***Sandridge Parish Council***

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Simon Thwaites Marshalswick Community Centre,

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18th June 2025

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| --- | --- |
| **TO:** | **MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE FOR SUSTAINABILITY**  Councillors: Maurice Wells, Mary Ternouth, June Reid, Debbie Chachulski, James Lambert, Carol Chalkley, Raihaanah Ahmed  Public Members: David Kealey (St Albans & District Footpaths Society),  Julian Thornton (Herts County Council), Mark Carter (Warden), A representative of Sustainable St Albans, Jim Watson (Friends of Jersey Lane)  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 24th June 2025 at Marshalswick Community Centre at 7.30pm.

**AGENDA**

1. **To receive and accept apologies for absence**
2. **Disclosure of interest and dispensations**
3. **Election of Chair for the upcoming year**
4. **Election of Vice-Chair for the upcoming year**
5. **Terms of Reference**

To review and re-adopt the enclosed Terms of Reference for the upcoming year.

1. **To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 1st April 2025**

Members are asked to review and approve the minutes of this committee meeting held on 1st April 2025.

1. **Committee Budgets 2025-26**

To discuss the table below in relation to ongoing and future initiatives.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item** | **2025-26 Budget**  **£** | **2025-26 Actual to date**  **£** | **Notes** |
| Sustainability Projects (6665) | 2,500 | 0 |  |
| Community garden (6659) | 1,500 | 197 |  |
| Wildflower/pollinator initiative (6654) | 3,000 | 875 | Sowing in spring 2026 |
| Tree planting (6653) | 5,000 | 0 |  |
| Wild Bird initiative | 3,500 + 1,550 | 0 | To continue swift initiative. (£1,550 is the income from residents having had boxes installed in 2024/25) |

The installation of a significant pond on the Jersey Farm Woodland Park was discussed at the last meeting of this committee when it was agreed in principle to offer funding from the budgets above once an approximate cost was known.

The current cost of the pond is an estimate of between £20,000 and £23,000. This includes labour, materials, fencing and planting. Some funding is expected from third parties (grants). Clearly, this initiative is as well suited to this committee as to the Woodland Park Committee, its purpose being entirely for the benefit of wildlife.

Having spoken to colleagues in the Parish Office, and mindful of what the year is likely to bring for this committee, the Clerk suggests the following funds are earmarked for virement (transfer) to the Jersey Farm Woodland Park Committee;

Sustainability Project budget £1,500

Community Garden £750

Wild Bird Initiative £2,000

Total virement CfS to Woodland Park Committee **£4,250**

It is;

**Recommended**

That Members consider earmarking this sum in support of the Jersey Farm Woodland Park Pond Project. Feasibility of the project will be discussed at item 13.

1. **Matters of Note**

* The balance on earmarked reserves relating to clothing bank income stood at £1,012 at 31st March 2025. This currently increases by around £50 per month. This reserve is to be used at the discretion of this committee or simply retained to gradually increase for future initiatives.
* The Ollie Foundation are proving enthusiastic partners in maintaining and promoting the community garden.
* The Council is setting £2,500 aside in reserves annually to pay for a new van when the current diesel model reaches the end of its useful life (we’re currently in year 2). It has been observed that, with many corporate electric vehicles reaching their third year and being replaced, the market has stabilised, meaning an EV can now be purchased for less than £10,000.
* As far as is possible to see, the living roof on the new Quadrant bus shelter is fulfilling its potential in attracting pollinators.

**Improving the Natural Environment for Residents**

1. **Update from Julian Thornton (HCC) on footpaths and rights of Way**
2. **Community Garden**

The volunteer gardeners continue to carry out maintenance of the garden with more emphasis on fruit and vegetables that form above ground, thereby increasing the interest to members of the public and with less likelihood of prematurely harvesting unseen root vegetables.

The garden continues to draw positive comments from the community and is in almost constant use. Members are however encouraged to consider ways in which the garden might evolve over the coming months, for example, hosting small events in partnership with local businesses.

**Protecting and Supporting Nature**

1. **Wildflower Initiative**

The Project, Amenities and Community Engagement Officer (PACE) to provide a verbal update on progress.

1. **Sandridge Swift Initiative**

Stage 1 of the Swift initiative may be seen as a success with 33 boxes installed and all resident contributions collected. There have been reports of swifts showing interest in several of the new boxes but no confirmed occupation yet.

An article has been put in the Summer edition of Neighbourhood News asking for expressions of interest in attending another information evening. It was hoped that neighbours of residents having boxes fitted would enquire themselves but few have. The Clerk will keep Committee Members updated. Needless to say, the Committee’s budgets should be used in ways most beneficial to wildlife and this programme may therefore need to be re-assessed in future. Members are encouraged to think of how else funds could be used should a decision be made not to proceed with Stage 2.

1. **Jersey Farm Woodland Park Pond**

The PACE Officer, and Deputy Clerk to provide an update on progress towards this significant project.

**Recycling, Reusing, Repurposing, Repairing**

1. **Installation of Mixed Recycling Bins**

It is hoped that, by the time of this meeting, the two dual bins previously approved will have been installed. This installation has been delayed only because the operative responsible for installations through the Parish Council’s GM Contract has been on sick leave.

The Parish Office will report back to the September meeting how well the bins are being used, at which point the Committee may wish to propose further bins in 2026/27, subject to a budget being approved in the Autumn.

1. **Repair Fairs**

The Clerk has made enquiries with St Albans Fixers regarding our hosting another Repair Fair in 2026 and it’s been confirmed that we are ‘on the list’. The Fixers themselves are booked up many months in advance. The Committee may also want to re-visit the Parish Council’s readiness to hold a fair of its own (in addition to hosting).

1. **Tetra-Paks**

The PACE Officer is making enquiries with the local waste authority on the feasibility of having a Tetra-Pak bank in one the Parish Council’s car parks. An update of any progress will be given at the meeting.

**Carbon Reduction and Capture**

1. **Travel and Transport**

Please see the attached request for participation in this year’s Susfest from Chloe Harmsworth of Sustainable St Albans. Committee Members are asked to decide if the Parish Council is able to participate.

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

As a relatively new body, the Committee for Sustainability inevitably began with a full agenda, it having been identified that it would be helpful to bring several activities not comfortably sitting within existing committees into one place. The range and variety of agenda items has not however expanded in the two and a half years since the Committee was created. Members are therefore encouraged to think of what new initiatives might be worth the Committee discussing. If Members wanted to first come to the Parish Office to discuss the feasibility of a new idea they’d be very welcome, however ‘off the wall’ it might initially seem. For example, one initiative a Committee Member might like to investigate is the provision of electronic tablets to Members, thereby significantly reducing the quantity of printed matter produced for meetings.

**DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Committee for Sustainability will take place on Tuesday 16th September 2025 at Marshalswick Community Centre.