

SANDHURST TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Strategy and Policy Committee held in the Kitty Dancy Room, Sandhurst Memorial Park on Thursday 27 March 2008 at 7.45 pm., ending at 9.25 p.m.

**PRESENT: Councillors N Allen (Chairman), Mrs J Bettison, N Bowers, Mrs C Cupper, Mrs D Pidgeon, Mrs A Shephard, N Skinner.
Substitute Member Cllr A Ronca for Cllr Mrs J Bettison.**

APOLOGIES: Councillor B Piggin.

59. Announcements. The Chairman announced that the order of business would be as stated in the procedures document.

60. Declarations of Interest. The Chairman reminded Members to declare interests in agenda items wherever relevant.

61. Urgent items not covered in Matters Arising.

- (a) Internal Audit Report (I)
- (b) Nepali Community Support Worker (D)
- (c) Blackwater Reach (I)

62. Minutes.

The Minutes of the Strategy & Policy Committee Meeting held on Thursday 24th January 2008 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a true record subject to:

- (i) Minute 52(b) 'the last' (ii) Minute 52(g) delete word 'Minute' (iii) Minute 52(l) 'the Town Council' (iv) Minute 53(e) 'within'.

63. Matters Arising for information only.

(a) Minute 52(a) Vandalism.

The Executive Officer reported that he had sent two communications to Bracknell Forest Borough Council regarding increasing the size of the bottle banks. He anticipated a positive response soon. He would chase. **ACTION.**

A meeting was due to take place on 31st March 2008 with the CCTV Consultant. The report on the system would follow shortly afterwards allowing the Town Council to consider recommendations. **ACTION.**

Cllr Mrs Cupper gave an update on the volunteer situation in the Police Point. The Executive Officer informed the Committee that at a recent Local Area Policing Board meeting Chief Inspector Simon Bowden had stated that he had taken on personal monitoring of the situation regarding any hold up in the vetting system. **NOTED.**

The Executive Officer reported that in the first part of the period since the last vandalism report the incidents were mainly broken glass issues. However, most recently there had been an increase in anti-social activity. The Executive Officer referred to specific instances including intimidation, broken windows, climbing on the roof of the Community Hall Complex and fire damage to play equipment.

From CCTV control room reports and police logs there had been a number of incidents where Police were able to attend. Liaison between the Policing agencies seemed to be working.

Meetings had taken place between the Executive Officer and Thames Valley Police Officers and there were various initiatives already in hand or planned.

The Committee considered the position. It was agreed that monitoring and action needed to be stepped up to contain and eradicate the anti-social element of Park use. The minority were once again preventing the majority's enjoyment of the facilities.

The Executive Officer was asked to keep the Committee updated and continue to pursue with Thames Valley Police any ideas that would impact on the situation. **ACTION.**

(b) Minute 52(b) Beyond Quality Status.

The new criteria for re-application for Quality Status was still to be published. **NOTED.**

The Executive Officer reported that good progress was still being made by the Communications Sub Committee. The Sandhurst Pride umbrellas had now been purchased, the stickers had been delivered. Plans for the Meadows Atrium Event were well under way. **NOTED.**

(c) Minute 52(c) Health & Safety.

The Executive Officer reported all staff had passed the Health & Safety one-day course assessment. **NOTED.**

(d) Minute 53(e) Annual Town Meeting.

The advertisement had been sent to the Sandhurst Residents Association magazine editor. **NOTED.**

The Executive Officer asked that the Chairmen's Reports be forwarded to the office no later than 4th April to enable them to be incorporated within the Annual Report. **ACTION.**

(e) Minute 53(f) Audit.

The Town Council has been advised that the external Auditor appointed by the Audit Commission for the financial year end March 2008 Audit is to be Mazars LLP.

The Executive Officer referred to the Internal Auditor's report dated 11th February 2008, previously circulated. The Executive Officer outlined its content and an in depth consideration was given. The Executive Officer confirmed that all recommendations had been acknowledged and actioned. The Committee received the report and were satisfied that adequate controls were being carried out. **NOTED.**

The Committee then considered its duty to review and confirm that the Internal Auditor (Alan Harland) was providing an appropriate level of independent financial monitoring. It was **RESOLVED** that an adequate level of control had been maintained and the systems that were in place were effective.

The Committee unanimously **RESOLVED** to re-appoint Alan Harland as the Sandhurst Town Council's Internal Auditor.

The new Audit programme was acknowledged including approval deadlines for 2008. **NOTED.**

It was also recognised that the deadline in 2009 would mean that the Council meeting cycle would need to be adjusted. **ACTION.**

(f) Minute 53(g) Consort Chain.

The Chairman informed the Committee that a sponsorship deal was in place for the chain. It was agreed that an order be placed. **ACTION.**

(g) Minute 53(h) Sandhurst Forum for the Future.

The review being undertaken by the Sub Committee was progressing well. It was hoped that the Chairman of the Sub Committee, Cllr Haseeb, would attend the next Strategy & Policy Committee meeting with draft interim document. **ACTION.**

(h) Minute 53(i) Budgets 2008/2009.

The Executive Officer stated that the end of year figures would be published as soon as the closing of the Accounts had been carried out. **NOTED.**

One obvious unexpected addition to the revenue costs of the facilities had been the 40% increase in Gas unit rates. The Committee acknowledged that attempts had been made to find an alternative supplier. **NOTED.**

(i) Minute 53(j) Newsletter.

The Executive Officer reported that distribution of the March newsletter had been successfully achieved using Bracknell Forest Borough Council Electoral Services.

It was established that access controlled flats had been difficult to deliver to. It was agreed that the extent of the problem should be identified and that the information should be shared with Bracknell Forest Borough Council. **ACTION.**

It was agreed to enquire how the Post Office deliver post to the problem buildings. **ACTION.**

The cost of distribution was discussed and it was agreed that Electoral Services, being the most reliable, would be the preferred option for all future deliveries. **NOTED.**

(j) Minute 53(k) Grants.

The Minutes of the Grants Panel meeting held on 8th February 2008 were received. It was **RECOMMENDED** to approve the grants allocations, with the inclusion of a grant to St Michael's Counselling to the value of £350.00.

(k) Minute 53(l) Beacon Status/Quality Status.

The Executive Officer reported that he and Cllr Allen had attended a Beacon Status briefing in London organised by the IDeA.

Advice was given on how to apply and experience feedback was given by Local Authorities who had gained Beacon Status before. The merit of gaining beacon Status was shared.

The Executive Officer stated that as a result of the briefing Sandhurst Town Council had registered an intent to submit an application. The deadline for full submission is 11th July 2008. **ACTION.**

It was agreed that the Executive Officer would draw assistance from Councillors to compile the submission as and when required. **ACTION.**

Councillors were fully behind the application. **NOTED.**

(l) Minute 53(c) CAB.

It was noted that CAB were still looking for a permanent home for their Tuesday morning outreach work in Sandhurst. The search was still continuing. **ACTION.**

(m) Minute 53(d) Vodafone Mast.

The Executive Officer reported that details had been forwarded to Vodafone. **NOTED.**

(n) Minute 54(a) Drainage.

A meeting with Bracknell Forest Borough Council Officers had taken place on 19th March 2008. Many aspects of the flooding topic were discussed and Bracknell Forest Borough Council had agreed to provide further information. It was agreed to await the information before discussing the matter further.

(o) Minute 54(b) Skate Park.

It was **NOTED** that the young people had given an update on the progress towards raising funds for the skate park extension to the Leisure Committee at its last meeting.

64. Urgent items not covered in Matters Arising.

(a) Nepali Community Support Worker (D)

The Executive Officer introduced the subject. At the January 2008 Full Council meeting a request was made for funding towards a Nepali Community Support Officer from Bracknell Forest Borough Council Social Care and Learning. At that meeting the request was turned down due to the lack of information. The Town Council had subsequently received supporting documentation, including a letter from the Sandhurst Group Practice and an outline business plan. The Environment Committee had discussed the matter and had recommended that, in view of the new information, the subject should be placed before Full Council again at the May 2008 meeting. This would include a proposal to waive the six-month rule for debate.

The Strategy & Policy Committee agreed that the matter should be put forward at Full Council at the May 2008 meeting for reasons of new important information now being available. **ACTION.**

(b) Blackwater Reach (I)

The Executive Officer referred to a meeting held between BBOWT, BFBC, BVCP and Town Council representatives over the future management of the small piece of SSSI land on the Memorial Park known as Blackwater Reach.

The land once part of a larger parcel of open space had now become isolated since the building of the Balancing Pond. The land is currently leased to BBOWT by the Town Council for management purposes. Whilst there is no suggestion that the land is neglected, it had been suggested that a partnership between Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership, Bracknell Forest Borough Council and Sandhurst Town Council could bring about more management options. The wide and varied management expertise brought by the three organisations, together with local volunteers, would give the land a new lease of life.

It was agreed by the Committee that the process to withdraw the existing lease arrangement should be started and although a six-month notice clause is included in the lease the management should be taken up by the new partnership as soon as possible. **ACTION.** The Town Council continues to work closely with BBOWT on land within Sandhurst. **NOTED.**

65. Correspondence for Committee's Attention.

(a) Sandhurst Sports Club.

A letter of thanks had been received from the Sandhurst Sports Club for the £200.00 grant towards the refurbishment of the toilets within the club premises. **NOTED.**

66. Date of Next Meeting.

The date of the next meeting will be Thursday 22nd May 2008 at 7.45pm in the Kitty Dancy Room.

67. In Committee Exclusion of Public and Press

It was RESOLVED that pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, members of the public and press be excluded from the Meeting for the consideration of items, which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following category of Schedule 12A of the Act.

- (a) Information relating to employees of the Council.