

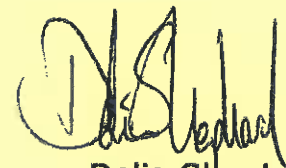
# Sandy Town Council

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**To: Cllrs N Aldis, J Ali, W Jackson, K Lynch, A Maycock,  
Mrs M Runchman, R Smith, Mrs S Sutton, M Scott and Mrs S Walsh**

**Cc: Cllrs C Osborne, M Pettitt, Sharman, White**

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Community Services and Environment Committee of Sandy Town Council which will be held in the Council Chamber at 10, Cambridge Road, Sandy, Bedfordshire on Monday 22 April 2013 commencing at 7.30 pm. The items of business to be transacted are specified below.



Delia Shephard  
Town Clerk  
10 Cambridge Road, Sandy  
SG19 1JE  
01767 681491  
15 April 2013

## **A G E N D A**

### **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 Community Services and Environment Committee held on 4 February 2013 and to approve them as a correct record of proceedings.

### **4 Sandy Market**

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To receive a report from Sandy Town Team on the recent Continental Market help in the Town Centre Car Park and to consider proposals for a "Have a Go" market in Sandy.

**5 Sandy Christmas Lights 2012**

To receive a report from the Christmas Lights Working Group on the provision of Christmas Lights in 2012 and to consider arrangements for 2013.

**6 Allotments**

To receive a report from the Clerk on progress with acquisition of a new allotment site.

*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 personal information as defined as exempt information in Part 1 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972 (personal and confidential data).*

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## REPORTS

### **4 Sandy Market**

Continental Market was held in Town Centre Car Park on Friday 12 April 2013 and Saturday 13 April 2013.

A meeting has been scheduled between representatives of the Town Team and the Town Clerk in connection with the Have a Go Market on Thursday 18 April 2013.

Further information will be provided at the meeting or before if available. Mr Phillip Wingfield and Ms Babs Morse will attend the meeting to provide feedback from the Town Team.

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## 5 Christmas Lights Report 2012

This is the formal report of the Working Group which took over the organising of the Christmas Lights and the event at which they were switched on. It was a mixture of Town Councillors and members of the community with experience of organising large events in the Town with other interested key players attending as and when required.

The Town Council members were:

Cllrs N Aldis (Chairman), W Jackson, S Lunn, K Lynch, A Maycock, M Runchman

As the Town Council took over the organisation of the event from the Chamber of Trade, the occasion had to be differently managed

As the Town Council came late to the process it was agreed to hold weekly meetings in order to ensure that all aspects of the day were covered. This undoubtedly paid dividends as the preparation and planning were the keys to the success of the day. With an early start and a good supply of paid and voluntary staff everyone knew what was required from them and the day went very well.

The key points to the successful day can be summarised as:

- ✓ Good planning and preparation
- ✓ A solid organisation plan
- ✓ Locating the big fairground rides in the car park
- ✓ School involvement for both stage acts and decorations
- ✓ The number of community stalls who were only asked for a donation
- ✓ An effective PA system
- ✓ Using the outdoor staff supervised by the Deputy Clerk to do the heavy lifting work in erecting the stalls
- ✓ Having a Health & Safety Team on site during the event

As a tier of local government it was important that things were done properly so the infrastructure for the light fittings had to be in accordance with Health & Safety Rules and the electricity used to illuminate the lights had to be from a recognised source which was paid for if necessary. Despite the preparation this was one area where but for the kind co-operation of a local business may still have gone wrong on the day.

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Lessons were learnt and at the de-brief of the Committee ideas put forward to improve the event next year. These include:

- Covers and lights on ALL stalls
- Locating the Town Council stall in a more central position to make the best use of staff and to be at the centre of the operation
- Moving the stage further into the centre of the activities
- Ensuring that the electrical supply for the stage is confirmed and working before the day
- Consider hiring stalls to reduce the transportation and staff hours collecting additional stalls from Biggleswade
- Having a uniformed organisation available after the event to assist taking down stalls
- Shift sessions for staff and volunteers as the day was very tiring for them

Letters of thanks have been sent to all those individuals or organisations which contributed financially or in kind to the event and the many people who helped prior to the event or on the day

Cllr Nigel Aldis  
Chairman of Christmas Lights Working Group

## **Clerk's Addendum to Report Staff Implications and Project Learning**

Delivery of the Christmas Lights project in 2012 had a considerable impact on Sandy Town Council's activities. Despite the good community support and the decision making by the working group a large workload fell to the staff team which can be divided into two sections:

- 1 Negotiation and management of the contract for illuminations
- 2 Preparation and management of the community event to switch on the lights

### **1 Contract**

The requesting of quotations, site visits etc was undertaken by the Town Clerk with support from the Deputy Clerk and Administrator. Four contractors made site visits (some more than one) and prepared quotations necessitating several hours of work for staff with each

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contractor.

All infrastructure work and permissions were negotiated with Highways, Central Bedfordshire Council, etc by the Clerk with support from the staff team and the Ward Councillors.

Method Statements, Health and Safety and Risk assessments were prepared by the Clerk and signed off by the working group.

The working group was responsible for contractor selection and the Clerk, supported by the Deputy Clerk, was responsible for managing the relationships with the contractor, infrastructure owners and the businesses in the town affected by the physical introduction of the lights.

The groundstaff were deployed for transport of the Christmas tree and for overseeing its installation (by a contractor), maintenance of barriers and tree and final removal of tree.

During the contract there were several maintenance visits from the contractor, reporting of faults and site visits to arrange installation and removal, disposal of old illuminations from Chamber of Trade.

All this work was absorbed into the Council's day to day activities but had an impact on productivity; the work should be less in years 2 and 3 of the contract.

## **2 Community Event – Sandy Christmas Cracker**

The workload attaching to the community event had a greater impact on day to day council operations. All forms of community development work are time-consuming and the weekly working group meetings involve the Clerk on all occasions, the Deputy Clerk, Administrators and Foreman attended some meetings and between meetings there was considerable planning, organisational, publicity and administrative work to support the group and to engage the community. Whilst the valuable work of volunteers has already been acknowledged above, it should be noted that managing the volunteer input presented its own challenges for staff.

The Working Group set three goals for the event:

- To provide an opportunity for people of all ages to celebrate the community of Sandy and be involved in the project
- To provide an opportunity for voluntary community groups to raise funds for themselves and publicise their year round



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activities

- To raise funds to contribute to the cost of the switch on event and to contribute to the festive lights

Town Council met the cost of insuring the event and all volunteers employed by the Council. All Town Council staff were asked to work on the day itself and all but two did so. The Clerk, Deputy Clerk and three grounds staff worked for over 12 hours each with minimal breaks. All groundstaff worked hard on the two days preceding and the day after the switch on event moving stalls etc. As the event was on a Sunday staff were paid overtime rates, the Clerk and Deputy Clerk were (theoretically) remunerated by TOIL.

(The Clerk suggests that for the future the Council investigates remunerating staff for any time spent on community events by means of either time off in lieu or a common "event fee". This fee would be paid to all staff regardless of their salary grade and whether the event was on a Saturday or Sunday, it would promote team working and inclusiveness and would make it easier to cost events. However, there are HR implications in terms of contracts and conditions and this needs further exploration.)

Equipment (such as market stalls) was borrowed from Biggleswade Town Council and other sources.

Over 20 stalls were made available to community groups and independent traders. Not for profit community groups were offered stalls free. Traders and profit making groups were offered stalls at the rate of £10. All stall holders were invited to contribute additional donations. Three stallholders did not attend, a deposit system might have prevented this but would have added to administration.

Prior to the event time and resource were concentrated on the production of publicity materials and it has been difficult to cost these activities separately. A better defined publicity programme, more use of social media, black and white printed materials and a more effective poster campaign have all been learning points for next year. The use of flyers in school book bags was very successful.

The switch on was supervised directly by Lamps and Tubes engineers. It was not possible to light one row of illuminations on the day as the power supply (working the previous week) had been switched off. These illuminations were lit by an alternative switching mechanism as from the Monday after the event. Repair of one of Amey's lamp columns is needed to overcome this problem next year.



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## **Health and Safety**

Attendance at the event was good, it is difficult to define crowd numbers but the anticipated numbers of 1500 maximum in the Market Square at any given time seemed appropriate. Health and Safety were paramount considerations and the Clerk was responsible for this. Support was negotiated free of charge from Ellis Whittam who attended the site and advised on electrical appliances and working at height during the morning preparations.

St John's Ambulance attended the event to provide first aid from a gazebo in the Market Square. There were several minor injuries and one more serious injury (a member of the public tripped over a fairground cable cover and dislocated a knee). It is recommended that a dedicated first aid vehicle is used on future occasions.

Support from Bedfordshire police PCSOs was provided at no cost during the event and afterwards during the clearing up process. There were few problems with ASB.

For future reference it was noted that several fairground rides blocked dropped kerbs impairing access for wheelchair users and this must be avoided. However general positioning of the fairground rides was considered suitable.

Learning from the event indicates that better lighting, shorter shift times and additional support for clearing the Market Square within the time allocated for the road closure would improve safety and security generally and the wellbeing of staff and volunteers. The issues with electrical supply have been noted in the Chairman's report. All electrical supplies were tested during the week before the event and were working at that time; it was only on the day that the supply was found to be unavailable.

The vehicle used as a stage was assessed and safety measures put in place to reduce risk but a lower and safer structure would be preferable for future years.

The PA system was required as part of the evacuation plan had this been necessary but many residents reported being unable to hear announcements which could potentially have compromised the plan. This must be taken into account in future evacuation and major incident plans. Moreover a better PA system would have added to public enjoyment of events.

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## **Finance**

In previous years the Town Council had provided a community grant towards the Christmas Lights and for 2012 this was originally set at £5,500. Following withdrawal of the Chamber of Trade the Council set a revised budget of £6,000 for provision of lights, with £3,000 made available for the community event and a target of £2,000 to be achieved by fundraising.

In previous years electricity for the lights had been obtained by private supply and unauthorised use of street lighting. It was necessary to secure permission from the Highways Authority to use the street light supply and introduce appropriate infrastructure to make this acceptable. The introduction of a Christmas tree into the Market Square as the focal point of the decorations necessitated construction of a tree pit. The Council took the view that safe and lawful infrastructure was essential to provide for illuminations in years to come and the existing infrastructure can be built upon in future should funds permit. Infrastructure costs were deemed to be capital costs and were met from the Council's general reserves. This expenditure totalled £4435.

Direct expenditure on the illumination contract and community event totalled £8,483 and income of £3,637 was generated by fundraising and donations.

Cllr Lynch funded the production of a DVD recording of some of the events of the day.

## **Looking Ahead**

The Council is now committed to two further years of illuminations and two switch-on events. It is suggested that planning begins as soon as possible in order to spread the workload.

The fundraising event held by the Mayor to support the Christmas lights was successful but also had an impact on Mayoral charity fundraising. The Council should decide on a fundraising strategy for the next two years.

Retaining and developing the working group is important and a more formal status for the group could be considered such as Town Council sub-committee status. A draft constitution for a Christmas Light "friends" group is attached for consideration (based on the model used by Ampthill Town Council).

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In 2012 the Working Group considered use of a professional event organiser and was offered help at £150.00 per day by the Christmas Lights event organiser for St Neots Town Council. As no budget was available this offer was not taken up but given the impact which the event had on staff resources as described in this report it is the Clerk's recommendation that this should be reconsidered for 2013.

## **Sandy Town Council – Draft Terms of Reference Friends of Sandy's Christmas Lights**

1. The Sub-Committee is to raise funds to provide festive lights to decorate the town of Sandy over the Christmas period and to organise the switch on event for the benefit of the whole community.
2. The Committee shall be made up of a maximum of 12 in number: -
  - a) Minimum of 3 and maximum of 5 representatives from the Town Council.
  - b) The difference in numbers being made up by co-opted members who can either be individuals or representatives from local organisations.

The Town Council representatives shall be appointed at the Annual Meeting of the Council for a twelve month term.

The co-opted members can be co-opted at any time.

Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer shall be elected annually, at the first meeting after the Annual Meeting of the Council and can be any member of the Lights Committee.

Secretariat will be provided by the Town Council.

3. The quorum of the sub-committee shall be one-half of its members with a minimum of 1 Town Council representatives.
4. The Sub-Committee has the following delegated powers, which may be exercised, only in providing festive lights to decorate the town of Sandy :
  - a) To raise funds (but not by means of taxable trading) and to invite

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- and receive contributions and donations;
  - b) To organise the annual switch on event;
  - c) To make recommendations to the Town Council to acquire, hire and maintain any property or equipment exercised for the purposes of erecting the Christmas lights and the switch on of the Christmas lights;
  - d) To make recommendations to the Town Council to employ paid or unpaid agents, staff or advisers;
5. Accounts - All accounts for payment and claims upon the Council shall be laid before the Council.
6. A Special Meeting of the Sub-Committee may be summoned at any time by the Lights Chairman, or the Mayor. An additional meeting shall also be summoned on the requisition in writing of not less than a quarter of the members of the Sub-Committee. The summons shall set out the business to be considered at the special meeting and no other business shall be transacted at that meeting.

**Members may wish to make recommendations to Council based upon the working group's reports.**

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- 6 Allotments**  
Confidential report to follow