

**Minutes of Sandon Parish Council Meeting  
Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> November 2015 at 7.30 pm  
Sandon Village Hall**

**Present:** Cllr J de Uphaugh (Chairman), Cllr F Cannon, Cllr J Wharton,  
Cllr B Wheeler, Cllr H Gallo, Cllr K Chamberlain  
**In attendance:** Mr M Wicksteed, Responsible Financial Officer  
District Cllr S Jarvis  
Ms M Parker, Clerk, Mrs H Stubbings, new Clerk (to 7.50pm)  
No members of the parish were present.

- 15.53 Welcome  
The Chairman, Cllr de Uphaugh, welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no absences.
- 15.54 Requests for dispensation for disclosable pecuniary interest on items on the agenda – Localism Act 2011 s33  
No conflicts were declared.
- 15.55 Minutes of Sandon Parish Council meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2015  
Approval of the 16/9/15 minutes was proposed by Cllr Cannon and seconded by Cllr Wheeler **subject to** confirmation of accuracy by the RFO of the Financial Report section.  
**Resolved**, that the Minutes be agreed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman subject to the RFO's confirmation.
- 15.56 Reports on actions agreed at the last Council meeting (not covered elsewhere in the agenda)  
Enclosure Award file – Cllr Wheeler will make arrangements to transfer the file to Hertfordshire Archives.  
Changes to mobile library provision  
Cllr Wharton proposed that a good location for the 100 books as a one-off donation from the mobile library service following the service's closure would be the Post Office. The alternative suggestion was the Village Hall but this would be more complicated in terms of opening and locking the hall. Councillors recognised the need to rectify the damp in the Post Office beforehand and as an interim arrangement the Village Hall could be used on a restricted time basis.  
**Resolved**, that Cllr Wharton will liaise with Mr Robert Wornham who had kindly offered to manage the post office damp work and will also contact Cllr Tony Hunter to find out if there was a community fund that could contribute to the cost of dry lining the Post Office walls.  
**Resolved**, that the Parish Council will pay for the cost of book shelves in the Post Office.  
**Resolved**, that Cllr Wharton will liaise with the Village Hall Committee.  
Parish map – Cllr Wheeler obtained 1 copy of the map and will provide everyone with a copy in due course.  
Parishes Online GIS mapping software - Cllr Wheeler contacted PSMA for a free licence for the software. An acknowledgment was received but there had been no further news and Cllr Wheeler will follow up the request.  
Sandon School Footpath – see agenda item below.  
Broadband – see agenda item below
- 15.57 Chairman's report  
The Chairman thanked Mrs Helen Stubbings who had kindly agreed to take up the post of Parish Clerk from 1<sup>st</sup> December. Ms Parker's resignation was effective from 31<sup>st</sup> December to allow for a handover. Mrs Stubbings, who comes to the PC with experience from another Parish, was thanked by all Councillors who looked forward to working with her.

#### 15.58 Safety Report

Mr M Wicksteed referred to his report on the monthly inspection of play equipment carried out on 11<sup>th</sup> November which had been previously circulated. There were no particular concerns to note and the reports were confirmed as accepted. Discussion took place on the purchase of a modern climbing frame and associated safety surfacing.

**Resolved**, that the Council should await the outcome of its Rural Grant application for new play equipment before making a decision.

#### 15.59 PC Grant allocations 2015/6

Requests for grant allocations that were previously circulated for Councillors to read were discussed. The following 8 organisations had been invited to apply: Sandon PCC, Friends of Sandon School (FOSS), Cygnets Pre-School, Gardeners' Club, Sandon Sports Club, Village Hall Committee, Royal British Legion, and Herts Air Ambulance.

FOSS, Cygnets and RBL did not apply this year.

Councillors discussed each allocation and voted on its merits and **agreed** to the following awards:

- Sandon Parochial Parish Council for Churchyard grass cutting - £600  
Proposed by Cllr Cannon, seconded by Cllr Wharton.
- Sports Club for pavilion maintenance - £600  
Proposed by Cllr Cannon, seconded by Cllr de Uphaugh.
- Sandon Gardeners Club for visiting speakers - £250  
Proposed by Cllr de Uphaugh, seconded by Cllr Wharton
- Hertfordshire Air Ambulance to fund the service - £200  
Proposed by Cllr Wheeler, seconded by Cllr Gallo

#### Sandon School

The PC felt that it was important to support Sandon School and **unanimously agreed** that Cllr Cannon should speak with the Head Mrs M Gilbert to encourage her to submit applications for grants on behalf of both FOSS and Sandon Cygnets. Funds were set aside pending the outcome

#### Sandon Cricket Club

The PC had not sent an invitation to apply for the grant to the Cricket club as it was in an interregnum because of management changes. However, the PC was aware of its urgent need for new nets and carpets and **unanimously agreed** to recommend that Sandon Cricket Club applies for a grant due to its valuable contribution to village life. Funds were set aside pending the outcome.

#### 15.60 Finance Report for year to 11<sup>th</sup> November 2015

##### 1. Finances

The RFO was pleased to advise a clean audit from BDO LLP for y/e 31.3.2015. Audit completion notices were posted on the village noticeboards on 28<sup>th</sup> September.

Pension auto enrolment – the PC must register with a pension provider before 01.5.2017 and having looked at the options, the RFO recommended NEST, a charitable trust organisation and cost effective solution for the employer.

**Resolved**, that the RFO will register Sandon PC with NEST. Proposed by Cllr Cannon, seconded Cllr de Uphaugh.

##### 2. The RFO presented the Financial Report for the year to 11<sup>th</sup> November. The accounts were reviewed and accepted and the following year-to-date highlights were noted:

. Total receipts:	£7,047.90
. Total payments	£1,818.72
. Available balance	£9,605.09

### 3. Authorise November payments

The RFO requested approval for two payments of £35 for HAPTC Chairs' training course for Cllr de Uphaugh, and for Mrs Stubbing's HAPTC training course for New Clerks and Minute-taking. Proposed by Cllr Wharton, seconded Cllr Cannon.

**Resolved**, that the payment was approved; the cheques were duly signed.

### 4. 2015/16 Grants

As approved at the last meeting, the RFO submitted applications for the following:

NHDC Community Building Refurbishment – Application for a 50% contribution to 4 x village noticeboards of £1,400

NHDC Playground Improvement – 50% contribution to new climbing frame for Roe Green of £2,500

NHDC Environmental Improvement – 100% funding for strimmer/brush cutter and associated safety equipment of £985.35

Government 2015/16 Transparency Fund - application for £2,250 for the purchase of a laptop computer, dongle and scanner to enable Sandon PC to be compliant with the legislation in the Transparency Act to publish its minutes in a public forum (ie. online).

### 15.61 2016/17 Budget and Precept

The RFO presented 3 budget options for consideration by Councillors. Councillors scrutinised the figures and asked questions. Councillors discussed the amount of the precept required next year and took into account the Transparency Act 2015 requirement to publish specific information on Council business and finances on line and the associated costs of administration, and to keep it up to date. Following discussion budget option B of £7,770, an increase of £770 on the current year was agreed. Councillors voting 4 votes to 2 in favour.

**Resolved**, that Budget Option B of £7,770 was approved. The RFO will inform North Herts District Council of the precept required for 2016/17 to support this.

Proposed by Cllr Cannon, seconded by Cllr Gallo.

### 16.62 Representative's reports

#### a. Access/Rights of Way

Footpath 47 - A pre-consultation notice to divert the footpath was served to the community and no comments or objections were received. However since that time, County's Enforcement Officer made an alternative suggestion which was to create a shortcut instead of a diversion which would use less of the landowner's land and be a logical step in improvements to the network. A plan was shown to illustrate the shortcut. It would need to be consulted on again but would form part of the same application. Councillors were enthusiastic about the proposals and agreed that it would be a benefit to the network. Cllrs Cannon and Wheeler will amend the application accordingly and it will be submitted.

**Resolved**, that Cllrs Cannon and Wheeler will submit a revised application for the short-cut.

#### b. Highways

Cllr Wharton attended a Highways Liaison meeting which was very useful in terms of information received and networking.

The damaged fencing around the pond had been dropped to a Category 3 repair, the lowest criteria. However, Cllr Wharton will pursue remedial works with NDDC in the New Year and in the meantime ascertain whether the barrier is on the highway and thereby the responsibility of the Council or on the verge and the responsibility of the village. The culvert at Mill End was a cause for concern as part of the road has fallen into the culvert. It has been reported.

c. Church

Cllr de Uphaugh advised that there was nothing to report.

d. Sports Club and Roe Green

Cllr Gallo advised that there was nothing further to report. See item 15.54 above.

e. Village Hall

Cllr Wharton advised in accordance with its Constitution the Village Hall Committee required a third Parish Councillor to join its committee. Cllr Cannon kindly volunteered.

**Resolved**, Cllr Wharton will advise the Committee.

f. Sandon School

Nothing to report other than progress on Footpath 47 as reported above.

g. Planning Applications

Cllr Cannon gave an update on recent planning applications as follows:

15 Payne End – 2 new homes – application ongoing

Harrow Dene – consented

Highland Barn – consented

Rockells Farm – An application had been submitted under permitted development rights which meant that the PC did not need to be consulted. However, following discussions between Cllr Cannon and the NHDC Planning Officer, Richard Tiffin, it was agreed that if Sandon received a Permitted Development or Change of Use application, NHDC will notify the PC and if the PC felt that under the guidelines it had fair reason to make a comment, then the PC would be permitted to do so. Cllr Cannon clarified that the PC cannot object to Permitted Development. Councillors were strongly in favour of encouraging residents to come and talk to the PC prior to submitting their application and were always willing to consider them as part of its agenda.

h. Planning/Forward Planning – Nothing to report.

Discussion took place on the benefits of Sandon having a Neighbourhood Plan or Village Statement, whichever was more appropriate. A Neighbourhood Plan could not be written until the Local Plan had been published. There was no news on plans for the Saddlery.

15.63 Broadband

Cllr Gallo continued to pursue ways to improve broadband to the village. A slight increase was noticeable in the speed. Most residents are on the upgrade to fibre on the Kelshall exchange which starts in June next year. The Broadfield exchange is not in current plans but there is a universal service commitment to get speed up to 2meg. When fibre is connected at Kelshall, residents will be able to get fibre to their homes but it will be at a cost. After which residents will be able to ask their provider for superfast fibre. Cllr Gallo recommended the following website: [www.connectedcounties.org/news/2015/october/herts-sep-postcode-list-and-map-published](http://www.connectedcounties.org/news/2015/october/herts-sep-postcode-list-and-map-published)

15.64 District Councillor's report

Cllr Jarvis gave an update on the Local Plan. The next level of consultation will be released in July. Each council must produce its plan by March 2017 but there is as yet no definition of what exactly it should contain. The revised number of new homes required to be built is 14,400 new homes. This relates to 2011 to 2031 and takes into account those that have already been consented. Baldock North is on the list. No plans for Sandon. The County Council has begun looking at its budget process and foresees no problem in making the savings it needs to in the coming financial year. Grant budgets in future may be reduced.

15. 65 Any other business

Telephone Boxes – Cllr Gallo confirmed that the red telephone box by the village hall, occupied by the goose, is owned by the Parish. The Roe Green box is owned by BT.

Sandon Conservation Group

A note from the Sandon Conservation Group was circulated by Cllr Gallo. The PC noted it had previously been advised of the establishment of the group whose purpose was to conserve and enhance the village’s rural character. Cllr Gallo will join the group to enable its views to be represented to the PC.

15. 66 Meeting dates

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2016 at 7.30 pm.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 8.50 pm.

Chairman .....

Date .....