

SANDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL



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Met at Marshalswick Community Centre on Wednesday 11th December 2024 at 7.30pm

PRESENT:

Councillors Jenny Roberts, John Hale, Graham Leonard (Chair), Mary Ternouth, June Reid, Maurice Wells, Julie Oakley, Luke Sieger, Debbie Chachulski, James Lambert, Raihaanah Ahmed

OFFICERS:

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

ABSENT:

Councillor Mike White

IN ATTENDANCE:

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5853 TO RECEIVE AND FORMALLY ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors Adam Twidell, Carol Chalkley

5854 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS

There was none.

5855 TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON THE 13th NOVEMBER 2024

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 13th November 2024 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

5856 Questions to Officers

Councillor Chachulski enquired what responses had been received to a recent Sports and Recreation post on Facebook seeking views on what new apparatus residents would like to see.

5857 Public Participation

There was none.

CLERK'S REPORTS

5858 Monthly Accounts

Members reviewed a schedule of creditor payments for the period 14th November 2024 to 11th December 2024. It was unanimously;

Resolved

That Members approve payment of this schedule on 13th December 2024.

5859 2024/25 Budgetary Control and 2025/26 Draft Budget

Members reviewed a report circulated with the agenda detailing the projected budgetary outturn for 2024/25 and the draft budget for 2025/26. Both documents were looked at in relation to the position on reserves and the proposed precept. Material items both within the budgetary control report and draft budget were highlighted and explained by the Clerk. It was unanimously;

Resolved

To note the projected outturn for 2024/25 and to approve the draft 2025/26 budget subject to funding (see item 5861). It was further unanimously;

Resolved

That The Council approves a further two items in addition to the draft 2025/26 budget presented to the Finance Committee as below;

- The sum of £6,500 for replacement doors at the rear of Marshalswick Community Centre, leading to the Parish Office/Committee Room.
- An increase to employer NI contributions in 2025/26 of £3,500 (ongoing).

5860 5 Year Model

The Council reviewed a five-year financial model giving an overview of the draft 2025/26 budget in the context of the two preceding years and two subsequent years (including levels of reserves). It was noted that the projection supports both the recommended draft budget at item 5859 and the recommended precept at item 5861. It was unanimously;

Resolved

That Members noted and accepted these projections.

5861 2025/26 Draft Reserves, Precept and Funding Requirement

Members reviewed a table detailing the 2024/25 and 2025/26 opening and projected closing position on reserves as reported to the Finance Committee on 28th October 2024. It was noted that the projection assumed (i) that the draft 2025/26 budget as above was approved, (ii) an 8% increase on the 2024/2025 precept is agreed and (iii) that reserves of £26,529 will be used to support the 2025/2026 budget (not allowing for the two additional items at 5859). Also assumed was the accuracy of the 2024/25 projected outturn. Councillors were reminded that Sandridge Parish Council continues to raise the lowest precept in the district and economic challenges in future years will impact more heavily if the Parish Council fails to maintain balances. It was understood that a prudent increase in next year's precept will safeguard against the potential for a proportionately higher increase in future years.

In general, future environmental priorities and global unrest could also result in unforeseen increased expenditure for the Parish Council, for example the cost of energy or the costs associated with damage from more severe weather. This would not have been considered when setting CIPFA recommended levels of General Reserves of between 3 and 6 months operational expenditure. It was unanimously;

Resolved

That an increase on the 2024/25 precept of 8% is approved for the 2025/26 financial year.

5862 Parish Council Schedule of Internal Controls

Councillors reviewed a report by the Clerk documenting the internal controls in place to manage risk to The Council, it being a requirement of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 to formally document and regularly review its internal control systems. It was unanimously;

Resolved

To formally note the requirement to document internal controls and formally undertake to carry out a regular review measuring the effectiveness of those controls.

5863 Internal Audit

A copy of the interim internal audit completed last month by IAC Audit and Consultancy Ltd was circulated with the agenda. The Clerk talked Members through the observations raised. It was unanimously;

Resolved

To formally note and approve the auditors report and the Clerk's response to the four recommendations made.

5864 Sandridge Swift Initiative

Members received a verbal update by the Clerk and PACE Officer on this Parish Council initiative, in summary that the public information evening was a great success with 31 orders placed for swift boxes to be installed in the parish. Following a recommendation by the Clerk and Councillor Wells it was unanimously;

Resolved

To make a £100 donation to each of the two organisations represented by speakers at the event, namely Hertford Swift Group and the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust. The Hertford Swift Group will be carrying out swift box installations locally.

5865 Matters of Note

- Staff appraisals will be carried out in early January 2025. These will be taken to the HR Committee on 3rd February.
- The new 'living roof' bus shelter on The Ridgeway, outside Phoenix Barbers is in place. This has been a successful collaboration between the County Council and the Parish Council, in particular Councillor Chalkley. Two planters have been installed and these have been filled with compost made on the Parish Council's community garden and planted up by garden volunteers with plants supplied by the Parish Council. Two new benches will be installed soon and the shelter will accommodate displays of local art.
- The new native hedgerow on the Jersey Farm Woodland Park has been planted by staff, councillors and volunteers. There was some amendment to the original planting plan following discussion with the householder.
- The Parish Council's Christmas lights in Sandridge, Marshalswick and Jersey Farm have now been switched on. A successful carol service was held under the tree at Marshalswick Community Centre by St Albans Pantry on 30th November.

COUNCILLOR AND COMMITTEE REPORTS**5866 Grant Applications**

- Sandridge Carpet Bowls Club – new bowls carpet

Members considered an application from the Sandridge Carpet Bowls Club for assistance in purchasing a new bowls mat. It was proposed by Councillor Reid, seconded by Councillor Lambert and unanimously;

Resolved

To award the sum of £750 for this purpose.

This award to be made using S.137 of the Local Government Act 1972

5867 Coopers Green Lane

Members considered a report and proposal from Councillor Roberts in relation to flooding on Coopers Green Lane and the increased risk of a traffic accident/injury to cyclists. It was proposed by Councillor Roberts, seconded by Councillor Wells and unanimously;

Resolved

To write to the Highways Authority asking that this matter be given urgent priority in its programme of works.

5868 MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES:

Committee Chairs briefed Members on meetings held since last Full Council

- Sports and Recreation Committee 4th December 2024
- Planning Committee – see below

5869 MATTERS OF NOTE ARISING SINCE THE CIRCULATION OF THE AGENDA

- Councillor Hale informed Members of a consultation event he'd attended in respect of future development at Oaklands College. Councillor Ternouth made reference to the Neighbourhood Plan in this regard.
- Councillor Hale asked Members to consider whether they personally know anyone who may be prepared to sit on the Sandridge Youth Sports Community Association (SYSCA) board of trustees.
- Councillor Chachulski confirmed that she is liaising closely with Sandringham School in finding ways to better inform residents when significant events are taking place at the school outside of school hours.
- The Clerk asked if priority could be given by the working party to deciding on whether to allocate parking spaces for Marshalswick Community Centre hirers.

5870 PLANNING MATTERS

The Planning Committee met on 25th November 2024

Sandridge Parish Council's Planning Committee meets every three weeks to review and respond to planning applications received from the Planning Authority, St. Albans District Council. Planning applications commented on since the last Full Council meeting are;

114 Osprey Drive 5/2024/1504
1 Harrier End 5/2024/1864

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.

5871 SUGGESTIONS AND/OR MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION AT FUTURE MEETINGS

There was none.

Note: In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972, the Parish Council meeting will be open to the Public unless the Parish Council resolves otherwise

Next meeting date – 8th January 2025 at 7.30pm – Marshalswick Community Centre

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.50 pm

Chair **Date**