

Minutes of Sandon Parish Council Annual Assembly

Wednesday 12th April 2017 at 7.45 pm

Sandon Village Hall

Present: Cllr J de Uphaugh (Chairman), Cllr F Cannon Cllr K Chamberlain, Cllr B Wordley, Cllr J Wharton.

In attendance: County Cllr Tony Hunter, District Cllr S Jarvis, Mrs H Stubbings, Clerk Mr M Wicksteed, Responsible Financial Officer and 60 Parishioners

The Chairman, Cllr de Uphaugh, welcomed everyone to Sandon's Annual Assembly and thanked County Cllr Tony Hunter and District Cllr Steve Jarvis for attending.

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr H Gallo, Caroline Wicksteed, Dorothy Brown, Christina Wornham.

Minutes of the Annual Assembly on 13th April 2016

The minutes of the last Parish Assembly were circulated to all present. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting, proposed by Cllr Keith Chamberlain and seconded by Cllr Fiona Cannon, all agreed. The Chairman signed.

County Councillor's report

Cllr Tony Hunter informed Parishioners that finance have been challenging, some £39 million pounds had been saved over the year with a further saving of £45 million pounds required next year. New initiatives to do this had included; reduction of staff by 25%, adaptation of buildings, and the introduction of LED street lights, which had saved £2m pounds. Spare land on Council house gardens is being built on to increase rental revenue. The largest growing cost is that of care for the aged and young people.

District Councillor's report

Cllr Steve Jarvis also reported the financial pressures being faced and the need to save and increase income. The Local Plan has been through Consultation; in draft and revised format and was voted on at a full Council meeting in April. It will now progress to the Secretary of State.

Cllr Jarvis felt some parts of the plan were flawed, e.g. the calculation for actual houses required, the siting of proposed developments, the number of secondary school places, especial in Baldock and many issues to do with transport or lack of it.

Cllr Jarvis reported that the grants budget has been halved and that new rules prevent the District Council giving grants to Parish Council's, although grants are still available to organisations.

The idea to run a transport scheme for the villages is taking shape. This will be a volunteer not for profit mini-bus service to be run on a Thursday through the villages of Sandon and Weston, for which local volunteer drivers are being sought.

Sandon Schools Headteacher introduction.

Emma McGill who had previously been employed at the school has been made the Headteacher. Mrs McGill was very keen to build on the links already established in the village, she was aware of some issues such as car parking and was keen to find a solution.

Cllr Hunter reminded Mrs McGill about the Locality & Highways budget.

Finance report

Parish Accounts 2015/16

Mr Wicksteed explained that the accounts for the year ended 31st March 2016 had been externally audited by BDO Auditors in line with regulations and that they had been approved.

Mr Wicksteed thanked Mr David Camps, our internal auditor, for his continued help in ensuring compliance.

Financial Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2017

The Parish Council had awarded grants to the following village organisations: Sandon Sports Club, Sandon PCC, Friends of Sandon School, Sandon Gardeners Club, Sandon Cygnets, Herts Air Ambulance, Sandon Strollers Cricket Club and the History Group.

Mr Wicksteed reported Parish Council receipts of £9545 made up of the Precept and additional grants. Outgoings were £9552 and the end of year the finances were in a satisfactory state with a residual balance in line with the Reserves Policy.

Mr Wicksteed drew attention to electors' rights in accordance with the Audit Commission Act 1998 to inspect and make copies of the accounts. This year the accounts will be available on the Parish website.

A budget for 2016-17 has been set at £7,770 and approved by NHDC.

Safety Inspections

In addition to the annual inspection conducted by RoSPA in May, which resulted in a medium risk site, Mr Wicksteed reported that he carried out monthly Safety Inspections of Parish Council equipment on Roe Green. The continuing problem of litter & dog fouling was disappointing.

Clerk's report

The clerk reported that the Parish Council had held 6 meetings in the past year, on a bi-monthly basis with an 84% attendance rate. The Clerk and Councillors have attended HAPTC (Hertfordshire Association of Parish and Town Councils) training events including Standing orders, Code of Conduct, planning, Minute taking. These have helped in the updating of the Council Standing orders bring us in-line with legal requirements. Continued and increased use of the village website is also helping the Parish Council meet its 'Transparency' commitments.

Chairman's report

The Chairman wished to thank all those who assist in making the village the special place it is to live. Councillors have delegated areas of responsibility and this model is working well with relevant reports presented at each meeting.

Achievements for the year include; the diversion of footpath 49, the installation and training on the use of a defibrillator and the second litter pick.

The Chairman then thanked a few particular people; but hoping not to miss anyone out!

Helen – Clerk

Mike – RFO, safety inspections & Mr fix it

Mr Mike Ayton for winding the Church clock and raising the standards.

Chris, Simon and Tina Mace for doing an impressive job of maintaining all of Church End Green and Churchyard.

Andy & Janice Darton for their work for the Sports Club and Janice for the History Group.

Robert & Christina Wornham for continuing to help in so many ways, not least VH, grass cutting, salt distribution, litter picking, Village News.

Rob & Jayne Wharton for the Pub Nights with Jenny and Chris Mace.

Cllr de Uphaugh then continued his report by mentioning the proposed planning application for the development of the Bury. Many letters of concern and a few of support had been received. The planning application when made will be looked at carefully by the Parish Council.

The Chairman then read out a 'Flavour of those some letters'

Questions and comments from Parishioners

Pete Laskey presented a report on behalf of the Sandon Action Group (SAG), his comments were endorsed by Tony Searle.

Rev E Faure Walker responded briefly.

On a lighter note, Robert Wornham; former Chairman for 25 years read from a Minute Book dating back to 1894.

He read 'I bring to your notice; drinking water in the village which is unsatisfactory, and this year has failed completely' dated 1911.

Candidates for election included; John Strickland, John Boothby, Victory Denis, George Gray, Mr Sale, Harry Mason.

And 'The Chair walked 17 miles with County Councillor to discuss the state of the roads.' – nothing changes!

A request to have the Minute book photocopied prior to it being deposited at the Hertford Archives was made.

Annual Assembly 2018

The date of next year's Annual Assembly will be 11th April 2018.

The assembly ended at 9 pm.

Chairman

Dated