

Sandridge Parish Council



THE COMMITTEE FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Met at 7.30pm at Marshalswick Community Centre on Tuesday 21st January 2025.

Present: Councillors June Reid (Vice Chair), Carol Chalkley, Mary Ternouth, Debbie Chachulski, Maurice Wells, James Lambert
Warden Mark Carter
Public Members David Kealey, Jim Watson
Jill Watson (Sustainable St Albans)
Julian Thornton (Herts County Council)

Officers: Emma Hostler, Deputy Clerk
Rebecca Pannese, Project, Amenities and Community Engagement Officer (PACE)

Absent: There were no absences

975 TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Jenny Roberts.

976 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS
Mark Carter declared an interest as a self-employed contractor for Sandridge Parish Council.

977 APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 17th SEPTEMBER 2024
The minutes of the 17th September meeting, having been previously circulated, were taken as a correct record. It was;

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Committee for Sustainability meeting held on Tuesday 17th September 2024 be approved and signed as a correct record by the Vice Chair.

978 COMMITTEE BUDGETS 2024-25 AND 2025-26
Members reviewed both current expenditure against draft budgets as well as available future spend for 2025-26, as shown below. Members were encouraged to consider ideas for future projects.

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?

979 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 Green House regarding potential part use of one of the Parish Council's garages for storage of items within their proposed Library of Things. This will be for an initial trial period of 9 months. The Clerk to report back to this committee in due course.

IMPROVING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT FOR RESIDENTS

980 UPDATE FROM JULIAN THORNTON (HCC) ON FOOTPATHS AND RIGHTS OF WAY

Julian reported on the following:

- The owners of the electric fence running alongside FP 24 have been notified to move it away from the path.
- HCC has submitted a response to planning application 5/2024/2093 for new builds adjacent to 38 House Lane and incorporating FP 55. Mary Ternouth notified members that Sandridge Parish Council Planning Committee has also submitted a lengthy response to the application and that a District Councillor has requested a call in should the SADC Planning Officer be minded to approve the application.
- HCC is aware of the need for surface works alongside Jersey Lane and whilst these are not included in current plans they will be a future consideration. Members alerted Julian to particular surfacing problem points along the route requiring attention.
- The owners of the damaged stile on FP20 (Capps Cottage/Nashes Farm) have been asked to make repairs.
- Scrub clearance works are being undertaken on Old House Lane and Ardens Rise.

At the end of the meeting, Julian also briefly touched upon status of pre-planning application discussions with Oaklands College as well as the BW 51 link path (Taylor Wimpey) and the path through the Oaklands Grange estate.

981 UPDATE FROM COUNCILLOR MARY TERNOUTH ON RIGHTS OF WAY

Mary provided a brief update on the status for applications for modifications of the definitive map on behalf of Sandridge Parish Council, this included from BW 53 to FP 27 (Jersey Farm Woodland Park) and Twin Fields. The former should be due for review at some point in the near future (13 of 362 outstanding applications) by the definitive map team but no update on the latter.

982 HARNESS WAY CIRCULAR PATHWAY

Members were reminded to visit the newly laid Harness Way circular pathway which has received positive feedback from the local community. It has been recommended to 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. Members received a copy of an audit carried out by the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT) in this regard containing advice towards a strategy for future management of the open space. Mark Carter suggested a future volunteer project creating a laid hedge from recent plantings adjacent to the pond which will increase the light into this habitat. The PACE Officer also informed members of plans to plant residual hedging whips from the JFWP hedging project (see minute 986) alongside a stretch of the pathway and that two new picnic benches will shortly be installed on the open space. Members were encouraged to read the audit to identify any additional future works.

Jim Watson, as a representative of Friends of Jersey Lane, informed the Committee of the group's plans to install a bench at a clearing adjacent to Harness Way on Jersey Lane and intended as an informal dedicated nature watch area. It was recognized that this has previously been identified as a rich habitat for bats and any plans should be sensitive to this. The group will liaise with both HCC and the Parish Council.

PROTECTING AND SUPPORTING NATURE

983 PARISH WILDFLOWER INITIATIVE

The PACE Officer provided an update on wildflower planting across the Parish including plans to create new beds. She has been investigating costs for hiring machinery and operators on a daily rate to help with the task of preparing the ground which can be offset against potential cost savings from purchasing seeds as part of the arrangement. She is also looking at sourcing and adding sand or chalk to the newly created mound at Harness Way to create more favourable ground conditions for wildflower growth. It is intended to focus on an annual seed mix for sowing this year having found perennials too dominant when part of the mix in past years.

984 SANDRIDGE SWIFT INITIATIVE (including St Leonard's Church)

It was reported that 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. Members were reminded that each box costs £85 with the Parish Council funding £50 and each resident funding £35 plus £15 installation. Pre-installation surveys have been carried out and 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 swift boxes,

both Impeckable and Councillor Wells' hand-crafted box, were made available at the meeting for Members to inspect.

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.

Members noted there is a budget of £3,500 in 2025/26 for wild bird initiatives and were asked to discuss whether to expand the Swift Initiative next year (bird sound players, more nesting boxes, a box cam) or if there are other projects to help local endangered bird & bat life that they would like to explore. Discussion followed, after which, it was:

RESOLVED

To continue with the Swift initiative for another year, however recognising that this may not require the full 2025/26 wild bird budget allocation, Members would therefore give further thought to additional activities to protect endangered wild bird or bat species and bring ideas to the April meeting.

985 JERSEY FARM WOODLAND PARK POND

Members were informed that 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 gave a brief update.

986 HEDGEROW ON THE JERSEY FARM WOODLAND PARK

Members were informed that a native hedgerow at the Jersey Farm Woodland park has now been planted by staff, volunteers and councillors. The original planting plan of 250m 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

987 INSTALLATION OF MIXED RECYCLING

Members noted that 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.

988 REPAIR WORKSHOP – 15TH FEBRUARY AT JERSEY FARM COMMUNITY CENTRE

Councillor Wells provided an update on the forthcoming St Albans Fixers Repair Shop which is to be held on 15th February and hosted by Sandridge Parish Council at Jersey Farm Community Centre. He explained the format of the event and asked for any volunteers to help support the event.

989 ITEMS FOR INCLUSION IN THE AGENDA FOR THE NEXT MEETING

Jill Watson from Sustainable St Albans provided a brief update on plans for SustFest 2025 which will take place over 4 weekends in March, May, September and November. Further information is available on the website and will be provided at the next meeting.

Jim Watson mentioned plans from The Green House for establishing a tree warden scheme. Discussions have already taken place with the Clerk.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING – Tuesday 1st April 2025 at 7.30pm at Marshalswick Community Centre.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.57pm

Chair

Date