



SANDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

Met remotely via video conferencing on Wednesday 13th May 2020 at 7.30pm for a meeting of The Council

PRESENT (VIA VIDEO):

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

APOLOGIES:

Councillor John Foster

OFFICERS (VIA VIDEO):

Simon Thwaites, Parish Clerk
Rebecca Pannese, Project and Amenities Officer
Emma Hostler, Deputy Clerk
Martine MacRae, Centres Manager and Website Manager

4932 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were none.

4933 TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON THE 11th March 2020

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 11th March 2020 were reviewed. They were agreed to be a correct record and it was;

Resolved

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

4934 QUESTIONS TO MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

1. Public Participation

No members of the public were present.

2. Questions to the Officers

There were none.

CLERK'S REPORTS

4935 Monthly Accounts

Members reviewed a schedule of creditor payments previously advised by email and made for the period 12th March to 11th April 2020. Questions were asked and responded to. It was;

Resolved

To ratify creditor payments as detailed on the schedule. It was further;

Resolved

To approve a second payment schedule, also circulated with the agenda, relating to creditor payments for the period 12th April to 13th May 2020.

4936 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 was therefore unanimously;

Resolved

1. To postpone the election of a Chair, Vice Chair and members of Committees and Outside Bodies until next year's Annual Meeting in May 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.

4937 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 was unanimously;

Resolved

To recognise that 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 to approve such circumstances as valid reason for non-attendance. This policy to be reviewed no later than 30 April 2021.

4938 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 was unanimously;

Resolved

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.

4939 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)

It was unanimously;

Resolved

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

4940 2019/2020 Internal Audit Report

Members noted the internal audit report circulated with the agenda.

4941 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 31st March 2020 were circulated with the agenda. It was noted that 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.

It was noted that 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

The Council was informed that the period selected for the Exercise of Public Rights, when the approved AGAR is publicly displayed, is from 25th May 2020 to 6th July 2020. This complies with the recently issued Statutory Instrument SI 2020/404 of the Accounts and Audit regulations. The Clerk was asked to amend the list of councillors to record those in the role until May 2019 and those in the role since May 2019. It was unanimously;

Resolved

That members of Sandridge Parish Council do 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 31st March 2020, the 2019/20 Annual Governance Statement is 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. It was further unanimously;

Resolved

That Sandridge Parish Council confirms that to the best of its knowledge the 2019/20 Accounting Statements contained in the Annual Return represent the financial position of the Council for the year ended 31st March 2020 and that the Chair and the Parish Clerk (RFO) should each sign Section 2 of the AGAR.

4942 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. The Clerk was asked to write to the company with condolences for the recent loss of company founder, John O'Conner.
- 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.

COUNCILLOR AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

4943 Ward Boundaries

Members were aware of a report drafted by Councillors Graham Leonard, John Newton-Davies and Geoff Churchard in response to the Boundary Commission's proposed boundary changes. This had been circulated to all Parish Councillors on 8th April 2020, prior to submitting it to the Boundaries Commission on April 11th. It was;

Resolved

That the submission made on April 11th be ratified as representative of the Parish Council's view on the proposals made.

4944 Grant Applications

Members agreed to amend the order of business to consider item 8 prior to item 7.2 on the agenda. Members then considered a grant application from Harvesters Football Club. Following discussion it was;

Resolved

To award the sum of £7,500 under the General Power of Competence

Councillor Bolton left the meeting during this item

4945 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). Following a proposal by Councillor Hale it was;

Resolved

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 OR 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

It was further;

Resolved

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.

4946 Meetings of Committees:

There were no issues raised from the following draft committee minutes produced since the last Full Council. Committee Chairs briefly summarised each meeting to Members.

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

4947 MATTERS OF NOTE ARISING SINCE THE CIRCULATION OF THE AGENDA

There were none.

4948 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.

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. The following application was forwarded to Council members on May 5th.

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). Following discussion it was;

Resolved

To object to the application on the grounds of it being inappropriate development on the Green Belt.

4949 SUGGESTIONS AND/OR MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION AT FUTURE MEETINGS

There were none.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Sandridge Parish Council will be held on Wednesday, July 8th 2020 at 7.30pm. It is anticipated that this will be held remotely via video conferencing.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.02 pm.

Chair **Date**

Cllr John Hale