

Sandy Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee of Sandy Town Council held in the Council Chamber at 10 Cambridge Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire on Monday 17 February 2014 commencing at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs P N Aldis, C Butterfield, C Osborne (Chairman), M Pettitt, M Runchman, M Scott and D Sharman

Absent: Cllr R Smith and Cllr S Walsh

In attendance: Cllrs J Ali and W Jackson, Town Clerk and one member of the public.

	Action
1 Apologies for absence (65-2013/2014) Apologies for absence were received from Cllr R Smith and Cllr S Walsh	Admin
2 Declarations of interest (66-2013/2014) i) Declarable Pecuniary Interests - None ii) Personal Interests – Cllr Osborne drew attention to his office of Chairman of Sandy Football Club in connection with item 6 and anything to do with the Club, Cllr Scott did likewise as President of Sandy Football Club, and Cllr Pettitt did likewise as an office holder at both Sandy Cricket Club and Sandy Colts FC.	
3 Minutes of previous meeting (67-2013/2014) RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee held on 6 January 2014 and to approve them as a correct record of proceedings.	Admin
4 Financial Matters (68-2013/2014) i) A report on progress to date against budget for the financial year 2013/14 was considered and it was RESOLVED to note the report. ii) A list of payments and receipts since the last meeting of the committee was considered and it was RESOLVED to note the information. A question was raised about the value for money of the council's advertisement in the Bulletin and the clerk was asked to make this an agenda item at a future meeting. iii) A report from the Clerk had been presented to Community Services and Environment Committee on 27 January recommending virement of funds from within the 2013/14 budget to meet the costs of securing the former allotment site at Stratford Road and the committee had recommended that PF&R committee approved this virement also. RESOLVED to recommend to Town Council that the costs of the capital expenditure on fence panels should be funded from capital reserves. The remaining costs of securing the site (asbestos removal exact cost yet to be confirmed) would be funded from funds vired from the revenue budget using cost codes 4345, 4650 and 4651 and the higher than budgeted income from burials.	Clerk Clerk

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- iv) The maturity of the council's Barclays Investment Bond no 94 Deal number 73438199 on the 14 February 2014 was reported and members consider future investment of the council's reserve funds in line with the council's adopted treasury management and investment policy and practices.

Clerk

RESOLVED to invest the proceeds of the Barclays Investment Bond in a Barclays Base Rate Reward account with immediate effect. Meanwhile further information would be obtained about possible investment vehicles with a higher yield.

- v) **RESOLVED** to note that in a Ministerial statement to the House of Commons on 5 February Local Government Minister, Brandon Lewis confirmed that the Government had not determined referendum principles for English local precepting authorities in 2014 to 2015, but they were "putting on notice that we are prepared if necessary to apply the referendum thresholds to larger town and parish councils from 2015 to 2016 onwards to provide protection for local taxpayers and extend the principle of direct democracy".

5 Management of Jenkins Pavilion (69-2013/2014)

A report from the Clerk on progress with confirmation of the new management contract for Jenkins Pavilion had been circulated prior to the meeting and the Chairman drew attention to the fact that the new contract between Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) and Stevenage Leisure Ltd (SLL) would be for 7 years and therefore the proposed agreement between Sandy Town Council and CBC would also be for 7 years.

RESOLVED to note the Clerk's report.

Members discussed protected bookings which remained from the period before SLL took over management of the facilities at Jenkins Pavilion and the Clerk provided information about collection of income from the Rainbows group currently using the building. Members expressed their wish to support community groups but noted that minimum costs must be covered by service users.

RESOLVED to approve the arrangements being made by the Clerk to meet with representatives of the Brownies and Rainbows and SLL with a view to discussing options for the future of this booking since it would be unreasonable to expect SLL to honour the current protected rate for a further 7 years.

Clerk

RESOLVED to arrange a meeting with representatives of Sandy Colts Football Club to discuss the protected booking arrangement applying to the Club for its monthly meetings and to explore the practicality of alternative arrangements eg meeting at Village Hall etc.

Clerk

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6 Scale of charges 2014/15 (70-2013/2014)

Members spent considerable time debating a report circulated in advance of the meeting which included a proposed scale of charges for recommendation to council for the financial year 2014/15.

Burial Charges

Burial charges were considered first and it was noted that the fees charged in recent years had not kept pace with the actual costs of operating the cemetery and maintaining it to the desired high standard. The clerk noted that the current fee for erection of a headstone barely covered the administrative costs of the work without taking any maintenance into account. Members were in agreement that fees must be increased to reflect actual costs more accurately and increases were agreed. Fees were also amended to apply consistently to all sections of the cemetery.

RESOLVED to recommend the following charges to Sandy Town Council for the financial year 2014/15:

Burial Charges	
Memorial fees	2014/15
Headstone, vase or tablet	£120
Subsequent inscription	£40
<i>Treble fees for non-parishioners</i>	
Exclusive Right of Burial fees	
In earthen grave 7 ft x 3 ft	£165 (all sections)
In earthen grave 7 ft x 6 ft	£260 (all sections)
Cremated remains in earthen grave 2 ft x 2 ft	£165 (all sections)
Cremated remains in earthen grave 4 ft by 2 ft	£260 (all sections)
<i>Treble fees for non-parishioners</i>	
Interment fees (include excavation)	
The interment fees shown below apply where the interment is not exceeding 7ft, for each additional foot an extra charge of £80 is payable	
Body of a non-viable foetus or a child whose age at the time of death did not exceed 12 months	£25
Body of a child whose age at the time of death exceeded 12 months but did not exceed 12 years	£50
Body of an adult over 12 years	£350
Cremated remains	£120

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<i>Treble fees for non-parishioners</i>	
Other fees	
Cemetery Chapel	£60
Maintenance of graves	No changes to those proposed
Scattering of ashes	£22
Transfer of rights of burial document	£50

It was agreed that no administration fee would be charged for enquiries within the parish burial records although the cost of providing this service would be kept under review.

Sports and Other Charges

Members then reviewed all other charges

RESOLVED to amend line marking of football pitches to a charge of £23.00 per marking rather than the £18 proposed in the draft scale

RESOLVED to defer making any decisions about pitch and changing room hire for the Colts FC and the Clerk was asked to include exploration of these charges in the agenda of the meeting planned with the Club.

There was discussion of room hire charges for 10 Cambridge Road and the accessibility of the council facilities for community groups.

RESOLVED to recommend to Town Council that the draft scale of sports and other charges for the financial year of 2014/15 be adopted with the two amendments described above.

7 CCTV (71-2013/2014)

RESOLVED to note the Clerk's report that a meeting would be held at CBC on 19 February 2014 to review CCTV provision further and that a separate meeting would then be scheduled with HCCTV. This item would remain on the agenda for the next meeting.

Clerk

8 New Standing Orders (72-2013/2014)

The NALC new model standing orders for local councils had been reviewed by the Clerk and compared with existing Sandy Town Council orders. Members worked through the model from page 17 to the top of page 28 of the bundle of papers and several specific orders were discussed.

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend the orders as included in the report from Section 1 to 5 but including the amendments shown below as part of a new model for adoption by Sandy Town Council in time for the annual meeting in 2014.

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Amendments:

Order no 1 m would read "The mover of an amendment has a right of reply at the end of debate on it not exceeding 3 minutes."

Order no 1 t contained a typographical error "understanding" should read "under standing".

Order no 4 d would be amended to prohibit the use of substitutes.

RESOLVED to defer consideration of the remaining orders to the next meeting of the committee.

9 Environmental Policy (73-2013/2014)

RESOLVED to defer this item of business to the next meeting of the committee.

Clerk

10 Community Engagement Strategy (74-2013/2014)

RESOLVED to defer these items of business to the next meeting of the committee.

Clerk

11 HR Arrangements (75-2013/2014)

A report was tabled with a proposed new structure and terms of reference for an HR committee and sub-committee which had been approved by the existing HR advisory group at a meeting held earlier in the day. The chairman reminded members that the matter dated back to December 2013 when it had been agreed to review the scheme of delegations in so far as it affected HR matters only. The HR advisory group recommended that the committee should approve the new arrangements described in the report.

Admin

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Town Council that its committee structure and scheme of delegations be amended in line with the proposal contained in the report.

Clerk

12 Staff Review (76-2013/2014)

RESOLVED that under the Public Bodies (admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended) members of the public and press should be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the agenda because it involved the likely disclosure of confidential personal information as defined as exempt information in Part 1 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972 (personal and confidential data).

Members discussed oral reports from members of the HR advisory group and the Clerk with regard to progress with the staff review and restructure. The chairman noted that the HR Group had met for over two hours during that afternoon. It was a matter of concern that the staff review had been such a drawn out project but it was hoped to make good progress during the coming weeks. A recommendation was put forward from the HR Advisory group that a contract for

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outsourcing accounts work as previously agreed in principle by Town Council should be approved and awarded to DCK Beavers to start as soon as possible. It was explained that if confirmed this action would be the first building block in the restructure and it was essential that this contract was embarked upon before the beginning of the new financial year.

RESOLVED to note the position with the staff review and to recommend to Town Council on 24 February 2014 that the recommendation of the HR Advisory Group outlined above should be approved.