

MINUTES OF THE SANDON PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL ASSEMBLY

WEDNESDAY 6TH APRIL 2022 AT 7.30PM

SANDON VILLAGE HALL



Present: Cllr James de Uphough (Chairman), Cllr Ian Dell, Cllr Janice Darton.

In attendance: County Cllr Steve Jarvis, Sarah Wylie - Clerk, Caroline Scott - Responsible Financial Officer and 1 Parishioner.

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Bridget Wordley, Cllr Helen Coates, Jayne Wharton.

The Chairman, Cllr de Uphough, welcomed everyone to Sandon's Annual Assembly and thanked Cllr Steve Jarvis for attending.

Minutes of the Annual Assembly dated 24th April 2019.

The minutes of the last Parish Annual Assembly were circulated to all present. Cllr Ian Dell raised a point of interest to be included as a point of discussion in the May meeting. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the 2019 meeting, proposed by Cllr James de Uphough and seconded by Ian Dell. The Chairman signed the Minutes.

Report from District Councillor Steve Jarvis.

Local plan - still nothing from the inspector last autumn - more than a year since anything has happened. Cllr Steve Jarvis quoted "No progress is not satisfactory."

Herts Lynx is proving a great success. They are to add more runs plus an electric service. Steve Jarvis to be contacted if parishioners would like a stop added.

The issue of problematic bins has been resolved.

20mph - Sandon - 300/400th on the list - is that the 20s Plenty? Look at all the speed reports for the village...Hertfordshire is lagging behind. Present speed limit is 40mph.

Increase in the number of children in care in Hertfordshire - looking at ways of dealing with this challenge.

Report from the Responsible Financial Officer, Caroline Scott.

1. Audit of 2020/21 Accounts -Application was made by the Parish Council for exemption from external audit with the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR), no queries were received from the appointed external auditor PKF Littlejohn LLP and the PC was not chosen for a 5% random sample audit.

2. Audit of 2021/22 Accounts - The RFO will be recommending to the PC that an application should again be made for exemption from external audit thereby saving £200 (min.) audit fee.The RFO is working towards preparing all year end documentation for approval by the PC at its 11th May meeting for submission of the AGAR by end May 2022. Notices of electors' rights to inspect the AGAR and related documents will be posted accordingly.

3. 2021/22 Accounts - Preliminary (unaudited) summary accounts have been prepared for the year to 31 March 2022 and a copy is shown on the reverse of this report.

4. Financial Highlights of the year ended 31 March 2022 : £

- Total receipts: (Precept + Grants + VAT refund) 8863.56
- Total payments: (including VAT) 9879.32
- Operating expenses incl. employment costs 5028.92
- Grants awarded to village clubs & organisations 1250.00
- Village Projects (village hall improvements) 345.00
- Maintenance and miscellaneous (sign post) 2680.00
- Expenses for the year exceeded receipts (due to budgeted signpost)
1015.76

5. Summary Financial Position - The Parish Council finances are deemed to be in a satisfactory state with a year-end balance of £13706.31 which is consistent with the Council's policy on operating reserves.

6. Exercise of Electors' Rights - In accordance with the Local Authority Accountability Act 2014 a notice will be displayed on the PC website: <http://sandonherts.co.uk> and village notice boards advising those interested that by appointment with the RFO (tel. 07542758948) or the Clerk, they may inspect and make copies of the (AGAR) and supporting documents between the dates that will be shown on the notices to be posted.

7. Internal Audit - During April 2021 an internal audit of the Parish Council's financial and administrative procedures was conducted by the Council's Internal Auditor, no significant financial or procedural errors were found, and compliance with the Transparency regulations, Real time PAYE reporting and Pension auto enrolment regulations were demonstrated.

8. Governance - During the year the Council reviewed, its Standing Orders, Financial Regulations; Insurance cover, Bank mandate, and its Business and financial and made a few minor to changes to strengthen its safeguards.

9. Budget for 2022 / 23 - The Parish Council has set a budget for the current year that is a 2% decrease over 2021 / 22. This decrease was due to the payment for the village sign which was completed in 2021/22, a precept of £8,750 has been agreed by NHDC. This will leave the PC financially constrained to meet its commitments and to support village clubs and organisations and will necessitate the use of Parish Council's reserves.

10. Safety Inspections - An independent annual RoSPA safety inspection of the Roe Green play area was conducted on 8 June 2021, and no defects were found and no recommendations for improvement made. Monthly internal inspections were conducted throughout the year by the Parish Council's Safety Officer.

Report from the Clerk, Helen Stubbings (outgoing).

Since the last annual village meeting the Parish Council have continued to meet for regular PC meetings and addition to discuss planning applications.

In the first year of the pandemic the PC met via zoom with the link accessible to parishioners. Each councillor in their neighbour set up a Whatsapp group to maintain links with villagers and in particular those who might have been

vulnerable and in need of help with shipping or medical supplies, or just a friendly chat.

For the past year the PC have met following current covid guidelines. Item to note include the refurbishment of the finger post sign in the middle of the village - this was partially funded by a grant from Cllr Jarvis' locality budget. The village hall committee have also sought governments grants and have been successful. Village organisations have been given grants from the PC.

Three councillors have resigned over this period, with two being replaced via the election process and one by co-option. The new councillors are Ian Dell, Janice Darton and Helen Coates. A new RFO was appointed in 2020, after seven years in the post, the Clerk has stepped down.

Report from the Chair, James de Uphaugh.

A big thankyou to Helen for all her services.

Thanks to David Locke (mowing), with the mower that Mike bought.

Thanks to Mike Ayton who looks after the Church clock.

Thanks to Steve Jarvis for attending the meetings and all your efforts.

Thanks to Robert Wornham for all that he does for the Village both seen and unseen.

Comments and questions from Parishioners.

Mike Wickstead endorsed the councillors and their jobs.

Nice to receive a drop in Council tax on the part on the Parish Council.

The date of the next Annual Assembly is to be discussed at the May meeting.

Point from Mike - Village Hall committee - organising for the Jubilee... letter of insurance for the PC is valid but not necessarily for the Village Hall committee.

Delegate responsibility to the Village Hall Committee...to be included in the May minutes.

