



SANDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

Met at Marshalswick Community Centre on Wednesday 13th December 2023 at 7.30pm for a meeting of the Parish Council

PRESENT:

Councillors Jenny Roberts (Vice Chair), James Lambert, Mary Ternouth, Raihaanah Ahmed, Debbie Chachulski, Maurice Wells, John Hale, Julie Oakley, Luke Sieger, Mike White

OFFICERS:

Rebecca Pannese, Project, Amenities and Community Engagement Officer, Stef Hayes, Community Centres Manager, Simon Thwaites, Parish Clerk, Emma Hostler, Deputy Parish Clerk

ABSENT:

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IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Iain Begg, Wheathampstead Parish Councillor

5617 TO RECEIVE AND FORMALLY ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors Adam Twidell, Graham Leonard, Carol Chalkley and June Reid.

5618 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There was none.

5619 TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON THE 8th NOVEMBER 2023

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 8th November 2023 were reviewed. They were agreed to be a correct record and it was unanimously;

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting be approved and signed by the Chair.

QUESTIONS TO OFFICERS AND MEMBERS

5620 Questions to Officers

There was none.

5621 Public Participation

Mr Iain Begg, a Wheathampstead Parish Councillor, spoke to Members on the subject of a clear definitive cycle/footpath between Sandridge and Wheathampstead alongside the B651. Following discussion it was agreed that Sandridge Parish Council is in favour of working in partnership with Wheathampstead Parish Council in ensuring a definitive cycle/footpath remains in place for the future with no risk of closure. Councillor Begg undertook to speak to the Sandridge Clerk in due course to establish next steps.

CLERK'S REPORTS

5622 Monthly Accounts

Members reviewed a schedule of creditor payments for the period 9th November 2023 to 13th December 2023. It was unanimously;

Resolved

To approve the schedule for payment on 15th December 2023.

Note: Councillor Ahmed joined the meeting at this point and confirmed having no declaration of interest.

5623 (a) Contract for the Jersey Farm Open Space Pump Track

On the recommendation of the Parish Council's Internal Auditor it was;

Resolved

To formally approve the award of the contract to construct the Jersey Farm Open Space Pump Track to JB Extreme Ltd in the sum of £48,400.

N.B: It was noted that there will be an increase in the contract value once the ongoing traffic survey, carried out to address concerns raised by Herts Highways is complete. Provision for this has been made within the 2024/25 draft Sports and Recreation budget.

(b) Jersey Farm Open Space Pump Track Update

Members received a verbal update from the Project, Amenities and Community Engagement Officer on the current status of this project. It was noted that the recently commissioned traffic survey report has been forwarded to Herts Highways for comment in respect of concerns around the site access.

5624 2023/24 Budgetary Control and 2024/25 Draft Budget

The projected year-end position for 2023/24 and the draft budget for 2024/25 were reviewed. The reserves position and the five year forecast based on projected net expenditure of £306,330 against a budget of £343,095 was noted.

In summary, the Clerk's report showed draft net expenditure for 2024/2025 of £357,305, being an increase of 4.14% on the current year's budget. Members noted two items in respect of Sports and Recreation;

1. The sum of £50,000 is shown in the reserves as earmarked for the bike track. This expenditure is not however reflected in the budget at this stage because of uncertainties around if/when it is to be used.
2. The Sports and Recreation capital budget at the adventure playground is shown as £30,000 but without a specific project named. This is because the final cost of complying with planning requirements to build the bike track are unknown and it is probable some of this funding will be required. It's also known that the build costs have increased. Most of the £30,000 should however fund a new project at a location to be determined in 2024/25 once bike track costs are finalised. Any new project(s) will be brought to Full Council before progressing because of the sums involved.

It was also noted that several budgets have been brought under the control of the new Committee for Sustainability where previously they've not been overseen by any committee. It was proposed by Councillor White, seconded by Councillor Roberts and unanimously;

Resolved

To approve the draft 2024/25 budget of £360,305, including an additional £3,000 allocated to the Parish Event, subject to funding (see minute 5626).

5625 Five Year Model

Members considered a five year financial model to give context to the 2024/25 budget and position on reserves.

5626 2024/25 Draft Reserves, Precept and Funding Requirement

Councillors considered and discussed an appendix showing the opening and projected closing position on reserves. Also noted was that Sandridge Parish Council continues to raise the lowest precept in the district for comparable councils and economic challenges in future years will impact more heavily if balances are not maintained.

It was proposed by Councillor Lambert, seconded by Councillor Sieger and unanimously;

Resolved

That an increase on the 2023/24 precept of 7% is approved for the 2024/25 financial year. This will increase the precept by £21,280 from £304,001 to £325,281 in support of the approved budget.

5627 Parish Council Schedule of Internal Controls

A schedule of internal controls as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 was reviewed and formally noted.

5628 Internal Audit

A summary of the 2023/24 Interim Internal Audit was circulated with the agenda along with the Clerk's response to the three issues raised. It was noted that of the 109 audit tests carried out, 108 were positive and 1 negative. Following discussion it was unanimously;

Resolved

To formally note and approve the internal auditors report and to record thanks to the office team.

5629 Matters of Note

- Staff appraisals will be carried out in early January 2024. These will be taken to the HR Committee on 5th February.
- A new Salvation Army clothing bank has been ordered for the Village Hall/Spencer Meadow car park. The Parish Office will monitor the bank for fly tipping.
Post meeting note: this is now in place.
- Grants awarded this year to the Jersey Farm Day Care Centre and the Hornbeam Hedgehog Sanctuary were awarded under the LGA 1972 s.145 and the Open Spaces Act 1906 s.9 & s.10 respectively. These details were omitted on the original minutes.
- Councillor Hale and the Clerk attended the first of three course sessions entitled 'Carbon Literacy' on December 5th. These are run by the Groundwork organisation and funded through the County Council.

COUNCILLOR AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

5630 Grant Applications

Sustainable St Albans - After deliberation it was proposed by Councillor Lambert, seconded by Councillor White and;

Resolved

To award Sustainable St Albans the sum of £2,000 towards venue, logistics, technical and promotional costs for the 2024 SustFest. This award to be made under the LGA 1972 s145.

5631 D-Day 80 at the Jersey Farm Woodland Park

Members discussed an initiative to commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day landings to take place on 6th June 2024 throughout the United Kingdom, Channel Islands, Isle of Man, UK Overseas Territories and at the site of the British Normandy Memorial. Each event to be centered around lighting a beacon, 80 of which are planned in each county.

Councillor Twidell circulated a report with the agenda, confirming he has spoken to the Scout's District Commissioner for St Albans regarding their participation in lighting a beacon, possibly with some words

such as a soldier's memoir spoken during a short ceremony. Members were reminded that the Parish Council signed up to the Armed Forces Covenant in March 2023. It was unanimously;

Resolved

1. That the Parish Council agrees in principle to participate in the D-Day 80 event on 6th June 2024.
2. That a budget of up to £300 be allocated in principle.
3. That the matter appears again on the February 2024 agenda for further discussion.

5632 Community Festive Lunch

Members were informed that Councillor Ahmed has organised a community festive lunch at Jersey Farm Community Centre on Thursday 21st December between 12pm and 2pm. Participation in the lunch is free of charge and walk-ins will be welcomed although booking is advised - stalbandscommunitypantry@gmail.com or 07534 523232.

5633 Proposed Diversion of Footpath 26 Sandridge

The meeting considered a report by Councillor Ternouth in respect of a long-standing proposal to permanently divert Footpath 26, currently running through Nashes Farm. Following discussion it was unanimously;

Resolved

To support the proposed diversion.

5634 Meetings of Committees:

Members noted this month's committee meetings;

- Sports and Recreation Committee 6th December 2023 - *Meeting postponed*
- Planning Committee – see below

5635 MATTERS OF NOTE ARISING SINCE THE CIRCULATION OF THE AGENDA

- Members were informed that the first Parish Event meeting had been held. A provisional date of 1st June 2024 between 1pm and 10pm had been agreed.
- Officers from Herts County Council met with representatives of Oaklands College this week in respect of re-opening public access through the campus.

5636 PLANNING MATTERS

It was noted that the Planning Committee met on 27th November 2023.

The planning applications formally commented on since the last Full Council meeting are;

- 22 Skyswood Road AL4 9PG 5/2023/2099
- 112 Osprey Drive AL4 0LU 5/2023/2206
- 7 Evans Grove AL4 9PJ 5/2023/2280

Please note: Planning applications received at the Parish Office from the Planning Authority *after* the Parish Council agenda has been published may also be discussed at the meeting as may applications of complexity or applications likely to impact heavily on the Green Belt.

5637 SUGGESTIONS AND/OR MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION AT FUTURE MEETINGS

- Oaklands College public access issues.
- St Leonard's Lych Gate restoration.

Next meeting date – 10th January 2024 at 7.30pm – Marshalswick Community Centre

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.06pm

Chair

Date

Cllr Jenny Roberts (Vice-Chair)