



SANDOWN TOWN COUNCIL – MEETING MINUTES – 6 FEBRUARY 2023

Minutes of the Meeting of Sandown Town Council held on **MONDAY, 6 FEBRUARY 2023** at The Broadway Centre, 1 Broadway, Sandown, Isle of Wight PO36 9GG.

Present: Paddy Lightfoot (Mayor), Alex Lightfoot (Deputy Mayor), Debbie Andre, Frank Baldry, Sue Betts, Emily Brothers, Ian Fletcher, Jenny Hicks, Robert May, Ian Ward, Toby Wilcock.

Also Present: Richard Priest (Clerk), Jennifer Armstrong (RFO), PA to Emily Brothers and 18 members of the public and press.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS:

Mr Paul Coueslant asked a question on behalf of the Carnival Association regarding the reason for proposed reductions to funding for Carnival Activities in the proposed budget and amendments. The Mayor responded by drawing attention to Cllr Alex Lightfoot's changes with alternative budget which proposed a higher amount and advised that while budget pressures were the main reason, the fact that the Carnival Association issued grants has been a consideration.

Mr Bob Blezzard suggested that public question time should be reserved for Sandown Residents before proceeding to refer to questions he had made in an open letter sent to the Mayor on the afternoon on the 3 February 2023, the Friday prior to the meeting. The Mayor sought clarification the letter was for council rather than him personally as it had not been addressed to the councils offices which Mr Blezzard confirmed. Mr Blezzard then made reference to a number of points in his letter including the treatment of income and how the budget had been drafted. He continued to state that he had discussed the matter with the [Sandown Town] council's internal auditor who agreed with him. The Mayor advised a written response would be provided due to the number of questions and their late receipt.

Ms Sally McConkey asked the council to consider delaying significant raises to the precept highlighting the increases in utilities and the cost of living crisis, suggesting that the provision of new toilets would not be financially viable for Sandown's residents.

Ms Kathy Wright supported Ms McConkey's position stating that the Food Bank was inundated with those needing help and requested the budget be reviewed. She continued that she accepted hall hire could not be projected but felt the monies for the lease at Sandham Grounds could be offset to reduce the precept.

The Mayor responded he was not unaware of the pressures on residents but the budget was drafted to ensure the council was able to meet its obligations and with a low risk approach to income.

51-2022/2023 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Humby.

52-2022/2023 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs Andre and Ward declared an interest regarding any matters relating to the Isle of Wight Council. Cllr Andre added she would not comment on any planning matters as a ward member.

Cllr Brothers declared an interest on school matters as a governor of the Cornerstone Federation and advised her register of interest had been updated to reflect this.

Cllr Hicks declared she was a Lake Parish Councillor.

53-2022/2023 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Cllr Brothers requested an inaccuracy be corrected. Her PA had attended the meeting on the 21 November 2022 but had not attended the reconvened meetings on the 29 November and 12 December 2022.

Cllr Andre raised the matter of Cllr Wilcock attendance which had been discussed at the meeting on the 21 November 2022. The Clerk presented the written response which had been drafted (attached to and forming part of these minutes) and advised while the Monitoring Officer had been contacted a response had not yet been received but would be circulated on receipt.

A proposal to approve the minutes subject to an amendment reflecting the inaccuracy was moved and duly seconded. Councillors' votes were confirmed verbally to meet accessibility requirements; the results were as follows and it was:

For (11), Against (0), Abstain (0)

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2022 be approved as a true record subject to the attendance of Cllr Brothers Personal Assistant being amended to show attendance on 21 November but not on the 29 November and 12 December 2022 being updated.

54-2022/2023 FINANCES

1. To approve the Payments and Receipts lists as presented for November 2022

A proposal was moved and duly seconded, that the payments and receipts list for November 2022 be approved. Councillors' votes were confirmed verbally to meet accessibility requirements; the results were as follows and it was:

For (9), Against (0), Abstain (2)

RESOLVED

THAT the payments and receipts for November 2022 be approved.

2. To approve the Payments and Receipts lists as presented for December 2022

A proposal was moved and duly seconded, that the payments and receipts list for December 2022 be approved. Councillors' votes were confirmed verbally to meet accessibility requirements; the results were as follows and it was:

For (10), Against (0), Abstain (1)

RESOLVED

THAT the payments and receipts for December 2022 be approved.

3. To receive and note the verified bank reconciliations for November and December 2022

The verified bank reconciliations for November and December 2022 were duly noted.

4. To receive and note the expenditure against budget through December 2022

The expenditure against budget through December 2022 was noted.

5. Risk Register

Members discussed the updated Risk Register. A number of amendments were proposed and officers agreed to update and circulate the revised register. These included:

- Page 3: The external back-up of files be checked at least annually to ensure it could be accessed.
- Page 4: That the action "creation of additional post to support office based staff" be revised to read "accept lower levels of services due to absence and capacity due to budget constraints".
- Council recommends all councillors undertake Chairman Training for all councillors.
- That provision be added that when best practice requires it a medium-term financial strategy be produced. The RFO responded that it was not required for a council of this size/capacity but could be included as a low risk to ensure the risk was mitigated in future.

A proposal was moved and duly seconded, that the register be approved subject to the inclusion of the proposed amendments. Councillors' votes were confirmed verbally to meet accessibility requirements; the results were as follows and it was:

For (11), Against (0), Abstain (0)

RESOLVED

THAT the risk register be approved.

6. 2023/2024 Budget

The Mayor outlined the process that had been followed in drafting the budget; the two options requested by council in November 2022, a budget reflecting inflation and a budget representing all identified priorities which had been discussed in detail at the budget briefing in January during which it had become clear to councillors present, that a nominal 5% increase would not support the council's activities.

There were four proposals for consideration. The budget recommended by the clerk and RFO, an alternative budget from Cllr Alex Lightfoot and a number of un-costed amendments from Cllrs Andre, Brothers and Humby. Cllr Andre had also proposed a motion to prepare a business case for the post office which would require additional monies to be allocated.

Cllr Brothers suggested that the decision in relation to the budget should be postponed as there were outstanding matters in relation to the budget amendments proposed as outlined in Paper G - Appendix C (attached to and forming part of these minutes) and that delaying the decision would mean officers could do further work as well as perhaps respond to comments made by members of the public. The Mayor responded the budget needed to be set as the Isle of Wight Council needed to be notified of the precept reminding members that all councillors had been given a clear timeline for the budget and time to work with officers on any amendments.

55-2022/2023 MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE – TO DEFER THE MOTION

Cllr Brothers moved under Standing Order 21.1.3 that the consideration of the budget be deferred which was duly seconded. Councillors' votes were confirmed verbally to meet accessibility requirements; the results were as follows and the motion fell.

For (3), Against (7), Abstain (1)

56-2022/2023 FINANCES

1. 2023/2024 Budget

The Mayor advised the proposals would be debated and voted in accordance with guidance provided by the clerk in advance of the meeting in the following order – first the amendment from Cllrs Andre, Brothers and Humby, then the Post Office Business Case Amendment from Cllr Andre, the proposal from Cllr Alex Lightfoot which included a full budget and finally the officer recommended budget.

The Mayor questioned if councillors wished to consider the amendment from Cllrs Andre, Brothers as the amendments were uncosted and had been submitted after the deadline. The headlines were the closure of Yaverland toilets, cessation of the lifeguard service and grass cutting in Los Altos, inclusion of planning enforcement and more meetings. He also highlighted that there were contracts in place for some items, including a framework agreement, and that there was a lease with conditions in place for Los Altos which meant the proposal to cease grass cutting in was not deliverable and therefore the amendment was compromised.

Cllr Brothers raised a point of order disagreeing with the order of debate. During discussion it was highlighted that the order in which the proposals would be discussed had been circulated in advance of the meeting and no comments had been returned. It was also noted that the amendments being proposed by Cllrs Andre, Brothers and Humby

presented over 16 thousand different budget possibilities and therefore was too complicated to be calculated during the meeting.

57-2022/2023 MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE – CHANGE ORDER OF BUSINESS

Cllr Brothers moved under Standing Order 21.6 that the order of business be altered so that the order of debate be the officer recommended budget, Cllr A Lightfoot's changes and subsequent budget, Cllr Andre's Post Office Business Case Amendment and finally the amendments by Cllrs Andre, Brothers and Humby. The proposal was duly seconded and Councillors' votes were confirmed verbally to meet accessibility requirements; the results were as follows and the motion fell:

For (3), Against (7), Abstain (1)

58-2022/2023 FINANCES

1. 2023/2024 Budget

Amendments from Cllrs Andre, Brothers and Humby

Cllr Brothers proposed and the motion was duly seconded, the amendments submitted by Cllrs Andre, Brothers and Humby advising that they were submitted in response to the cost of living crisis, sought to reduce the precept and were expected to deliver savings of £74,000. The key points Cllr Brothers highlighted, suggesting they wanted dialogue to help set a budget were:

- Further savings could be created by removing the loan for Pier Street Toilets
- Passing back Yaverland toilets to the Isle of Wight Council would generate savings of £29,000 on the proposed loan and further savings on cleaning and maintenance.
- As a result of the proposed savings an enforcement officer could be brought in one day a week to address the derelict buildings.
- Regarding the Blue Flag and Lifeguard Service, other beaches on the Island did not have lifeguards and they did not feel Sandown was a particularly unsafe beach.
- Other savings could be brought about by investing in solar and renewable energy in the long term, even with initial capital costs.
- The Isle of Wight Council should not be paid for maintenance at Ferncliff Gardens and monies should be redirected to Green Towns Volunteers.
- The budget also had allocated reserves and it wasn't clear how these were ring fenced and match funded.

Cllr Andre expanded on these points including suggesting that the public consultation was only a snap shot of public opinion, derelict buildings were a priority with a day of planning enforcement making a significant difference and suggesting income should be used to reduce the precept.

Members responded that the budget process had begun in August yet no amendments had been brought forward until seven days prior to the meeting. Regarding ringfencing, the figures were outlined in the budget proposal and could be further explained if needed.

During the debate it was highlighted the consultation had indicated the toilets were residents' top priority and the beach the second followed by parks.

There was general agreement that the Isle of Wight Council would not take Yaverland back and closed toilets would significantly impact on the health and wellbeing of residents. It was also suggested that it would be unacceptable to cease the lifeguard provision which had saved two lives the previous season and, in a poll relating to the service, had been supported by 88% of the 416 respondents (that response rate being significantly higher than most consultation response rates)

Investment in renewable energy would be welcomed but could not be a last minute un-costed budget decision and needed to be properly investigated and should be proposed as an item for the relevant working party.

Planning enforcement was considered a good idea in principle but the town council had no powers in this regard and the issues with the derelict buildings in Sandown would not be helped by more enforcement officers as they were being dealt with by lawyers and the courts. It was reported that Ryde Town Council appear to have ceased their funding for this arrangement with the IOW Council.

Cllr Andre was asked if she was going to declare an interest in the amendment relating to Los Altos and responded while it was good practice to declare it at the meeting her register of interest was up to date and her property was declared.

Councillors' votes were confirmed verbally to meet accessibility requirements and a named vote was requested; the results were as follows and the motion fell:

For (2),

Cllrs Debbie Andre, Emily Brothers

Against (7)

Cllrs Frank Baldry, Ian Fletcher, Alex Lightfoot, Robert May, Ian Ward, Toby Wilcock, Paddy Lightfoot.

Abstain (2)

Cllrs Sue Betts, Jenny Hicks

Amendments from Cllr Andre for a Post Office business case.

Cllr Andre moved her amendment regarding the post office which was duly seconded. The Clerk clarified that she accepted the officer recommended budget in proposing the amendment. During the debate members all agreed the post office was an important part of the community but also noted that post office franchises did not make money, with figures from Hailsham Town Council being provided; losses to date were £32,000 and a proposal to extend that cover for losses to a total of £64,000 was under consideration. Hailsham had around double Sandown's Income and population. The issues around problems with the post offices Horizon computer systems including the ongoing action against IW Community Action regarding post offices on the Isle of Wight and post masters receiving custody sentences, were also discussed.

Councillors' votes were confirmed verbally to meet accessibility requirements and a named vote was requested; the results were as follows and the motion fell:

For (2),

Cllrs Debbie Andre, Emily Brothers

Against (8)

Cllrs Frank Baldry, Ian Fletcher, Jenny Hicks, Alex Lightfoot, Robert May, Ian Ward, Toby Wilcock, Paddy Lightfoot.

Abstain (1)

Cllr Sue Betts

Alternative budget from Cllr Alex Lightfoot

Cllr Alex Lightfoot proposed his alternative budget (Paper G - Appendix B, attached to and forming part of these minutes) and the motion was duly seconded. Cllr Lightfoot highlighted the following differences between his budget and the budget recommended by officers:

- The grants to Sandown and Shanklin Independent Lifeboat and Carnival had been increased to £2000 each. Cllr Lightfoot apologised to the Carnival Association he couldn't increase it further.
- He would like to remove the Mayors Allowance completely but was aware other members had not supported this so had proposed it be reduced to £500 per annum and those monies be transferred to increase the Schools budget by £500. This change would be net and not increase or reduce the overall budget.
- The Youth Provision has been increased to £15,000 noting the resilience officers work was making a significant difference to Sandown.

In his closing statement Cllr Lightfoot stated that the town council had to invest in Sandown as the Isle of Wight Authority could not, due to pressures from adult social care and a lack of funding and that private business would not.

Councillors' votes were confirmed verbally to meet accessibility requirements and a named vote was requested; the results were as follows and it was:

For (6)

Cllrs Frank Baldry, Ian Fletcher, Alex Lightfoot, Robert May, Ian Ward, Toby Wilcock

Against (3)

Cllrs Debbie Andre, Emily Brothers, Paddy Lightfoot.

Abstain (2)

Cllrs Sue Betts, Jenny Hicks

RESOLVED

THAT Cllr Alex Lightfoot's alternative 2023/2023 budget be approved.

(Since a complete alternative budget and precept calculations had been proposed, the officer recommended budget did not need to be considered).

2. 2023/2024 Precept

A proposal was moved and duly seconded that in line with the approved budget, the precept of £531,299, a Band D equivalent of £218.40 be set for 2023/2024. Councillors' votes were confirmed verbally to meet accessibility requirements and a named vote was requested; the results were as follows and it was:

For (7)

CLLrs Frank Baldry, Ian Fletcher, Alex Lightfoot, Robert May, Ian Ward, Toby Wilcock, Paddy Lightfoot.

Against (4)

CLLrs Debbie Andre, Sue Betts Emily Brothers, Jenny Hicks

Abstain (0)

RESOLVED

THAT in line with the approved budget for 2023/2024, to set the precept of 531,299 the equivalent for a Band D property at £218.40.

59-2022/2023 MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE – EXTEND MEETING BY 30 MINUTES

A proposal to extend the meeting by 30 minutes as provided by standing order 9.1.3(i) was made and duly seconded. Councillors' votes were confirmed verbally to meet accessibility requirements; the results we as follows and it was:

For (10), Against (1), Abstentions (0)

RESOLVED

THAT the meeting be extended by 30 minutes.

60-2022/2023 STATION DEFIBRILLATOR

CLLr Andre advised that alternative arrangements had been made in relation to the defibrillator and the Youth Offending Team would now be supporting the project.

61-2022/2023 MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE – CHANGE ORDER OF BUSINESS

CLLr Lightfoot moved under Standing Order 21.1.6 that the order of business be altered so that Item 11, CLLrs Andre's motion be considered next which was duly seconded. Councillors' votes were confirmed verbally to meet accessibility requirements; the results we as follows and it was:

For (10), Against (1), Abstentions (0)

RESOLVED

THAT the next item of business be Item 11 – CLLr Andre's motion relating to the Post Office.

For (11), Against (0), Abstain (0)

62-2022/2023 MOTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

Motion proposed by Cllr Debbie Andre (Paper J): Taking on Post Office franchise by Sandown Town Council

Taking on Post Office franchise by Sandown Town Council

This Council is concerned about the loss of vital public services with the anticipated closure of the Post Office on Avenue Road, Sandown, from May 2023. This will exclude many residents from community based financial and support services.

This Council instructs the Clerk to explore the viability of this Council securing the Post Office franchise in order to secure the continuation of this vital public service.

The Clerk is asked to provide an options paper to the next Full Council meeting on 20th March 2023, to include a business case for Sandown Town Council taking on the franchise.

An amendment was moved that since there was no budget for a business case, a working party be formed to looking to what could be done to support residents to access those services when the post office closes. Cllr Andre responded that she wanted to involve the public in the discussions and would accept an amendment that public workshop with residents be arranged. This was proposed and duly seconded. Councillors' votes were confirmed verbally to meet accessibility requirements; the results we as follows and it was:

For (11), Against (0), Abstain (0)

RESOLVED

THAT a public workshop be arranged, at a mutually convenient time, to work with residents on how they could best be supported following the closure of the post office.

63-2022/2023 TOWN CLERK REPORT

Council noted the report from the Clerk. Clarification was requested on a number of points including:

- Bay Place plan – An update would be provided by the Mayor during his report.
- The Revetment Working group – The group was active, Cllr Hicks and Humby were part of the group and would bring forward any recommendations when appropriate.
- Accessibility Projects – An application for a grant was underway and details would be brought back to a later meeting. The Lifeguard Service has secured a grant for a children's beach wheelchair.
- Southern Water – there had been a change in lead officer at Southern Water. The clerk would update in due course.
- Sandham Grounds – A meeting around lighting would be welcomed.

64-2022/2023 WORKING PARTIES

Members noted the written update from the working parties. The chair of the Public Realm (Assets) Working Party moved a proposal to remove the Urinals from Yaverland Toilet and add signage indicating the impact of Grey Waste disposal which was duly seconded. Councillors' votes were confirmed verbally to meet accessibility requirements; the results were as follows and it was:

For (11), Against (0), Abstain (0)

RESOLVED

- (i) THAT the urinals at Yaverland be removed
- (ii) THAT signage advising disposal of grey waste is blocking drains

Members also noted that the Events Working Party would be taking forward a community tidy up day; to work with the residents and community organisations to undertake this. Activities could include painting railings, litter picks and clearing vegetation and should not be limited to the seafront.

65-2022/2023 TO RECEIVE ANY ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES RAISED

No issues had been received from statutory agencies.

66-2022/2023 TO RECEIVE ANY PLANNING MATTERS

There were no planning matters for consideration. However, a draft planning enforcement policy had been received and circulated to members.

67-2022/2023 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM

1. Town Councillors

Cllr Brothers updated members on activities undertaken as the councils IWALC representative including:

- Events around the cost of living crisis
- Supporting equality and diversity training
- The Bus and Rail User Group including discussions regarding Braille timetables and connectivity with the Hover Craft and FastCat.
- Substitute representative on Health and Wellbeing Board at recent meeting and learning session at St Mary's from other Island health economies.

Questions were raised regarding IWALC work to redefine relationships between the Local Authority and local councils. Cllr Brothers advised there had been some discussion regarding service levels but did not recall anything further but would come back on it. Cllr Andre reminded members that there was a monthly zoom call with the Cabinet open to all councillors.

Cllr Andre reported she had attended an inspiring and impactful film produced by the local youth forum. Cllr Andre had also been part of a group looking at accessibility issues and had attended an accessibility conference. An "accessibility" kite mark had been discussed.

Cllr Hicks was a member of the Revetment Working Party who would be meeting on 10 February 2023 to further discuss what safety measures could be utilised. The Mayor reminded members these proposals would be brought back to council.

Cllr Ward provided members with an update on the Ocean hotel. The latest news regarding the Isle of Wight Council Enforcement Action was that the case was to be heard on the Island later in February 2023. The Police were trying to work with the owners in regard to their own legal challenge and monies may have been secured to make the site more secure and improve/tidy up the grounds.

Cllr Alex Lightfoot had attended a meeting organised by the resilience officer regarding sports on the Island looking at an Island-wide collaboration with a structure similar to the Island Collection (arts, cultural, heritage collective).

The Mayor updated members on the Place Plan. The invitation to tender had been issued and three responses had been received. During discussion it was noted the Isle of Wight Council would shortly be appointing an officer to manage the Bay Place Plan. Paperwork had been circulated to the representatives of the Bay council's for scoring. The Mayor had also attended the screening of the Youth Forum's film and noted the concern regarding knife crime.

2. Outside Bodies

The outside bodies reports had been covered by the town councillor reports and would be merged into a single agenda item in future.

68-2022/2023 MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE – EXTEND MEETING BY 30 MINUTES

A proposal to extend the meeting by 30 minutes as provided by standing order 9.1.3(i) was made and duly seconded. Councillors' votes were confirmed verbally to meet accessibility requirements; the results were as follows and it was:

For (10), Against (1), Abstentions (0)

RESOLVED

THAT the meeting be extended by 30 minutes.

69-2022/2023 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The budgeted meeting dates were noted as follows:

20 March 2023
15 May 2023
17 July 2023
18 September 2023
20 November 2023
12 February 2024
18 March 2024

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Ms Wright asked a question in relation to the reserves, referring to the balances on the banking reconciliations. The Mayor responded that in addition to maintaining the minimum level of operating reserves, the Council has made a decision to allocate capital monies for the replacement of assets which were included in the balances. Ms Wright suggested it would be helpful if this was shown and was directed to the allocated reserves

breakdown included in the budget calculation. Mr Blezzard made further complaints about officers' treatment of the precept.

Meeting closed 21:40