

# 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 27 November 2017 commencing at 7.30pm.**

**Present:** Cllrs P N Aldis, P Blaine, T Cole, A M Hill, W Jackson, C Osborne, M Pettitt, M Scott (Chairman) and P Sharman

**In attendance:** Mr C Robson (Town Clerk)

*Actions*

**1 Apologies for absence (62-2017/18)**

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr D Sharman and Cllr S Sutton.

Members expressed their disappointment that other Members who did not sit on the committee were unable to attend the meeting as it was particularly important that Members engage in the budget process.

**2 Declarations of interest (63-2017/18)**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3 Public Participation Session (64-2017/18)**

No members of the public were present and no questions had been received in advance of the meeting.

**4 Minutes of previous meeting (65-2017/18)**

**RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee held on 23 October 2017 and to approve them as a correct record of proceedings.

Cllr Hill informed the committee that he had spoken with Biggles FM and queried whether more figures and data could be provided to support any future grant requests. Due to the size and resources of the station they are unable to afford to get listening figures and can only provide feedback on the number of calls the station receive as an indication.

**5 Financial Reports (66-2017/18)**

- i) A balance sheet and detailed financial report showing income and expenditure against the revenue budget for the year to 30 September 2017 had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

The Chair presented the more recent October accounts for Members inspection and explained that due to IT problems

# Sandy Town Council

within the office these were unable to be issued ahead of the meeting. It was agreed that the more recent October accounts be fully reviewed.

Town Clerk

It was **RESOLVED** to note the September 2017 accounts.

- i) A balance sheet and detailed financial report showing income and expenditure against the revenue budget for the year to 31 October 2017 had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

Members reviewed the accounts page by page and the following comments and explanations were made;

Photocopier charges appeared high for the time of year. The Clerk informed the committee that two more invoices were due, one for £299 and another for £90 so the budget would not be overspent at the end of the financial year.

Stationery and printing is high for the time of year, this is in part due to printing of large agendas and large documents such as the local plan. Based on the previous 7 months the Clerk anticipated copier charges would be £372 for the remainder of the year. This would leave a remaining stationery budget of approximately £500.

Refuse collection was also high. This is as a result of the volume of waste collected rather than increasing costs for disposal. An increase has been allowed within the 2018/19 budget.

It was noted that fuel would be overspent by the end of the year and that an increase has been allowed within the 2018/19 budget.

It was noted that the electricity expenditure for Cambridge Road was low. The Clerk explained that due to overcharges in the previous year there were credits on the account which resulted in lower than usual expenditure to date.

It was noted that rent for the Cricket pitch was due and the Clerk would speak with the office regarding invoicing. The Clerk informed Members that SLL who run the Jenkins pavilion had informed the Clerk that their share of the rent received from the cricket club was insufficient to cover the costs involved with use of the pavilion. Meeting with the officers of the cricket club was overdue and the Clerk was to look to arrange a meeting in February or March 2018.

# Sandy Town Council

- ii) Members received and reviewed overview report from the Clerk.

It was **RESOLVED** to receive and note the report.

- iii) Members scrutinised a schedule of payments made since the previous meeting.

A Member queried a payment made to DHE Productions and the Clerk confirmed that this was for staging and sound systems at the Christmas Light event.

**RESOLVED** to approve the schedule of payments.

- iv) Bank reconciliations and statements.

Cllr M Scott

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

## 6 Grant Application (67-2017/18)

Members received and considered a grant application from Bedfordshire Autism. It was proposed and seconded to approve the application.

**RESOLVED** to grant Autism Bedfordshire £200.

## 7 LED Street Lighting (68-2017/18)

Members received and considered a report from the Clerk.

A Member outlined what he felt the advantages of converting all street lights to LED at once would be;

- Possible larger discounts on the cost of conversion
- A full electricity saving would be achieved from the outset
- The costs of replacing streetlights will go up over the years
- Maintenance savings due to longer lifespans for LED

The Clerk informed Members that the amount available to lend on an interest free basis can be no more than the amount that will be made in electricity savings over a five year period.

The total cost of converting the lights would be approximately £108,000. By converting all streetlights, the electricity savings over a 5 year period would be roughly £20,000. Therefore, the Council could look to take an interest loan for this amount and investigate the costs/rates of an £80,000 loan to pay the balance of the project

# Sandy Town Council

costs.

Members queried whether there were any other grants available to help Councils convert to energy saving schemes.

A Member asked whether the work could be funded from reserves. It was felt that the Council had only just got its reserves back to where they ought to be and that due to the costs of the depot build and cemetery conversion an additional drain on the Council's reserve funding would be too much.

A Member asked whether section 106 could be used to fund streetlight conversion.

**RESOLVED** that the Clerk to advise on improvements and bring back a report detailing;

- The discount the Council would receive if all lights were converted
- Rates and details of a loan to cover the £80,000 remaining cost
- Confirmation of the amount available on interest free loan
- Details of other possible funding schemes available
- The accountants opinion on funding the project from the Council's reserves

## **8 2018/19 Budget and Precept Request (69 -2017/18)**

Members received and reviewed draft budget for the 2018/19 year. The Clerk informed Members that at present the budget required an increase of £21,121, which was a 3.92% increase in budget resulting in a 2.96% increase in precept per Band D Equivalent household.

The Clerk explained that various budgets had reduced and increased by small amounts and that the big increases were made up of;

- The purchase of a new mobile CCTV camera
- Increase in the budget for tree works following tree surveys and costs by the Council tree contractor
- Increase in the budget for streetlight maintenance as a result of increasing damage to streetlights in 2017 by motorists
- Increase in the pension budget in line with the Councils required contributions under the Local Government Scheme
- Increase in vehicle fuel costs due to rising prices
- Increase in refuse budget due to increased costs related to fly tipping

# Sandy Town Council

Members reviewed each budget line of the report and the following amendments were made;

402 – 4022 – Postage – Reduced to £1,200

402 – 1003 – Tourism Income – Reduce to £200

The Chairman informed Members that the Council needed to keep an eye on the 'Fallowfield' money as this was to be used for the purpose of an internal loan to fund the cemetery extension and the Council must be careful about reducing the money in the fund via the annual £15,000 transferred into the budget to help maintain Fallowfield.

A Member asked about the £500 credit – 1201 which appeared to be a dulcification. The Clerk explained that this was the fee charged for use of The Pinnacle land by the fun fair.

The Clerk informed Members that the changes detailed resulted in an increase in budget of £22,421 which equated to a 3.20% increase for Band D equivalent properties, which was approximately 8p a week.

It was noted that LED streetlight conversion and a possible lighting scheme for Fallowfield recreation ground were not factored into this.

## **9 Car Park Line Marking (70 -2017/18)**

Members received and considered a report from the Town Clerk. It was agreed that the most cost effective way to carry out the line marking work in the car park was to keep it included as part of the Market Town Regeneration Fund work. This would result in far lower costs for the Council but did mean that it was dependent on Highways work schedule. The Clerk would continue to work with CBC to see if this element of the work could be brought forward.

**RESOLVED** that the Council continue to keep the line marking work in the car park as part of the Market Town Match Fund.

## **10 Surgery Relocation (71 -2017/18)**

The Clerk informed Members that the surgery was due to open in Shannon Court on 11 December 2017. The surgery was in need of a number of parking passes to access the car park before the barrier went up.

**RESOLVED** that the Surgery purchase car parking passes at full price for access to the car park prior to 8:45am.

# Sandy Town Council

## **11 Action List (72-2017/18)**

The Clerk informed Members that the Cemetery Management Company had been informed by CBC that the amended planning application for the new depot would be decided on by 12<sup>th</sup> December 2017. A delay was due to consultation with Highways regarding drainage management onto the main roadway and because of the change in design of the roof to accommodate the wider access doors. The planning officer has agreed that these changes can be addressed by way of a non-material amendment rather than a revised planning application.

It was agreed that the Cemetery Management Group would meet in January to pull together a timetable for the excavation and build of the depot and consider if any other support was necessary.

The Clerk had received a final contract from CBC relating to the management agreement for the Jenkins Pavilion. The working group who reviewed the original contract which was later approved by Council are to review the final version to ensure it is in keeping with what was agreed by Council.

## **12 Drone and Model Air Craft Policy (73-2017/18)**

Members reviewed suggested amendments to the Drone and Model Air Craft Policy which sought to clarify that the Council does not permit the flying, launching or landing of drones on its land.

It was proposed that the following alterations be made to the amended wording;

1.2 should read 'on/over' Council owned or managed land

1.3 should be amended to read 'If a person or company wants to fly a drone or unmanned Ariel Vehicle (UAV), (including those carrying photographic equipment for commercial purposes) above, launched from or land on property owned or controlled by the council.....'

2. Correct 'Plans'

2.6 To include 'former allotment land' in land owned/controlled

A Member queried how the Council was going to enforce the policy and noted that it did not include any details of what a member of the public should do if they see anyone flying a drone on council land. A facility was needed for reporting the incident and this should be included in the policy.

Members felt that the Council would be within its right to confiscate drones or model aircraft that were launched or used on Council owned or managed land. A Member commented that a warning

# Sandy Town Council

should be given before confiscation and the Council's duty of care to employees should come first, no employee should be accepted to tackle an individual or group breaking the rules of the policy if they felt the situation could become volatile or dangerous.

It was proposed and seconded that the amended policy be approved subject to the alterations listed.

The Chairman stated that he would like to have further information on the Council's rights to confiscate so enforcement and action could be agreed. It was agreed that when the Beeston Green Management Plan was looked at the signage of all areas of Council land be considered in line with council policies.

**RESOLVED** to approve the amended Drone and Model Aircraft policy subject to the committee's alterations.

**RESOLVED** that the Clerk investigate enforcement of the policy and the Council's legal rights to act when the rules of the policy are broken.

## **13 Chairman's Items (74-2017/18)**

The Chairman informed Members that the planting of two free trees to mark the Council's involvement in the Tree Charter was to happen on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November at 11am as part of the national tree planting week.

## **14 Date of next meeting (75-2017/18)**

It was noted that the date of the next committee meeting will be 22 January 2018.