

## SANDON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the ANNUAL ASSEMBLY held at **Sandon School**  
on Thursday, 20th April 2023 commencing at 7.30 pm



**PRESENT: Councillors:** Dee Hyatt - Chairman  
Martin Cross – Vice Chairman  
Cedric Calmeyer  
Gary Nicholls

**In attendance:** 23 recorded electors of the Parish and members of the surrounding community  
Ted Munt, Clerk  
Sue & Keith Dobson, Madam Mayor and Consort  
Ronnie Myatt, RTT  
Jane Beattie, Tricolor (via video link)  
Elaine Williamson, Essex Wildlife Trust

The meeting commenced at 7.35 p.m. with the Chairman welcoming the gathered assembly, the members of the Parish Council, and the invited guests. She explained the format for the meeting. The first half would comprise of the meeting formalities, followed by presentations from the guest speakers. The meeting would then adjourn for a break and to enable parishioners to talk to the various invited guests around the hall. The meeting would then reconvene to summarise the main points made during the informal discussions, to encourage comments about what the parish council could do to help residents, and to sum up.

- 1 Emergency Procedures** – The Chairman explained the emergency procedures in the event of a fire.
- 2 Apologies for absence** – apologies were received from, Cllr Alan Kalbfell, Cllr James Colbeck, Judy Cecil, Jane Willis and Vic Morgan
- 3 Introduction of Parish Councillors and Guests:** – Cllr Hyatt introduced and thanked the Parish Councillors for the time and effort they had given the Parish in the past year. Cllr Nicholls had joined during the year, and Cllr Trew had decided not to stand for election. Note that there is still one vacancy. Cllr Hyatt outlined what each of the councillors responsibilities were, and asked them to say a few words about themselves. She then thanked the clerk for his efforts during the year. She said that there would be no City cllrs in attendance during the session as we were in the pre-election period. This was unfortunate as she would have personally wanted to thank Ian Wright for his 24 years as our City Councillor. She has sent flowers to his home address instead and we wish him well in his retirement from civic duty.
- 4 The Minutes of the Annual Assembly held on 23rd May 2019** were agreed as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.
- 5 Chairman's Report and Presentation of Sandon Cup.** – Cllr Hyatt ran through the notable issues that had affected the parish over the last year (see appendix 1 for the full report.) It was agreed to award the Sandon Cup to The Sandon Neighbourhood Planning Group. The key members behind this were: Judy Cecil, Jane Willis, Cedric Calmeyer, Pam Knott, Jan Ullmer, Pat Ferris (until his sad death), Dee Hyatt, and Rosemary Hoare and Martin Cross who were there at the start. Jan then received the cup on behalf of the team.

**6 Presentation of the unaudited accounts for the year 2022/23** – Cllr Cross then gave a report on the unaudited accounts for 2022/2023. To summarise, there was £56,566 in the bank account and the council had made a loss of £1,744 over the year. However, this loss was lower than had been budgeted. Note that expenditure this coming year is likely to be high. The allotments may need improvements, depending on their future, and the Community Centre will need funds before the incorporated charity can take it over.

## **7 Presentations:**

- a. **The new Community Centre– Cllr Calmeyer** updated the meeting with the latest information. He said that there were copies of the plans at the back of the hall for residents to have a look at. He then introduced Jane Beattie from Tricolor. This is the organisation who will be sourcing the funds for the project. She gave a presentation via video link
- b. **Essex Wildlife Trust – Elaine Williamson** introduced herself as the Urban Wildlife Champion for the parish. She will be encouraging the residents to come up with ideas and actions which could enhance the amount, and diversity, of nature within the community. Examples from other parishes in Essex include: transforming neglected road verges, supporting migrant birds, encouraging wildlife in church gardens, reviving local parks, bumblebee awareness, installation of bug hotels, bird and bat boxes, etc, etc.
- c. **Neighbourhood Development Plan – Cllr Calmeyer** informed the meeting that the Regulation 14 consultation has now been completed. The group are assimilating the comments/suggestions that they have received back from the consultation, prior to going for Regulation 15 compliance. This would then be followed by Regulation 16 consultation. All being well, there will be a referendum later in the year where residents can vote on the plan. If it is made, then not only will this be able to shape any future developments in the area, but that higher levels of developer's money (CIL) will be given back to the parish to spend on upgrading its infrastructure.
- d. **Rapid Relief Team – Ronnie Myatt** explained the purpose of the RRT. Their aim is that "RRT delivers hope and relief to people across the globe. Whether it be fire, flood or humanitarian need, RRT expands their support services to meet the need at hand." Closer to home, they have provided: food boxes, smart bars, snack packs and EBL packs to local schools, hospitals, and charities such as Kids Inspire, CHESS, and Essex Police Domestic Abuse.
- e. **Madam Mayor – Sue Dobson** gave a brief history of the city mayorship. She explained how she was suddenly thrust into the role of being the mayor following the untimely death of her predecessor. She outlined the duties that she had carried out and emphasised how good it was that "ordinary" people can become mayors. You do not need to have been born with a silver spoon in your mouth. She, and her consort, Keith, then left the meeting.
- f. **Proposed developments in Sandon – Cllr Hyatt** presented the details of the proposed housing by Redrow, north of Sandon, written by a Great Baddow resident, This showed an increase in properties from the Local Plan. Redrow had proposed three storey 'Gateway' buildings but after pressure, these have been reduced in height. The Local Plan did not envisage any access to/from 3c on Molrams Lane, but the planning application included a row of nine self-build dwellings, which has been deemed unworkable on this narrow road. The application remains the subject of negotiations/discussion with CCC, and is believed to be several months before it goes before Committee.

It has been realised that there are impediments to the development going ahead with the current economic climate:

Rising interest rates making homeowners cautious about moving  
Shortages of building materials resulting in high build costs (but easing now).  
Chronic shortage of skilled and unskilled labour  
The longer the delay the more environment policies will come into place:  
Prospective ban on gas boilers from 2025?  
Ban on new build homes being connected to the gas grid in England from 2025?  
The environmental alternatives are more expensive, which will push up building costs.  
The number of new home sites has dropped with 55 Local Authorities having withdrawn their housing plans.

**Conclusions:**

Redrow developments and Hopkins on Manor Farm may be shelved for a few years. Residents need to keep themselves informed and be prepared to read reports as they appear. We can influence the final outcome and seek funds from developers for improvements to local infrastructure and local facilities like the Community Sports Hall in Sandon.

- g. National Grid information – Cllr Hyatt** outlined the proposed maintenance work that the National Grid was currently carrying out around the area.

The meeting then adjourned at 8.50 pm to allow parishioners to talk to the invited guests around the hall. The meeting reconvened at 9.05 pm.

- 8 Summary of main points made during the. informal discussions – Cllr Hyatt** led a discussion on those items that had been flagged up during the interval.
- 9 The Neighbourhood Development Plan –** There had not had any contentious conversations during the interval.
- 10 Questions from the floor to the council**

Concerns were expressed about the generators that were being sited off Cards Road. Why are they being placed there, and how noisy are they going to be? Who could have approved of such a location?

What is the future of the current allotment site? If they are going to be moved to a site by Gablesfield, then how soon will this happen?

What is the future of the Community Centre? There is a danger it could become just a glorified sports club.

The recent remedial work down by the ford at Sporhams Lane is very poor. What can be done to get this improved?

The Chairman thanked parishioners and guests for attending, and for the support and hard work of her fellow councillors. She also thanked Sandon School for the use of the hall. Chairman then drew the meeting to a close.

The meeting formally closed at 9.15p.m.

## APPENDIX 1

### Chairman's Speech for Annual Assembly 2023

We are pleased to welcome you to this meeting and thank you for coming.

The previous Annual Assembly was in May 2019, then of course COVID struck! We held our meetings during COVID via TEAMs. Thanks to our Clerk Ted setting it all up and getting us going. It worked reasonably well.

Since our previous Assembly, the two very large planning applications have filled our thoughts. The plan for houses by Redrow on the land behind Sandon School up to Maldon Road, known as 3c, the land on the opposite side of Maldon Road for houses and a Nursery School, known as 3d, and 3b for a commercial area. Then Hopkins proposing housing on 3a at Manor Farm plus the Country Park. Not popular developments with residents.

There was also a planning application for gas turbine engines on the land South West of Cards Road agreed on appeal, which was also not popular with residents.

The Platinum Jubilee celebrations early February 2022 went well, with many gatherings, fetes and garden parties taking place. What a wonderful time we all had. The Parish Council planted five sapling Cherry trees with plaques with help from children from Sandon School and the Rotary. It gave Jubilee Celebration coins to the children of the Parish and beyond who attended the many functions on offer.

Then sadly our beloved Queen passed away on 8 September 2022, Elizabeth II, Queen of the United Kingdom and the other Commonwealth realms, died of old age at Balmoral Castle in Scotland, at the age of 96. What a shock that was. We put up a gazebo on the Village Green where residents could leave their tributes, which we later sent to the Palace and later received a very nice card and letter from King Charles and the Palace.

David Pearson and his wife Barbara moved to Wales last year. They were stalwarts and the founders of the Howe Green Community Association that provided regular garden parties and other activities for quite a few years. They will be sorely missed.

There was a crocus planting initiative on Sandon Village Green with the Danbury and Villages Rotary Club on 8th November and we planted around 500 bulbs to join the ones we planted last year. The mauve flowers certainly brighten up the area.

We once again provided a Christmas tree outside St Andrew's Church, supplied to us by a local company. It looked wonderful once decorated by the WI. The carol service and switch on of the lights was well attended by residents and their children.

The Sandon Cup this year goes to:

#### **The Sandon Neighbourhood Plan Group**

The Parish Council felt the group who have written a wonderful Draft Plan for Sandon deserves recognition and the Sandon Cup.

This has comprised of members of the community with assistance from a few Parish Councillors and they have worked so hard since the end of 2017. It has taken over five years to write this document which replaces the Village Design Statement which was written in 2011.

A Neighbourhood Plan is a document that sets out the planning policies for our Parish, Planning policies are used to decide whether to approve planning applications or not. It is a legal document when approved, and will go to a Referendum which will need your support to get it approved after so much effort.

The Group look forward to all their hard work coming to fruition. Please bring your hands together for the Neighbourhood Plan group.

Jane Willis – Chair Not here tonight

Judy Cecil – Secretary Without whom this would not have been possible – Also unable to join us tonight.

Cedric Calmeyer – Parish Councillor

Pam Knott – Very good at proof reading

Jan Ullmer – Dab hand at the graphics to make the document very professional

Pat Ferris – Sadly died last year who was a stalwart of the Plan

Rosemary Hoare and Martin Cross who helped out at the beginning

Plus yours truly.

Thank you everyone.