

Sandy Town Council

**To: Cllrs N Aldis, P Blaine, A M Hill (Chairman), W Jackson, C Osborne, M Pettitt, and S Sutton
c.c. A Gibson, J Hewitt, T Knagg, R Lock, S Paterson, M Scott, P Sharman and N Thompson**

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Human Resources Committee of Sandy Town Council to be held in the Council Chamber at 10, Cambridge Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire on Monday 11th January 2021 commencing at 7.30pm.



Town Clerk
10 Cambridge Road
Sandy, SG19 1JE
01767 681491
6th January 2021

Notes:

(1) Due to the current Covid-19 Coronavirus situation, the Town Council will meet virtually via Zoom (<https://zoom.us/>) as permitted in The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 ("the 2020 Regulations").

(2) Meeting ID: 874 6791 8025

Press and public are cordially invited to attend. Those wishing to join the meeting should contact the clerk on clerk@sandytowncouncil.gov.uk in advance for the meeting password.

(3) Members of the public wishing to address the Council during the public participation part of the formal meeting must make the Clerk aware of their intention before the meeting starts.

A G E N D A

1 Apologies for Absence

2 Declarations of Interest

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

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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) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests*
- ii) Non-disclosable Interests*
- iii) Dispensations*

3 Minutes of Previous Meeting

To consider the minutes of the Human Resources Committee held on Monday 12th October 2020 and to approve them as a correct record of proceedings.

Previously
circulated

4 Public Participation Session

Members of the public may ask questions or make representations to the committee about items of business which are on the agenda.

5 Health and Safety / Accident Report

To note that no accidents have occurred since the last meeting of the Human Resources Committee.

6 Training Report

To receive a report on employee and Councillor training undertaken or planned.

Appendix I

7 COVID19

To receive and note a status report on operations under COVID19 pandemic restrictions.

Appendix II

8 Employee Handbook Review

The Council's external HR Advisor has reviewed and updated the Council's Employee Handbook, including the Human Resources policies within it. To receive and approve the following policies as part of the handbook.

- i) Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- ii) Grievance Policy
- iii) Equal opportunities Policy
- iv) Harassment Policy
- v) Equal Pay Policy
- vi) Dignity at Work Policy

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9 Chairman's Items

10 Date of Next meeting: 22nd March 2021

11 COMMITTEE IN PRIVATE SESSION

RECOMMENDED In terms of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972, the following items will be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment and contractual matters and it is, therefore, RECOMMENDED that pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.

12 Staffing Matters

- i) To receive and note employee sick leave figures for the financial year to date.
- ii) To receive and consider a staffing report.
- iii) To receive and consider a report from the Chairman of the Human Resources Committee; Cllr M. Hill.

AGENDA ITEM 6**APPENDIX I****SANDY TOWN COUNCIL****COMMITTEE:** Human Resources**DATE:** 11 January 2021**AUTHOR:** Town Clerk**SUBJECT:** Training and Conferences**Training**

The following training or seminars have been completed by staff and Councillors since the last meeting of the Human Resources Committee:

Training	Provider	Participants	Date
Tractor Driving and related operations	Shuttleworth College	C. Dainton	20/10/20 & 21/10/20
Safe Handling and Application of Pesticides (PA1)	Bedford College		07/12/20
Pesticide Application (PA6)	Bedford College		08/12/20

The following training has been booked:

Training	Provider	Participants	Date	Cost	Comment
Parish Carbon Footprint Tool – Training Session	Centre for Sustainable Energy	A Elliott-Flockhart Env. Plan Councillors	12/01/21	Free	To support actions within the Council's Environmental Plan.
Council powers and duties	BATPC	Place booked for use by Clerk/officer	27/01/21	£30	Open to Clerks, officers and Cllrs.
Council meetings			23/02/21	£30	Open to Clerks, officers and Cllrs.

AGENDA ITEM 6**APPENDIX I**

The following training has been identified for completion as soon as it becomes available at a suitable location. Interest has been flagged with each of the training providers listed below.

Training	Provider	Participants	Cost
New Councillor Induction	BATPC	Cllr S Paterson	£30
Chainsaw Maintenance and Use	City and Guilds	Chris Dainton	£410
Basic Tree Survey & Inspection	Bedford College	Grounds Team Member	£195
Grounds Maintenance and Management	Institute of Groundsmen	Outdoor Team	£900 for on-site based training course.
Press Releases and Social Media for Local Councils	Costs being sought from various providers.	Clerk/Admin Team	Unknown
Microsoft Office for Local Councils	SLCC	Admin Team	Unknown

Bedfordshire Association of Town & Parish Councils Short Training Programme Winter 2020-21

Our Training Programme is restricted due to COVID-19

Local Council Clerk – Core Skills

£300 per delegate

Covers the basics of local council administration and prepares clerks and other officers to put together a portfolio of evidence for CiLCA

Thursdays: 7th, 14th & 21st January, 4th, 11th & 25th February, 4th March

10.00 am . 12.45 am

Biggleswade

New Councillor Induction Training

£30 per delegate

Each set of 2 x 1 hour sessions cover the basics for new councillors and those who have not previously attended basic councillor training.

13th & 20th January

7.00 pm - 8.00 pm

Zoom

2nd & 9th February

7.00 pm . 8.00 pm

Zoom

18th & 25th March

7.00 pm . 8.00 pm

Zoom

Brush up on council powers and duties

£30 per delegate

A more detailed look at councils' powers and duties, including finance and the general power of competence. Suitable for councillors, clerks and other officers

27th January

7.00 pm - 9.00 pm

Zoom

Brush up on council meetings

£30 per delegate

A more detailed look at meeting procedures and the purpose of routine items on the agenda. Suitable for councillors, clerks and other officers

23rd February

7.00 pm to 9.00 pm

Zoom

All prices quoted are the BATPC member council rate.

Places on any of the above courses can only be confirmed on receipt of a completed booking form and payment of the appropriate course fee.

Tracy Moorhouse handles all bookings. Please contact Tracy direct for booking forms and to check availability. email admin@batpc.co.uk

SANDY TOWN COUNCIL

COMMITTEE: Human Resources
DATE: 11 January 2021
AUTHOR: Town Clerk
SUBJECT: COVID19 Operations

1. Summary

- 1.1 At a meeting of the Human Resources committee held on 12th October 2020 the Committee received a report outlining the challenges and Council's response to the Covid19 pandemic over the previous 7 months.
- 1.2 The following is a brief report on the Council's ongoing operations within the pandemic since the last meeting of the committee.

2. Background Information

- 2.1 The previous report to the committee covered the period March to October 2020. Following the October meeting, the country entered a further lockdown phase during November 2020. Following this, areas of England were placed into different tiers, with differing restrictions depending on coronavirus rates in their area. Sandy was initially placed into 'tier 2' at the start of December 2020. This later rose to 'tier 3' on 19th December 2020 and then quickly into 'tier 4' on 22nd December 2020. On 4th January 2021, the country entered a further national lockdown.
- 2.2 The Council responded quickly to the increasing tiers by altering its operations as it had done during the earlier lockdown in 2020.
- 2.3 During the November 2020 lockdown, the Council increased homeworking again for members of the administration team. Due to the nature of work, it is not possible for administrators to work completely from home. Employees came in on differing days of the week to ensure continuance of a presence in the office, to carry out work that cannot be done at home, while reducing contact between officers and the risk of a transmission of the virus. The Council reception and the Roman Sandy exhibit was closed to the public.

Playgrounds and the public toilets remained open during the lockdown as per guidance, however outdoor gyms and MUGAs were closed.
- 2.4 At the end of the November lockdown, Sandy was put into 'tier 2' restrictions. The administration team reduced home working and increased the number of

days they worked from the office. The Council reception was re-opened to the public, along with all play and sports facilities.

With the exception of a level of home-working and slower responses from other organisations (contractors, quotations etc), the Council's operations were only minimally impacted.

- 2.5 The 'Tier 3 & 4' restrictions resulted in a move back to homeworking as per the government's guidance. The administration team worked fixed days in the office and at home to reduce the risk of virus transmission, but to ensure continued administrative presence in the office. Full guidance on tier 4 can be found at; <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tier-4-stay-at-home>
- 2.6 Due to the nature of their work, the outdoor team have continued to operate as normal throughout the lockdown and tiered restrictions. However, reduced staffing has shifted work priorities at times.

3. Current Situation

- 3.1 On the 4th January 2021 the government announced a further national lockdown, which would be in place until mid-February at the earliest. The government's message is 'Stay at Home'. Full details on lockdown restrictions and guidance can be found at;
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home>

- 3.2 The following highlights the impact of the new lockdown on the Council's current operations.

3.3.1 Council Meetings

The current legislation permitting Councils to meet via remote technology runs until May 2021. Meetings will continue to operate remotely as per the Council's schedule of meetings.

3.3.2 Home Working

Under the current guidance, employees should work from home unless they cannot do so. As such, the administration team is now operating from home, only coming into the office when needed. When in the office, administrators will observe all covid19 guidelines (social distancing, cleaning of equipment, washing of hands). The office continues to be cleaned daily and sanitiser wipes and gel are available throughout the office. A number of tasks cannot be completed from home, such as an element of invoice and purchase order processing, issuing of cheques and copying of agendas/minutes.

The Clerk will continue to operate mainly from the office while observing Covid19 guidelines and the administration risk assessment.

3.3.3 Town Council Reception

Under the lockdown restrictions, the Town Council reception will remain closed to the public. Signage and social media posts advise the public accordingly. The Council remains contactable by the public via phone, website and email.

As soon as restrictions are lowered to a point where guidance indicates the reception can open, it will operate at its normal hours, observing the COVID19 Risk Assessment in place. However, throughout the course of the pandemic, the Clerk may need to take steps to close the reception to the public if guidance changes. In addition, should staffing be affected by a track and trace incident or an employee displaying symptoms, the reception may need to be closed for public safety. A deep clean would then take place.

3.3.4 Events

Under the lockdown and higher Covid tiers, gatherings and meetings are not permitted. Sporting events and other community gatherings are also not permitted. As such, no events should take place on Council land while lockdown or tier 3/4 restrictions remain in place.

Guidance and rules around holding events will be reviewed if Sandy moves into a lower tier.

Several events are planned for later in 2021 (Circus, outdoor theatre). Whether future events will be able to run safely within COVID19 guidelines will depend on the tier Sandy is in and the advice and restrictions in place at the time.

3.3.5 Playgrounds

Under lockdown restrictions, playgrounds can remain open. Outdoor gyms and MUGAs must close.

Sandy's playparks will therefore continue to be open for use with Covid guidance signage in place. Play equipment is checked weekly and sprayed with a 7-day anti-bacterial spray. Some items of equipment (such as swing seats) have been removed to encourage social distancing. COVID19 advisory signage is in place and the Council's insurers confirm that the Council is currently doing all it can reasonably be expected to do.

Closure signage will be placed on the outdoor gym and MUGA equipment in line with government guidance.

Under the previous tier 4 guidance, the outdoor gyms were permitted to operate.

3.3.6 Public Toilets

Under the national lockdown and the previous tier 4 guidance, public toilets can remain open for use. At the commencement of tier 4, Sandy's public toilets were closed due to the Council's caretaker receiving instructions to isolate. The opening of toilets is dependent on ensuring sufficient daily cleaning is undertaken to make them 'Covid-safe.' The toilets will re-open following discussions with the Council's caretaker and ensuring steps are taken to have him work safely.

3.3.7 Funerals and Cemetery

Under the national lockdown guidance, funerals will continue to operate as they have under the tier system, but attendance will be limited to a maximum of 30 people. The chapel is also permitted to operate for funerals, subject to covid19 restrictions. Clerk undertaking Risk Assessment.

3.3.8 Outdoor Team

The outdoor team will continue to operate as usual, observing social distancing and following the outdoor team Covid19 risk assessment while operating. Due to pressure on staffing, workload and tasks will be continuously monitored.