***Sandridge Parish Council***

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Simon Thwaites Marshalswick Community Centre,

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15th January 2025

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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), 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 21st January 2025 at Marshalswick Community Centre at 7.30pm.

**AGENDA**

1. **To receive and accept apologies for absence**
2. **Disclosure of interest and dispensations**
3. **To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17th September 2024**

Members are asked to review and approve the minutes of the meeting of this committee held on 17th September 2024.

1. **Committee Budgets 2024-25 and 2025-26**

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| **Item** | **2024-25 Budget**  **£** | **2024-25**  **Spend to date**  **£** | **2025-26 Budget**  **£** | **Notes** |
| Sustainability projects | 6,000 | 3,647 | 2,500 | 2024/25 spend gross of recharge for swift boxes. Recycling bins to be purchased in 2024/25. |
| Community garden | 1,500 | 762 | 1,500 | Planting in spring |
| Wildflower/pollinator initiative | 2,750 | 788 | 3,000 | Sowing in spring |
| Tree planting | 5,000 | 0 | 5,000 | Planting in new year |
| Wild Bird initiative | 0 | 0 | 3,500 | Continue swift initiative or new project? |

1. **Matters of Note**

* The four clothing banks continue to be very busy with collections exceeding 1.5 tonnes monthly. Unfortunately, the nationally agreed rate paid to the Council in commission has fallen significantly. Income has continued to be earmarked for this committee and currently stands at £872.
* A licence has finally been given by HCC to install a bike rack/planter to the front of Marshalswick library. Councillor Wells and Councillor Chalkley have now completed its construction.
* A garden shed has been installed to the rear of the community garden for the safe storage of tools.
* The Centres Manager is to explore new ways of flushing the urinals at Marshalswick and Jersey Farm Community Centres – currently happening irrespective of levels of use (i.e. through the night and during holidays).
* The Clerk is currently in discussion with Tricia Gibbons from The Greenhouse regarding potential part use of one of the Parish Council’s garages for storage of items within their proposed Library of Things. The Clerk to report back to this committee in due course.

**Improving the Natural Environment for Residents**

1. **Update from Julian Thornton (HCC) on footpaths and rights of Way**
2. **Update from Councillor Mary Ternouth on Rights of Way.**
3. **Harness Way Circular Pathway**

Members are reminded to visit the newly laid Harness Way circular pathway. It is recommended to discuss and put in place plans to rewild the area outside of the path to create habitat, provide food and compensate for the land taken by the pathway’s installation. Attached is an audit carried out by the HMWT in this regard containing advice towards a strategy for future management of the open space. Some of the remaining whips from the recent hedgerow planting at Jersey Farm Woodland Park (see item 12) will be planted in areas alongside the path – see attached photo.

**Protecting and Supporting Nature**

1. **Wildflower Initiative**

The Project, Amenities and Community Engagement Officer (PACE) to provide a verbal update on plans to further seed existing beds as well as new locations this spring.

1. **Sandridge Swift Initiative (inc St Leonard’s Church)**

A successful public information evening was held in November with Tim Hill from the HMWT and Clive Fleming from Hertford Swifts both speaking. Between 50 and 60 guests enjoyed the presentations and orders for 28 Impeckable nesting boxes were taken. Additionally, two residents with 3 boxes bought but not yet installed requested help. All applicants opted to take advantage of the subsidised installation service offered by Hertford Swifts. To remind committee members, each box costs £85 with the Parish Council funding £50 and each resident funding £35 plus £15 installation.

So, from pre-installation surveys carried out so far it’s likely that 31 nesting boxes will be installed throughout the parish (Sandridge 9, Marshalswick 14, Jersey Farm 8) in time for the spring. Furthermore, Councillor Wells has successfully obtained permission from St Albans Diocese, with support from the Sandridge Parochial Council, to install 4 swift boxes, built by himself, in the belfry of St Leonard’s Church, Sandridge. It is intended to install these on 16th February.

The Clerk will write an article in the next edition of Neighbourhood News and participants will be asked to keep the Parish Council updated with any successful nesting stories.

Additionally, Members will note there is a budget of £3,500 in 2025/26 for wild bird

initiatives. It is;

**Recommended**

That Committee Members discuss whether to expand the Swift Initiative next year (bird sound players, more nesting boxes, a box cam) or if there is another project to help local endangered bird & bat life that members would like to explore.

1. **Jersey Farm Woodland Park Pond**

The Jersey Farm Woodland Park Committee is looking at the feasibility of a large

wildlife pond close to the entrance at Jersey Lane. Trial pits have been dug to

assess the soil’s suitability for holding water and pond experts consulted. The PACE Officer and Deputy Clerk to provide an update.

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

The native hedgerow at the Jersey Farm Woodland park has now been planted by staff, volunteers and councillors. The original planting plan of 250m has had to be reduced by approximately 90m following a request by the householder but will still provide an extensive habitat and food source when mature and, finally, traditionally laid.

**Recycling, Reusing, Repurposing, Repairing**

1. **Installation of mixed recycling**

The Parish Council has approved the budget in 2025/26 (ongoing) to fund the collection of recyclables from bins in Sherwood Park and Spencer Meadow. The Clerk has asked a colleague at the District Council to confirm the arrangement is still able to proceed. Once confirmed two mixed general waste/recyclable bins will be ordered and installed in anticipation of the collection commencing in April 2025.

1. **Repair Workshop – 15th February at Jersey Farm Community Centre**

Councillor Wells will be assisting colleagues from St Albans Fixers at a Repair Shop to be held on 15th February 2025. Councillor Wells to update Committee Members on the event format.

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

**DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Committee for Sustainability will take place on Tuesday 1st April 2025 at Marshalswick Community Centre.