticipate being in a position to allocate any Council Tax Support grant to either Town or Parish Councils and I would ask you to please factor this into your financial planning for next year and beyond.

I appreciate that this news may not find favour with many of you but I hope you will appreciate the commitment this Council has to freeze its Council Tax precepts to local residents and, indeed, the sanctions it would face (by way of a local referendum) should it increase its precept by more than 2%.

I know many of you will be aware of the considerable savings we have already had to find as a Unitary Authority, some £50m since our creation in 2009.

We are ready to continue to deliver the efficiencies we need to protect front line services whilst managing reducing budgets.

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However, in this context we also need to consider the rationale for every payment that we make and in this context I trust that you will understand why it is neither feasible or realistic for us to make "grant" payments from budgets that have been subject to significant cuts from Central Government and for which there is no statutory requirement for us to do so.

Yours sincerely



**Cllr Maurice Jones**  
**Deputy Leader of the Council &**  
**Executive Member for Corporate Resources**

Tel: 0300 300 8536

E-mail: [maurice.jones@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:maurice.jones@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

Central Bedfordshire Council  
Priory House, Monks Walk  
Chicksands, Shefford  
Bedfordshire SG17 5TQ

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# Sandy Town Council

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## 5 Banking Arrangements

### Clerk's Report

The Town Clerk has reported previously on difficulties with the council's present bankers (Barclays Bank) in respect of changes to the council's sweep facility between accounts, difficulties in adding signatories, difficulties in closing accounts and establishing telephone and internet banking. Although specific problems have been overcome the council remains in the position that only one member of staff has access to online statements and the ability to make transfers between accounts (ie the Town Clerk). Barclays advise it is not possible to extend this to a second officer for security reasons. The town council's Relationship Manager has changed repeatedly during the past two years. For these reasons it has been suggested that the Town Council should consider changing providers. On the positive side the council has a long relationship with Barclays, enjoys free banking (whilst in credit), there is a Barclays branch in Sandy and the bank is considered secure.

The Town Clerk has compared experiences with other councils and made preliminary investigations about potential alternatives. Anecdotal evidence from other councils is that the high street banks provide broadly similar services and many councils experience similar problems. A considerable number of councils have moved to Unity Trust Bank which has a current account tailored for community groups, Town Councils, Charitable Industrial and Profitable Societies etc. The bank has no branches and relies on the Post Office or another nominated high street bank for paying in. All other services are internet based. The bank also boasts ethical banking. The Co-op Bank itself is also popular with local councils as it has a good appreciation of council structures and makes changes of signatory very easy (eg relying on election results for proof of ID etc). However, interest rates on deposit accounts may not be as beneficial as those offered by larger institutions and members will want to be mindful of the stability and security offered by different institutions. The Town Clerk's previous experience of internet banking with the Co-op for local councils is mixed.

If council wishes to pursue a change of bankers further work will be undertaken to provide a comparison between the offers of different banks. This will entail a considerable amount of work and it is suggested that this is not undertaken until the budgeting process is completed and improvements to the council's accounting software have been made.



# Sandy Town Council

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## **6 Request for amendment to parking arrangements at Bedford Road Recreation Ground**

Following the imposition of yellow lines on both sides of Albion Court Sandy Football Club has asked Sandy Town Council to review the decisions it made about parking arrangements at Bedford Road Recreation Ground at a meeting on 14 January 2014. At this meeting it was resolved that no parking was to be allowed within Bedford Road Recreation Ground as stated in the lease and individual requirements for access and parking in Bedford Road Recreation Ground would be dealt with on a case by case basis by the Town Council,

Members may remember that the council's original regulations for the recreation ground prohibit parking anywhere within the ground and form a part of the lease between the council and the Football Club. The Club has pedestrian access to the pitch only. However, exceptions to the regulation have been made for an ice cream van during the summer months and on occasion for the Football Club to load and unload. Occasionally town council staff or other contractors park within the recreation ground.

It is generally accepted that parking near to the recreation ground has now become more difficult for all users of the facility. However as the council's health and safety officer the Clerk recommends that the original regulations for the recreation ground should not be relaxed as the park is frequented by children of all ages and vehicle movements within or close to a play area are not desirable for obvious reasons.

The Clerk has asked the Football Club and others to take photographs and record any evidence of dangerous parking and congestion in Bedford Road especially at weekends and once evidence is collected the Club and/or the council may wish to approach Central Bedfordshire Council to review the decision to impose double yellow lines on both sides of Albion Court.



# Sandy Town Council

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## 7 Jenkins Pavilion Clerk's Report

A copy of the current management agreement between Sandy Town Council and Stevenage Leisure Ltd for management of Jenkins Pavilion is attached. Central Bedfordshire has gone out to tender for the management contract for its leisure facilities including Sandy Leisure Centre and it is proposed to include management of the Jenkins Pavilion in the new contract. The general terms proposed by Central Bedfordshire are shown below.

- CBC include the management of the Jenkins Pavilion within the Leisure Management Contract for Saxon Pool and Leisure Centre, Flitwick Leisure Centre, Houghton Regis Leisure Centre and Sandy Sports Centre as an additional facility with the Sandy Sports Centre.
- That included within the management responsibilities for the Jenkins pavilion management is the requirement to implement the Football Development Plan to meet the requirements of the Football Foundation and to achieve successful monitoring of the grant requirements.
- All costs involved in the maintenance and operation of the centre (including Utility costs and Council tax) will become the Contractors responsibility.
- CBC will monitor the performance of the Contractor and report back to Sandy Town Council monthly on an agreed set of KPI and arrange a meeting between the Contractor and the Council on a quarterly bases.
- CBC will undertake an annual Condition Survey on the facility to ensure that the facility is being maintained and looked after correctly by the contractor.
- CBC will include the Jenkins Pavilion into all its monitoring systems to ensure that it achieves the aims and objective of both the Town Council and CBC.
- CBC will ensure that organisations that have current agreements to use the facility with the Town Council are able to continue this use.
- CBC will require the contractor to report separately on the income and expenditure of the Jenkins pavilion so that it can provide financial details to the Town Council.
- Any profits that are made from the management of the Jenkins pavilion will be identified and reinvest into the pavilion following discussion with the Town Council.
- Sandy Town Council will pay £15k per annum to CBC to cover the cost of the facility within the contract, this will be increased by October's CPI figure every April for the length of the contract.

# Sandy Town Council

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- Sandy Town Council will undertake the grounds maintenance of Sunderland Road Recreation at their expense and will continue to lease directly with both the Cricket Club and the Football clubs\* regarding maintenance and use of the pitches.
- Sandy Town Council will remain responsible for lifecycle costs i.e. boiler replacement, etc.

\*The Town Clerk has already advised Central Bedfordshire Council that Sandy Town Council is likely to require the contractor to undertake bookings and invoicing for pitches as well as for facilities within the Jenkins Pavilion in line with the current management agreement.

Members will note that the new terms quote a management fee of £15,000 as compared with the current fee of £19,500 for 2013/14. In addition to this utility costs are also transferred to the contractor. For the year ending 2012/13 utility costs were:

Water	£1,114
Gas	£4,056
Electricity	£1,573
<b>Total</b>	<b>£6,743</b>

A further significant change in the proposed terms is that any profit should be reinvested in the building rather than split between the contractor and the town council.

The council has received monthly management reports from SLL for the first 5 months of the financial year (to end August 2013). Pavilion usage figures have increased compared with the like period for 2012.

Council will need to decide

- i) whether to proceed with outsourcing of the management of the Pavilion as part of the CBC leisure contract
  - ii) whether the terms proposed by CBC are acceptable
- and the committee is asked to make a recommendation to council.

**Agreement between Sandy Town Council and Stevenage Leisure Ltd for operation and management of the Jenkins Pavilion and booking of associated pitch facilities at Sunderland Road Recreation Ground, Sandy SG19 1TH**

- 1 The agreement is for an initial period of 12 months commencing on 2 April 2012
- 2 Sandy Town Council will pay a management fee of £19,500 to Stevenage Leisure Ltd for this period
- 3 Stevenage Leisure Ltd agrees to use the management fee to provide
  - i) Cleaning and maintenance of the Jenkins Pavilion
  - ii) Rates payable on the Jenkins Pavilion
  - iii) H&S legislative checks necessary for the operation of the Jenkins Pavilion
  - iv) Bookings management for the Jenkins Pavilion and the cricket and football pitches at Sunderland Road Recreation Ground
- 4 Sandy Town Council agrees to retain responsibility for
  - i) Utilities
  - ii) Buildings and pitch insurance
  - iii) Maintenance of the cricket wicket and outfield
  - iv) Maintenance of the football pitches
  - v) Maintenance of all other outdoor facilities at Sunderland Road Recreation Ground for which the Council is responsible
- 5 The following bookings will remain in place under Sandy Town Council's previous commitments and will attract a protected bookings fee:
  - Sandy Cricket Club (terms of lease between Sandy Town Council and Sandy Cricket Club will apply)
  - Sandy Colts Football Club (fee agreement between Sandy Town Council and Sandy Colts Football Club will continue)
  - Sandy Brownies and Rainbows (protected booking rate will continue)
 These fees will be communicated to Stevenage Leisure Ltd in writing by Sandy Town Council

- 6 All other bookings will be made using a standardised pricing for the facilities agreed between Sandy Town Council and Stevenage Leisure Ltd
- 7 Stevenage Leisure Ltd will be responsible for ensuring that all users are aware of their H&S responsibilities and ensuring that appropriate use of the premises is maintained
- 8 Sandy Town Council will inspect the cricket and football pitches on a regular basis and between Monday and Friday will advise Stevenage Leisure in a timely manner if weather or other conditions result in the pitches becoming unplayable at any time
- 9 On weekend days Stevenage Leisure Ltd will be responsible for inspecting the pitch and determining whether conditions permit play
- 10 Stevenage Leisure Ltd will take responsibility for notifying teams that pitch conditions prohibit play
- 11 Stevenage Leisure Ltd undertakes to
  - i) Inspect the premises on a daily basis and maintain them to the highest possible standard of cleanliness, safety and security
  - ii) Return the premises to the owner in the same condition in which they took over the premises
  - iii) To report to Sandy Town Council any significant damage to the premises and/or any criminal activity associated with the premises which shall be reported to the police
  - iv) Provide Sandy Town Council with a monthly usage report and P&L account
  - v) Meet with the Town Clerk (at a minimum) on a quarterly basis to discuss the operation of this agreement
  - vi) Advertise, market and promote the facilities at Jenkins Pavilion
  - vii) Work to increase bookings and usage of the Jenkins Pavilion by developing positive synergies between Sandy Sports Centre and the Jenkins Pavilion for the benefit of local people
  - viii) Work to exploit development opportunities with the FA following review of the existing football development plan



- ix) Provide users of the facility with a customer user forum to enable them to express concerns and contribute their views and to take these concerns and views into account in providing appropriate management of the facility

12 Sandy Town Council undertakes to

- i) Provide Stevenage Leisure Ltd with full access to all information it requires pertaining to the premises
- ii) Allow Stevenage Leisure Ltd to use the premises in whichever way it deems most appropriate to secure the shared goals of increased community usage and cost effective management of the facility
- iii) Use the bookings system provided by Stevenage Leisure Ltd if the Council wishes to make use of the premises itself and respect all previous bookings accepted by Stevenage Leisure Ltd

13 No alterations to the internal or external physical structure of the premises will be undertaken by either party during the term of this agreement unless a separate written agreement between the parties is reached

14 Stevenage Leisure Ltd will be responsible for providing additional signage at the premises to be funded from the management agreement fee, the location and design of which is to be approved by Sandy Town Council

15 At the end of the 12 month agreement 50% of any surpluses generated at the Jenkins Pavilion by Stevenage Leisure Ltd will be paid to Sandy Town Council and 50% will be retained by Stevenage Leisure Ltd



# Sandy Town Council

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## 8 Fallowfield

### **Deputy Clerk's Report**

Cllr Sharman, Cllr White and the Deputy Town Clerk recently visited Fallowfield to identify areas for improvement.

The Town Council took over ownership of various plots of public open space in Spring 2012, the plots vary greatly in size. The play area was installed in 2011 and the planting of the large recreation ground site (Fallowfield Recreation Ground) was undertaken only a short time before the land transfer from Kier Homes to Sandy Town Council took place. Plan showing all the locations attached.

Fallowfield Recreation Ground which is located adjacent to Maple Tree Lower School is a large open space with amenity grass, two play areas and planting.

### **A Fallowfield Recreation Ground**

#### ***1 Play Equipment***

Children's Playgrounds are inspected annually by an independent specialist to ensure the long term safety of the site, equipment and ancillary items. This will meet legal and insurance responsibilities as well as complying with the requirements of [EN1176](#) (the new European Playground Standard).

Following this year's ROSPA inspection, the Town Council instructed Park Leisure the play installer to carry out various works to the play equipment.

Members are reminded that the four pedestrian entrance gates to the play areas are not fully functional and cannot be repaired. On 10.12.12 Community Services and Environment Committee (CS&E) resolved that the Town Council would not replace the four gates at the entrances to the play areas on the large open space. On 25.06.12 CS&E meeting resolved to note the Clerk's report and expressed disappointment that the play equipment was not in 100% good condition.

The grass in front of the ball wall is heavily worn and rubber matting that allows grass to grow through it may be needed in future.

#### ***2 Planting 2012***

The planting of the recreation ground was completed for Kier Homes shortly before the Town Council became responsible for the area. A number of the trees and shrubs have failed in the eighteen months since then because the trees have been snapped and the shrubs have been trampled on.

# Sandy Town Council

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The Town Council now has three options for dealing with this:

**Option 1** replacement planting of the trees that have been snapped and the shrubs that have been trampled at an approximate cost of £4250 for materials.

**Option 2** no replanting of the trees that have been snapped, removal of the landscape material and grass seeding over of the areas that were initially planted with shrubs at an approximate cost of £150 for materials.

**Option 3** a mixture of option 1 and 2 (replacement planting of selected failed areas with trees and shrubs and grass seeding over of other areas) at an approximate cost of £1,250 for materials.

If the council proceeds with option 1 or 3 it will be necessary to protect the shrubs to enable them to establish successfully. A physical barrier (possibly additional bow top fencing) could be installed at some of the entrance areas at an approximate cost of £4,250 for the fencing to be supplied and installed.

If the council proceeds with option 2 it may still be necessary to protect certain areas (to lesser extent than option 1 or 3) to allow the grass seeding to be successful at an approximate cost for materials of £2,850.

**Recommendation that option 3 is chosen and bow top fencing is installed to protect the planting.**

### ***3 Grass Cutting***

Following adoption arrangements were made for the grass cutting of the public open space in Fallowfield to be undertaken by Central Bedfordshire Council's contractors on the same schedule as all other public open space in Sandy ie 15 cuts per season.

The quality of the contractor's work at the large recreation ground has varied between satisfactory and poor. Problems include, poor and incomplete cutting, lack of overlap, litter being chopped by mower, lack of information about scheduling.

To improve the standard of the grass cutting and to prevent litter being chopped the Town Council may need to arrange for the outdoor staff to undertake this work.

# Sandy Town Council

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## **4 Litter**

The Town Council carries out regular litter picking of the recreation ground and emptying of the litter bins the frequency depending upon length of daylight hours and school holidays. During the summer school holidays the amount of litter deposited in the receptacles and on the floor increases significantly.

Now the school holidays have passed, the outdoor staff have been instructed to reduce the frequency of litter picking of all of the Town Council's recreation grounds, so that other tasks can be undertaken. It is on occasion necessary for the office staff to ask the outdoor staff to carry out reactive litter picking of the council's open spaces.

This site has only three litter bins, one each in the two play areas and a further bin located on Merlin Drive.

**Recommendation: that five additional bins are installed an additional bin in each play area, a bin near the ball wall and a bin at the two entrances to the site that do not have a bin. Approximate cost to purchase the bins and materials to install five additional bins £2,000.**

## **B Goldfinch Drive**

Goldfinch Drive was original planned as an area of open space with a young children's play area. The play area located in Goldfinch Drive was removed before the play areas in Fallowfield Recreation Ground were installed. Goldfinch Drive is now an area of open space with trees, shrubs and hedging planted.

A number of the trees, shrubs and hedging have failed, though the failure rate is to a far lesser extent than the losses in Fallowfield Recreation Ground, the majority of the failures are to shrubs and hedging which have been trampled on.

The Town Council has three options with regard to the loss of a number of trees and shrubs.

**Option 1** replacement planting of the shrubs and hedging that have been trampled at an approximate cost for materials of £1950.

**Option 2** grass seeding over of the areas that were initially planted with shrubs and hedging at an approximately cost of £75 for materials.

**Option 3** a mixture of option 1 and 2 (replacement planting of selected

# Sandy Town Council

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failed areas with shrubs and hedging and grass seeding over of other areas) at an approximate cost of £750 for materials.

If the council proceeds with option 1 or 3 protection of the the shrubs and hedging will be necessary to enable them to establish successfully this may be achieved by a temporary physical barrier (possibly chestnut pale fencing) at an approximate cost of £200 for materials.

**Recommendation that option 3 is chosen and chestnut pale fencing is installed to protect the planting.**

## **C Open space along Sunderland Road, behind even numbers of The Harriers**

The open space is a banked area which is approximately 250 metres long being of varying depth with amenity grass, shrubs and trees.

The shrub planting in this area has been established for several years and is now overgrown due to a lack of maintenance. The outdoor staff have started hard pruning some of the shrubbery. The trees growing in this area are of mixed species and are generally planted at the top of the banks. Some of the trees appear to have originally been ball top variegated maples, though these have reverted to green and are now growing into large trees.

**Recommendation that some of the trees are removed and replaced with ornamental trees at an approximate cost of £975.**

The Town Council has received complaints from a resident with regard to shading from one of the Maple trees growing at the top of the bank. The Highways department had arranged for the Maple to be removed as they believed that the tree was on highway land, the Town Council was contacted by another resident as they would like the tree retained, and the tree was not removed as the tree is on Town Council land. Maples will grow into very large trees and this species in this location is not suitable.

**Recommendation: that the Maple tree is removed by a contractor and replaced with a smaller growing tree in a nearby location at an approximate cost of £325.**

One area has a number of railway sleepers and these are severely rotten, removal and potentially replacements will need to be considered in due course.

This location has six spot lights which are in poor condition and with some bare wires, an electrical contractor has been instructed to carry

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out investigations. The electrical contractor has advised that the lights are not currently live, though the location of the power source(s) for these lights is not known, it may be possible that the site power source comes from the show homes for the development.

## **D Open space along Sunderland Road, starting behind odd numbers of Woodcock close to even numbers of Fieldfare**

The open space is a banked area which is approximately 1000 metres long being of varying depth with amenity grass, shrubs and trees.

The shrub planting in this location is of mixed species and has been established for several years but not been maintained. In places residents have started to cut down the vegetation.

**Recommendation: that the shrub planting in this area is significantly reduced in size to allow the area to be managed and maintained effectively by the outdoor staff. This work is likely to take a great deal of time to complete and will generate a large amount of vegetation. To allow the outdoor staff to spend a significant amount of time in this and other areas of Fallowfield, the frequency of tasks elsewhere in the town must be reduced.**

If major work is required to the trees this will need to be completed by an outside contractor as the outdoor staff do not have the skills to undertake this work.

## **E Open space along Sunderland Road, behind odd numbers of The Jays**

The open space is a banked area which is approximately 175 metres long being of varying depth with amenity grass, shrubs and trees.

The shrub planting in this location is of mixed species and has been established for several years and also not maintained for several years. In places residents have started to cut down the vegetation.

**Recommendation: that the shrub planting in this area is significantly reduced to allow the area to be managed and maintained effectively by the outdoor staff. This work is likely to take a great deal of time to complete and will generate a large amount of vegetation. To allow the outdoor staff to spend a significant amount of time in this and other areas of Fallowfield, the frequency of other tasks elsewhere in the town must be reduced.**

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## **Summary**

The Fallowfield area requires a lot of work to be undertaken to bring the area up to the same standard as the rest of the areas that the Town Council looks after within Sandy.

## **Recommendations:**

- **that to complete the works to the shrub beds the frequency of the work undertaken in the other areas of the town is reduced.**
- **that five additional litter bins are installed in the Fallowfield Recreation Ground at a cost of £2,000 for the bins and materials.**
- **that replacement planting is planted in the Recreation Ground and Goldfinch Drive and fencing is installed of two types, bow top fencing in the recreation ground and chestnut pale fencing in Goldfinch Drive at an approximate cost for materials of £6,450.**
- **that the Town Council undertakes the grass cutting of the large recreation ground and other areas that the Town Council maintains are not maintained as frequently to allow for the outdoor staff to undertake this work within the normal working week.**
- **that some of the trees behind the Harriers / Avocet Close are removed and replaced with ornamental trees at an approximate cost of £975.**
- **that the Maple tree behind 16 The Harriers is removed by a contractor and replaced with a smaller growing tree in a nearby location at an approximate cost of £325.**
- **that the shrub planting on Sunderland Road, starting behind odd numbers of Woodcock close to even numbers of Fieldfare is significantly reduced in size to allow the area to be managed and maintained effectively by the outdoor staff. This work is likely to take a great deal of time to complete and will generate a large amount of vegetation. To allow the outdoor staff to spend a significant amount of time in this and other areas of Fallowfield, the frequency of tasks elsewhere in the town must be reduced.**

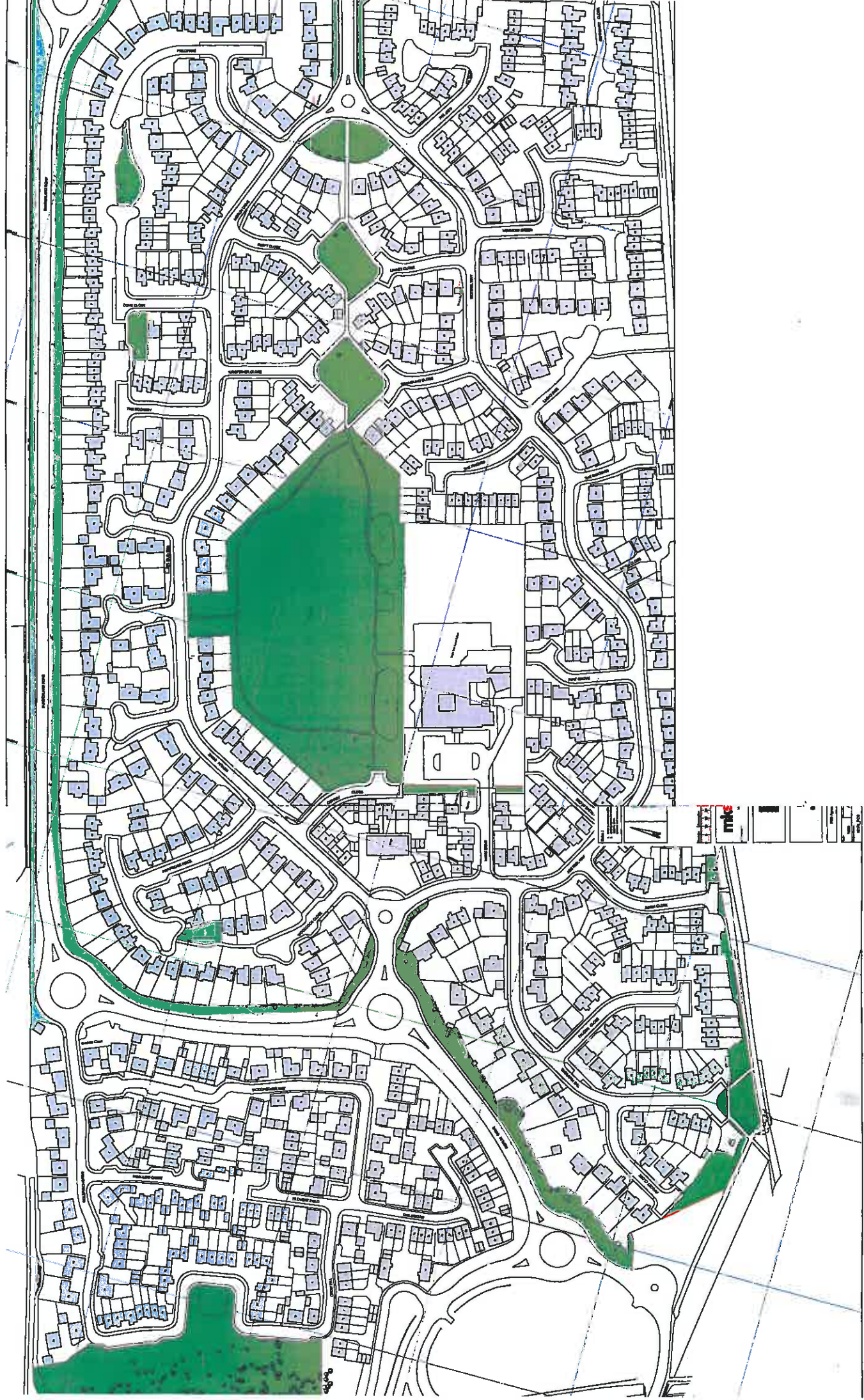


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- **that the shrub planting along Sunderland Road, behind odd numbers of The Jays is significantly reduced to allow the area to be managed and maintained effectively by the outdoor staff. This work is likely to take a great deal of time to complete and will generate a large amount of vegetation. To allow the outdoor staff to spend a significant amount of time in this and other areas of Fallowfield, the frequency of other tasks elsewhere in the town must be reduced.**

The Town Council has received a large number of complaints about Fallowfield in the last eighteen months. To reduce the complaints in the Fallowfield area various improvements are required, this will have an impact on the rest of the town and this may result in the Town Council receiving complaints with regard to other areas of the town. Members may recall that the Town Council received a commuted sum of £380,000 to take over the ownership, management and maintenance of various pieces of land in the Fallowfield area.



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## 9 **Budget Timetable**

**PF&R Committee Monday 14 October 2013** – followed by Financial Workshop 2 (if time permits) premises alterations to be discussed

**Town Council Monday 21 October 2013** - Presentation from DCK Beavers

**CS&E Committee Monday 4 November 2013** – any recommendations to go to PF&R

**PF&R Committee Monday 25 November 2013** – recommendations and instructions to Town Clerk re first draft

**Town Council 2 December 2013** – First draft of budget discussed

**PF&R Committee 6 January 2013** - Second draft of budget discussed and recommendation to Town Council

**Town Council 13 January 2013** – Final draft of budget approved and precept agreed.

In addition to these scheduled meetings it is planned to have an HR Advisory Group prior to the PF&R Committee meeting on 25 November 2013 and potentially a second HR Advisory Group meeting as scheduled on 23 December 2013. It is expected that the recommendations of the staff review group will be discussed and recommendations made to PF&R in time for 25 November 2013. If necessary additional meetings can be scheduled.



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## **10 Review of Premises**

At the last meeting of the premises review group (which met jointly with the staff review group) it was agreed to obtain "ball park" figures for specific alterations to the building at 10 Cambridge Road. A basic specification was produced by the Town Clerk and approximate costings have been provided by one builder, a second estimate is awaited. These figures have not been put into the public domain because it is possible that the council may invite formal quotations in response to a detailed specification from these and/or other builders.

Members are asked to note the information provided which will be of use in the forthcoming budgeting process.

