

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE

(Cadwell, Chesfield, Codicote, Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo, Kimpton and Knebworth Wards)

**Minutes of the meeting held in Committee Room 1, Council Offices, Gernon Road,
Letchworth Garden City on Thursday, 14 June 2007 at 7.30 p.m.**

MINUTES

PRESENT: *Councillor D.J. Barnard (Chairman), Tom Brindley (Vice-Chairman),
A. Bardett, John Bishop, Lee Downie, Tricia Gibbs & Mrs C.P.A. Strong.*

IN ATTENDANCE: *Garry Gover – Community Development Officer,
Ian Gourlay – Senior Committee and Member Services Officer.*

Six members of the public.

4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jane Gray, Sal Jarvis and David Miller.

5. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 April 2007 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and signed by the Chairman, subject to the replacement of the words "Letchworth Area Committee" with "Southern Rural Committee" in the second line of the third paragraph in Minute 132 – Chairman's Announcements.

6. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Lee Downie to his first meeting of the Southern Rural Committee since his election at the recent District Council Elections.

The Chairman commented that, unfortunately, no representative of the Knebworth Youth Football Club would be available to present their grant application at Agenda Item 7 on the agenda.

7. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman announced that one additional grant application, submitted by the Hexton Village Play Group, had been tabled at the meeting.

8. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were received prior to, or at the meeting.

9. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No requests for public participation had been received.

10. CHAMPION NEWS

The Community Development Officer for the Southern Rural Area presented a report of the Head of Community Development and Cultural Services to the Committee, which advised them of the activities undertaken by the Community Development Officer for the Southern Rural Area since the meeting of the Committee held on 26 April 2007, and brought to their attention the important community based activities that would take place during the next few months.

Members asked for an interim report on the success of the SCOOTs project to be submitted to the September meeting of the Committee

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the report of the Head of Community Development and Cultural Services be noted;
- (2) That the actions taken by the Community Development Officer for the Southern Rural Area to promote greater community capacity and well-being for the Southern Rural Area communities be endorsed.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: To keep members of the Committee apprised of the latest developments in community activities in the Southern Rural Area.

11. GRANT APPLICATIONS

The Committee received presentations from the following organisations in respect of their grant applications:

1. Codicote Village Day (Charlie Unwin and Steve Watts) – seeking a £1,000 grant towards the cost of the 2007 Village Day event;
2. Sticky Mitts Arts and Crafts Group (Helen Watson and Lisa Stewart) – seeking a £1,250 grant towards the cost of website development and new tables;
3. Knebworth Youth Football Club – seeking a £896 grant towards the cost of replacement goalposts;
4. Hexton Village Play Group (Helena Devereux and Fiona Game) – seeking a £1,233 grant towards the essential running costs of rent, heat and lighting for the premises.

Members asked a number of questions of each of the applicants.

12. GRANT APPLICATION – CODICOTE VILLAGE DAY

RESOLVED: That the sum of £1,000 be awarded to the Codicote Village Day Committee as a financial contribution toward the costs of the 2007 Codicote Village Day, on the understanding that this would be a one off grant for the 2007 event only.

REASON FOR DECISION: The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims and strategic priorities of the Council.

13. GRANT APPLICATION – STICKY MITTS ARTS AND CRAFTS GROUP

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the sum of £650 be awarded to the Sticky Mitts Arts and Crafts Group as a financial contribution towards the cost of website development and new tables;
- (2) That the Community Development Officer be requested to assist the Group in accessing alternative sources of grant funding from other community organisations.

REASON FOR DECISION: The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims and strategic priorities of the Council.

14. GRANT APPLICATION – KNEBORTH YOUTH FOOTBALL CLUB

RESOLVED: That the sum of £896 be awarded to the Knebworth Youth Football Club as a financial contribution towards the cost of replacement goalposts.

REASON FOR DECISION: The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims and strategic priorities of the Council.

15. GRANT APPLICATION – HEXTON VILLAGE PLAY GROUP

RESOLVED: That the sum of £1,233 be awarded to the Hexton Village Play Group as a financial contribution towards the essential running costs of rent, heat and lighting for the premises.

REASON FOR DECISION: The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims and strategic priorities of the Council.

16. DEVELOPMENT AND AREA VISIONING BUDGETS 2007/2008

The Community Development Officer for the Southern Rural Area presented a report of the Head of Community Development and Cultural Services to the Committee, which set out the current expenditure and balances of the Area Committee delegated budgets for 2007/08.

The Community Development Officer advised Members of a number of amended figures in the report as a consequence of the Committee's earlier decisions on the four grant applications.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the current expenditure, balances and carry forwards of the Ward Development Budgets and the allocated Visioning Budgets, as set out in Appendix 3 of the report, be noted;
- (2) That the Committee will now consider its programme of awards to community organisations for this financial year 2007/08 on a meeting by meeting basis, in order to ensure that the management of grants is more manageable and to grant-aid all voluntary groups and organisations more effectively, in support of their project needs.

REASON FOR DECISION: The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims and strategic priorities of the Council.

17. SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE – THE WAY FORWARD

The Committee considered the report of the Legal and Democratic Services in respect of proposed dates for meetings of the Southern Rural Committee during the 2007/08 Civic Year.

In association with the report, the Chairman lead a discussion with Members on the way forward for the Southern Rural Committee. The following points were made during the discussion:

- One of the proposed dates could be used for a combined Committee/Rural Conference event, and that authors of some of the Parish Plans could be invited to participate in this process;
- Another date could be used for a Grants Seminar/grants presentation evening;
- Community Safety could be a feature at another one of the proposed meetings;
- Some of the meetings should be held in rural venues throughout the Southern Rural area;
- Future meetings could perhaps commence with the "formal" items of business, and then conclude with some "informal" business based on a theme;
- Amongst a number of themes mentioned for future meetings were Roads/Highways, Community Policing, Rural Transport and Enforcement.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Members' comments regarding "The Way Forward" for the Committee, as detailed above, be taken forward by officers in the arrangements for future meetings of the Southern Rural Committee;
- (2) That the following dates be agreed for the remaining meetings of the Southern Rural Committee during the 2007/08 Civic Year:
 - Wednesday, 19 September 2007 – including SCOOTs update;
 - Thursday, 4 October 2007 – incorporating a Rural Conference type element;
 - Thursday, 6 December 2007 – Grants Presentation evening (rural venue);
 - Wednesday, 20 February 2008 – incorporating a Community Safety element;
 - Thursday, 10 April 2008 – incorporating a Grants Seminar (rural venue).

REASON FOR DECISION: To enable the Committee to function in an effective and efficient manner.

The meeting closed at 9.25 p.m.

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Chairman