



## SANDOWN TOWN COUNCIL

### SANDOWN ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES – 24 APRIL 2023

Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting, held at the Broadway Centre, Broadway, Sandown, Isle of Wight, PO36 9GG at **6.00pm** on **Monday, 24 April 2023**.

#### **Present:**

Mayor of Sandown: Cllr Paddy Lightfoot

Residents: 33 Members of Public, local PSCO and the Vicar of Christ Church, Sandown.

Also Present: Sandown Town Councillors - Debbie Andre, Frank Baldry, Emily Brothers, Sue Betts, Ian Fletcher, Jenny Hicks, Heather Humby, Alex Lightfoot, Paddy Lightfoot, Robert May, Ian Ward, Richard Priest (Clerk), Jennifer Armstrong (RFO).

#### **1. Welcome by the Mayor.**

The mayor welcomed residents.

#### **2. Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on the 25 May 2021**

Those present noted the meeting had started at 7:00 pm and ended at 8:00 pm and that the minutes should be amended to correct the typo.

#### **3. Town Council Report**

The Mayor read his annual report, attached to and forming part of these minutes, which was also available on the town council's website.

#### **4. Public comment and question time**

A number of residents raised issues during the meeting:

- The Mayor was challenged on progress with the Section 215 against the Ocean Hotel and frustration at the delays relating to the matter was expressed. Residents were advised that neither the Mayor nor the Council had any power to move the matter forward and that all parties were waiting on a court date to be agreed. There was also insufficient monies for the Isle of Wight Council to undertaken any compulsory purchases. The Isle of Wight Council ward members were asked to bring updates on the derelict buildings in their wards to the next council meeting.
- Clarification was provided that the High Street Task Force related to Sandown specifically but would feed the Bay Place plan.

- A resident asked a number of questions were asked regarding a recent expression of interest for a grant at Sandown Grounds. Residents noted that the details of the project had not been finalised and were subject to the expression of interest being accepted. Details, in writing of the current allocated reserves were requested.
- A number of questions were asked regarding if the High Street Task force or Bay Place Plan could be used to challenge planning decisions and was advised that the plan would influence planning decisions.
- A member of the public asked who sat on the Town Board as was advised that this had not yet been created and any business or interested parties should look for the engagement opportunities which were well publicised.
- Mr Bob Blezzard proposed that the meeting request a Community Governance Review be undertaken with a view to merging the three Bay council's Shanklin, Lake and Sandown into one Bay council. He highlighted that Government guidance inciated a review should be undertaken every 10-15 years and it had been 13 years since the last review.

Mr Blezzard continued that Sandown's town council precept for 2023-24 was £218.43 per Band D property, the highest on the Island by some considerable margin, noting that in Shanklin that figure was £89.41 and in Lake £98.54. He went on to state that the residents of The Bay enjoyed comparable levels of local government service and that it was not acceptable for Sandown residents to be required to pay more.

Mr Blezzard suggested that the resolution to the injustice to Sandown residents could be resolve by merging the councils, that since total precept for the three Bay councils in2023-24 was £1,017,561 the precept for all residents under a single council would be £132.17, a saving to Sandown residents of £86.26. He expanded stating that there wer e 37 council seats across the three Bay councils and that a single Bay council could function perfectly well with 12 councillors, two for each unitary Council ward in The Bay.

Mr Blezzard highlighted that the joined up working of the Bay Place Plan was recognition joint working was needed and was Sandown Town Council's provision of back-office support to Lake.

There was little support for the proposals with one local councillor and Sandown resident highlighting it had been tried before and the that the previously combined South Wight council had not been successful. In general though residents indicated that the provisions in Sandown were used by residents from across the Island and that there should be a greater contribution from other councils including investment of the monies collected from concessionaires locally.

Several residents expressed concern that non-Sandown councillors on a combined council would use the reduction of services in Sandown to reduce the precept and that services were not comparable; that it was unlikely residents from Lake and Shanklin would support services such as the Beach Safety Service, Blue Flag and investment on the Skate Park and playgrounds.

Mr Blezzard then called for support for a Parish Poll on the matter for Sandown Residents but did not want to extend this to Shanklin and Sandown. Other residents

expressed concern that sufficient detail for residents to make an informed decision would not be available.

- PCSO Alex Short introduced himself and gave an update on local policing, noting a reduction in antisocial behaviour and outlining current initiatives including increased patrols.
- A member of the public asked the local policing representative about recent violent crimes and the meeting noted it was not possible for individual incidents or individuals to be discussed but that there were processes which had to be followed within the law and it was not always possible for individuals to be remanded in custody immediately.
- The issue of HMO's was raised during this debate with residents concerned about the concentration of HMO's in Sandown, the lack of policy to address this and the lack of support for individuals in need. It was noted that the Isle of Wight Council was reviewing its policy and Cllr Andre advised she would be able to bring a report which outlined the Stage 1 and Stage 2 locations in Sandown.
- The Reverend Williams provided an update to residents on the Ofsted status of the Bay School. The primary and secondary schools in Sandown, both previously rated as inadequate, had merged and the new through school had been rated as Good during its recent inspection.
- Mr Alan Jones, on behalf of the Sandown Community Association called for volunteers to help deliver the 2023 guide.
- Residents were also informed the local fire service had an initiative underway for young people.

Meeting Closed: 7.20 pm