***Sandridge Parish Council***

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Simon Thwaites Marshalswick Community Centre,

Parish Clerk The Ridgeway,

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11th September 2024

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| **TO:** | **MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE FOR SUSTAINABILITY**  Councillors: Jenny Roberts (Chair), Maurice Wells, Mary Ternouth, June Reid, Debbie Chachulski, James Lambert, Carol Chalkley  Public Members: David Kealey (St Albans & District Footpaths Society),  Julian Thornton (Herts County Council), Mark Carter (Warden), Jim Watson (Friends of Jersey Lane), Representative of Sustainable St Albans  Officers: Simon Thwaites (Parish Clerk), Emma Hostler (Deputy Clerk), Rebecca Pannese (Project, Amenities and Community Engagement (PACE) Officer) |

A meeting of the Committee for Sustainability is to be held on Tuesday 17th September 2024 at Marshalswick Community Centre at 7.30pm.

**AGENDA**

1. **To receive and accept apologies for absence**
2. **Disclosures of interest and dispensations**
3. **To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 25th June 2024**

Members are asked to review and approve the minutes of the meeting of the Committee for Sustainability held on 25th June 2024.

1. To review the below draft budgets for this committee in 2025/26. All draft budgets are subject to review by the Finance Committee before going to Full Council in November/December.

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| **Purpose** | **2024/25 Budget** | **Draft 2025/26 Budget** |
| **£** | **£** | **£** |
| Sustainability Projects | 6,000 | 2,500 |
| Community Garden | 1,500 | 1,500 |
| Wildflower Initiative | 2,750 | 3,000 |
| Tree Planting | 5,000 | 4,000 |
| Swift/birdlife Initiative | - | 3,500 |
|  | **15,250** | **14,500** |

**Protecting and Supporting Nature**

1. **Pond Survey on Harness Way**

At the Sports & Recreation Committee meeting held on 19th June a proposal was made and approved for the installation of a hard surface path through Harness Way Open Space. Recognising that the installation of hard surfacing necessarily reduces the surface area for natural habitat, the Project, Amenities and Community Engagement (PACE) Officer has met with a representative from Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT) to discuss how to offset this loss and generally seek advice to ensure we are making the most of the ecological opportunities of this green space. Following this, HMWT has undertaken two audits on behalf of the Parish, the reports from which should be with us imminently. It is hoped to formulate a management plan from the results.

1. **New Hedgerow on the Jersey Farm Woodland Park**

A pre-order has been made for 1,750 mixed native hedgerow plants to be planted as a hedge on the Jersey Farm Woodland Park. The hedge, consisting of Hazel, Hawthorn, Field Maple and Bird Cherry will be approximately 250m in length and is expected to provide an invaluable habitat and food source in years to come. The cost of this project does not fall to this committee but Members may be able to help in raising volunteer support for when it’s time to plant. A provisional date of the weekend of 23rd/24th November has been set for this.

1. **Wildflower Beds**

An update from the PACE officer on plans to revitalise various wildflower beds in the area both this year and next. Lessons have been learnt from the last two years and different approaches will need to be applied.

1. **Sandridge Parish Wild Bird Initiative**

Please see attached a report by the Parish Office Team proposing an initiative to protect and benefit the visiting swift population. This is further to the Committee approving in principle funding for a community engagement similar to the wildflower initiative but with the intention of protecting/aiding birdlife.

1. **Installation of swift boxes in St Leonard’s Church Belfry**

In conjunction with item 8, Anne Thomas, a Public Member on the Jersey Farm Woodland Park Committee and Cllr Maurice Wells, were already working with a representative from NE Herts Swifts, exploring the possibility of installing up to 8 swift boxes in the belfry at St Leonard’s Church. This initiative has been given approval by the vicar and also the Diocese of St Albans. Cllr Wells is now asking this committee to approve £100 of funding to build the swift boxes by hand. This will cover the cost of building materials including wood, hinges and other miscellaneous items. It is hoped to build the boxes over the winter for a spring installation ready for the bird’s breeding season in May. It is;

**Recommended**

That the Committee for Sustainability approve £100 of funding to build swift boxes for installation in St Leonard’s Church belfry as part of the Committee’s commitment to supporting wild birds in the parish.

**Improving the Natural Environment for Residents**

1. **Update from Julian Thornton (HCC) on footpaths and Rights of Way**
2. **Footpath at the Harness Way Open Space**

A verbal update from the PACE Officer on this project (see also Protecting and Supporting Nature item 5).

1. **Sandridgebury Lane to Bridleway 8**

A third party with a keen interest in the public rights of way network and an association with the St Albans Access Forum will be making an application for the track running in front of the Sandridge Scout Hut to become a definitive right of way. With the aim of raising the application on HCC's priority listing Public Member David Kealey, chairman of the St Albans Access Forum has been asked to organise witness statements to demonstrate that the track is used by the public. The witness statements will be reviewed by the third party but David would like to use Parish Council resources to receive them in the first instance - this will involve using the Council’s email address and postal address to receive the statements in either hard copy or electronically and then forward them to David. The Modification Order Amendment will be submitted by the third party. The Parish Council would be referred to on the notice displayed but would have no other involvement in this process. It is;

**Recommended**

That Members approve this process.

1. **Rights of Way PTRO Consultation**

Herts County Council have initiated a public consultation regarding the review of Rights of Way Permanent Traffic Regulation Orders (PTROs). PTROs are legal instruments that impose restrictions on certain types of traffic or users along designated routes. Regular reviews of PTROs are advised to ensure they remain relevant and effective. The Council is currently assessing the various options for each route affected by these orders.

This committee is asked to note that this consultation has begun and may want to submit its own representation. Further details are available at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/about-the-council/consultations/permanent-traffic-regulation-orders/permanent-traffic-regulation-orders-consultation.aspx

1. **Right of Way Through Woodland Adjacent to the Woodland Park**

A verbal update by Councillor Ternouth on the progress of this application.

1. **Tree Reduction at Harness Way Open Space**

A resident of Harvesters (Jersey Farm) has approached the Parish Office to request that two Beech trees, approximately thirty feet high, are reduced by 30% because they are creating issues with loss of light, satellite reception and increased pollen. The PACE Officer, having visited the site with Mark Carter, informed the resident that the trees are not diseased or dying and it would, therefore, be contrary to the Parish Council’s usual approach to grounds maintenance to reduce them.

The resident has asked if she’s able to employ a contractor to carry out the reduction at her expense. It is;

**Recommended**

That the Committee considers this request.

**Recycling, Reusing, Repurposing, Repairing**

1. **Blister Packs**

The Clerk has been liaising with the Environmental Officer at London Colney Parish Council regarding the recycling of packaging from empty medicinal blister packs. The Council collects blister packs at various locations which are then taken periodically to a processing centre linked to a high street chemist. There may be an opportunity for Sandridge Parish Council to participate in this scheme – this would involve the purchase of, perhaps, two receptacles, one in each of the two community centres. These would need to be modified to ensure whatever was put inside each receptacle stayed out of reach of young hands. Only empty blister packs would be collected. Advice would be taken from London Colney Parish Council in this regard. It is;

**Recommended**

That Members consider whether this is of interest.

**Carbon Reduction and Capture**

1. **Bike Racks**

The proposed bike rack to the front of Marshalswick Library has not yet received approval. The library manager is hopeful of this happening soon.

1. **St Albans Greener Together Net Zero Fund**

A community fund with a target of improving sustainable local transport and energy use is now open with grants of between £2,000 and £20,000 available. Members may have project ideas for which to apply for funding or know of a local group who could benefit.

1. **Matters of Note**

* TMA Environmental Consultants have been commissioned to carry out an internal decay investigation on a large Beech in St Leonard’s churchyard. The cost will not fall to this committee.
* Clothing banks continue to be very busy with two metric tonnes collected in June across all four banks. Payment rates have however reduced significantly (these are set nationally).
* A reminder that a Repair Shop will be held at the Jersey Farm Community Centre on 15th February 2025 in partnership with St Albans Fixers.
* Members are reminded that the purchase of two dual bins for our parks is being withheld pending approval of the 2025/26 budget to fund ongoing collection.

1. **Items for inclusion in the agenda of the next meeting**

**DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Committee for Sustainability will take place on 21st January 2025 at 7.30pm at Marshalswick Community Centre.