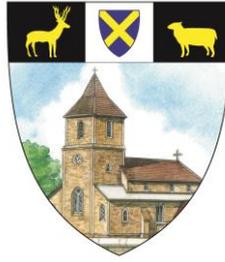


# *Sandridge Parish Council*



Marshalswick Community Centre,  
The Ridgeway,  
St.Albans,  
Herts  
AL4 9TU

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7th May 2020

To : Councillors Janet Churchard, Geoff Churchard, Claudio Duran, John Foster, John Newton-Davies, James Lancaster, Graham Leonard, Julie Booth, Neil Harris, John Hale (Chair), Patsy Cann, Lyn Bolton, Jennifer Roberts, Jon Hegerty

**You are summoned to attend a meeting of Sandridge Parish Council, to be held via video conference in accordance with The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings) (England) Regulations 2020 on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020 at 7.30 pm**

*Simon Thwaites*  
Parish Clerk

Members of the public and press are invited to attend this meeting via Zoom video conferencing and using meeting reference number 861-7059-3172, key 777851. Alternatively, questions or concerns may be submitted to the Clerk in advance of the meeting via email using [clerk@sandridge-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@sandridge-pc.gov.uk) or by post, address as above.

## **A G E N D A**

- 1. TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 2. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS**
  - a) To receive declarations of interest from councillors on items on the agenda
  - b) To receive written requests for dispensations for declarable interests; and
  - c) To grant any requests for dispensation as appropriate
- 3. TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON THE 11<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2020**

Full Council 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020

#### **4. QUESTIONS TO MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

- 4.1 Public Participation - An opportunity for residents to raise issues or ask Members questions.
- 4.2 Questions to the officers.

#### **5. CLERK'S REPORTS**

##### **5.1 Monthly Accounts.**

Please find attached for ratification a schedule of creditor payments made for the period 12<sup>th</sup> March to 11<sup>th</sup> April 2020. This was sent to all Parish Councillors on 3<sup>rd</sup> April for review. It is;

##### **Proposed**

That creditor payments as detailed on the schedule are ratified by Full Council. It is further;

##### **Proposed**

To approve the attached payment schedule, relating to creditor payments for the period 12<sup>th</sup> April to 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020.

##### **5.2 Election of Chair, Vice Chair and appointment to Committees and Outside Bodies.**

The requirement to hold an Annual Meeting of the Parish Council has been removed due to the current pandemic. It is therefore;

##### **Recommended**

1. To postpone the election of a Chair, Vice Chair and members of Committees and Outside Bodies until next year's Annual Meeting in June 2021. All existing positions to remain until that election/allocation takes place.
2. To postpone the review of committee Terms of Reference until later in the year, to allow consideration of the guidance on holding physical meetings.
3. To authorise committees to meet remotely should the Clerk and Chair of the committee decide a meeting is required.

##### **5.3 Absence from Council Meetings**

The Local Government Act 1972 states that a councillor no longer holds office if he/she fails to attend a meeting of Full Council or one of its committees for a period of six consecutive months and the reason for the absence has not been approved by Full Council before the end of the six month period. In light of government guidance relating to social distancing and the avoidance of gatherings it is;

##### **Recommended**

That Council recognises there may be Members unable to attend meetings (actual or virtual) for a period of six months or more as a result of COVID-19 and therefore approves such circumstances as valid reason for non-attendance. This policy to be reviewed no later than 30 April 2021.

##### **5.4 Annual Parish Meeting**

The Annual Parish Meeting (APM) is normally held in April. It is an opportunity for members of the parish community to meet, to hear from the Parish Chair on the previous year's activities and ask questions of all councillors.

Legislation does not currently allow the APM to be held remotely and neither does it allow the meeting to be cancelled. In the current Government 'lockdown', where it is not possible to promote physical gatherings, the Parish Council must take a view on how best to serve the parish community's needs. In the absence of new regulations to give direction in this matter it is;

### **Recommended**

That the Annual Parish Meeting be postponed until the next time the Parish Council meets in person and that the Clerk gives notice of this on the Parish Council's website, asking residents to contact him in the meantime with any questions or statements they wish put to councillors prior to the APM.

#### **5.5 General Power of Competence (GPC) – Annual Review**

The GPC was introduced through the Localism Act 2011 s.1-8, extending the powers of local councils, encouraging efficiency and innovation. To hold this power of first resort a resolution must be passed annually confirming;

- Two thirds of council members were elected
- The Council has a suitably qualified Clerk (CiLCA)

These criteria appear in the Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012/965. This power differs from s137 of the LGA. There is no maximum annual expenditure imposed and it allows a greater degree of financial freedom. The GPC allows eligible councils to do anything an individual could lawfully do (i.e. excluding anything prohibited by legislation). Eligibility doesn't remove the requirement of local councils to perform statutory duties. In November 2016 the current Clerk completed the CiLCA qualification, thereby fulfilling the criteria for Sandridge Parish Council to hold the GPC. It is therefore;

### **Recommended**

That Sandridge Parish Council resolves to re-adopt the General Power of Competence in 2020/21, for review at the May 2021 Full Council meeting.

#### **5.6 2019/2020 Internal Audit Report**

To note the attached report produced by the Parish Council's internal auditor, Green Biro Ltd. It may be noted that there are no action points resulting from the audit.

#### **5.7 2019/20 Final Accounts, Internal Audit report and Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)**

A set of Accounts compiled by George Street Accountants, together with a copy of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 are attached. The Council is already aware that the final Accounts for 2019/20 have been approved by the Internal Auditor who has also signed the AGAR.

The final budgetary outturn for 2019/20 will be reported to the next meeting once all accrued expenditure and income are posted on to the financial management system. Outturn will clearly show savings on the original 2019/20 budget. Several budgets, unspent because of unavoidable delay during 2019/20, will be carried forward into 2020/21 as follows;

Skate Ramp £18,290  
P3 Funding £1,000  
MCC Paving £1,500  
Roundabout Planting £1,000

For information, the proposed period for the Exercise of Public Rights, when the approved AGAR is publicly displayed, is from 25<sup>th</sup> May 2020 to 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020. This complies with the recently issued Statutory Instrument SI 2020/404 of the Accounts and Audit regulations. It is;

### **Proposed**

That members of Sandridge Parish Council acknowledge responsibility for ensuring there is a sound system of internal control, including the preparation of the Statement of Accounts, and confirm that to the best of its knowledge and belief, with respect to the Council's Statement of Accounts for year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020, the 2019/20 Annual Governance Statement should be approved by the Council and that the Chair and the Parish Clerk (as RFO) should sign Section 1 of the AGAR. Additionally, that the period for the Exercise of Public Rights proceeds as stated above is approved.

It is further;

### **Proposed**

That Sandridge Parish Council resolves to confirm that to the best of its knowledge the 2019/20 Accounting Statements contained in the Annual Return, plus the explanation of variances made available at the meeting represent the financial position of the Council for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 and that the Chair and the Parish Clerk (RFO) should each sign Section 2 of the AGAR.

## **6. Matters of Note**

- The programme to plant trees on verges throughout Marshalswick has completed for the current year. The Project Officer is already receiving further site suggestions from residents for next year's programme.
- John O'Conner Ltd have continued to maintain all play areas and open spaces, including grass cutting and bin emptying during recent weeks.
- A small number of incidents of anti-social behaviour on Parish Council owned open spaces have been reported to the police and acted on.
- The Parish Office has continued to work effectively through a combination of physically attending the office, with only one team member present at any time, and remote working via link to the Parish Council's computer network.
- The Parish Council's insurance policy through Zurich has been renewed for a further five year period. This following a negotiated policy premium reduction and in consultation with members of the Finance Committee.
- The lease for the Sherwood Park Surestart Centre has finally been signed and returned to the County Council to be sealed.

## **7. COUNCILLOR AND COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **7.1 Ward Boundaries**

Councillors Graham Leonard, John Newton-Davies and Geoff Churchard drafted a response to the Boundary Commission's proposed boundary changes and circulated it to all Parish Councillors on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2020, prior to submitting it to the Boundaries Commission on April 11<sup>th</sup>. It is;

### **Proposed**

That the submission made on April 11<sup>th</sup> is ratified as representative of the Parish Council's view on the proposals made.

### **7.2 Grants to Local Organisations affected by Coronavirus**

The current pandemic has impacted significantly on local community organisations, either by preventing social contact within those set up to support isolated or elder people or by placing enormous financial strain on charities established to mitigate situations such as this (e.g. food banks). Councillor Hale;

### **Proposes**

That organisations be invited to submit grant allocations of up to £1,000, within an overall cap of £10,000 if able to evidence the following;

- the organisation is local, or is a national not for profit organisation with an established branch within the parish
- the organisation has been financially impacted by the pandemic and is not eligible for significant government support
- the organisation is working to alleviate the impact of Coronavirus on residents within the parish and would expand this assistance if further funding became available

- has a dedicated bank account

In the absence of scheduled Full Council meetings it is further;

### **Proposed**

That the availability of funding is advertised through word of mouth, the Parish Council website and noticeboards. Also that applications are considered and decided jointly by the Clerk, the Chair of The Council and the Chair of the Finance Committee, and then reported at the next Full Council meeting.

### **8. Grant Applications**

- Harvesters Football Club.

### **9. Meetings of Committees:**

- Sports and Recreation Committee 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020
- Planning Committee 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2020 (via email)
- Planning Committee 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2020 (via email)

### **10. MATTERS OF NOTE ARISING SINCE THE CIRCULATION OF THE AGENDA**

*The Council may not make decisions under this item*

### **11. PLANNING MATTERS**

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. The following application was forwarded to Council members on May 5<sup>th</sup>.

Planning ref: 5/2020/0919

Location: Land Between Hopkins Crescent and The Former Baptist Chapel St Albans Road Sandridge Hertfordshire

Proposal: Outline application (access and layout) - Construction of 14 semi-detached affordable dwellings (resubmission following withdrawal of 5/2019/2925).

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.

### **12. SUGGESTIONS AND/OR MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION AT FUTURE MEETINGS**

**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 – to be advised or agreed at this meeting**