

**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE  
(Cadwell, Chesfield, Codicote, Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo, Kimpton  
and Knebworth Wards)**

**Minutes of the meeting held at Council Offices, Gernon Road,  
Letchworth Garden City  
on Wednesday, 17 June 2009 at 7.30 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** Councillors D.J. Barnard (Chairman), Alan Bardett (Vice-Chairman), John Bishop, Lee Downie and Sal Jarvis.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mary Caldwell (Planning Control and Conservation Manager), Garry Gover (Community Development Officer) Hilary Dineen (Committee and Member Services Officer).

7 members of the public at commencement of meeting.

**4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tom Brindley, Tricia Gibbs, Jane Gray, David Miller and Mrs C.P.A. Strong.

**5. MINUTES – 12 MARCH 2009 AND 30 APRIL 2009**

Councillor Lee Downie apologised for not being present at the meeting held on 12 March 2009.

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Meetings held on 12 March 2009 and 30 April 2009 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

**6. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chairman advised that no other business would be considered at this meeting.

**7. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

(1) The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting;

(2) The Chairman reminded the Members that any declarations of interest in respect of any business set out in the agenda should be declared as either a prejudicial or personal interest and are required to notify the Chairman of the nature of any interest declared at the commencement of the relevant item on the agenda. Members declaring a prejudicial interest should leave the room and not seek to influence the decision during that particular item.

**8. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – CODICOTE HEART ACTION TEAM**

Mr Mark Knapper thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee. He advised that the Codicote Heart Action Team (CHAT) had been conceived in September 2009 following the collapse of a 13 year old boy with a heart attack. He stated that heart attacks could occur to anyone of any age at any time and that CHAT aimed to promote awareness, offer screening and offer CPR training to people from a wide area and of all ages. He informed Members that the training sessions had started on 13 June 2009 with 100 people so far receiving training. CHAT would wish to nominate people to receive intensive cardiac and 'train the trainer' training, who would then train other people and that the team was working with the Red Cross to identify suitable candidates to receive this intensive training. He stated that the training sessions were open to all North Herts residents and that the mobile screening unit belonging to Cardiac Risk in the Young (CRY) had been utilised to screen young people for heart problems with the unit being in attendance at the

Codicote Village Day. He informed Members that funding was being sought towards training and marketing and that full accounts would be provided on an annual basis.

Members asked several questions including how wide an area would be covered; what were the plans for any grant funding received; whether a defibrillator would be acquired and whether CHAT would seek funding from neighbouring parishes as the idea spread.

Mr Knapper informed the Committee that although the scheme had been started in Codicote, the Red Cross had been supportive regarding plans to grow; that any grant funding would help towards the costs of courses and to support the cost of heart screening for children, which would cost £35 per child; that the aim was to get a defibrillator and this was a work in progress; that strong links existed through which to promote the cause and consideration was being given to asking for financial contributions from other sources, although the aim would be for other areas to set up their own group using the CHAT model.

The Chairman thanked Mr Knapper for his informative presentation.

**9. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – HITCHIN HELPING HANDS**

Mr David Green and Mrs Jean Jenkins thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee. Mr Green informed the Committee that Hitchin Helping Hands (HHH) was a charity, run by volunteer staff, providing transport in the community for the elderly and people with disabilities across North Herts. He stated that the transport enabled users to maintain a level of independence; that HHH operated 4 minibuses, which were equipped with wheelchair tracking; clamps and safety harness to enable use by wheelchair users and that the service was particularly valued in rural areas, where transport can be more difficult. Mr Green advised Members that HHH had already replaced 2 of the minibuses and were currently raising funds to replace a third one at a cost of £34,600, which would enable HHH to continue to provide a high quality service to their clients.

Members asked several questions including which villages were covered by the service; whether Baldock and District Committee or Hitchin Committee had been approached for funding; who would qualify to use the HHH service; what about funding for future replacement buses and how many people currently used the transport being offered.

Mrs Jenkins informed the Committee that at least 7 villages in the Southern Rural Area were covered by the service; that this Committee had been the first to be approached for funding, but other Area Committees would be approached in the future; that any adult who was elderly or had a disability could use the service, and that it was planned to replace the next bus in 2010 and that the transport was currently being used by approximately 100 people per week.

The Chairman thanked Mr Green and Mrs Jenkins for their informative presentation.

**10. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – LEA SPORT PSG FOOTBALL CLUB**

Mr Stephen Smith thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee. He informed the Committee that he was the Secretary of a very active and growing football club; that there were currently 9 junior and adult teams; that coaching took place throughout the year and that there was an active membership of the Sports and Social Club. He advised that the Club had erected a fence last year and aimed to replace a 35 year old wooden stand with vandal resistant seating at the back of the stand and a bench at the front costing a total of £5,000.

The Chairman thanked Mr Smith for his presentation.

**11. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – SPURGEONS CHILDRENS CENTRE MANAGER**

Sam Colderwood, the Spurgeons Children's Centre Manager, thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee. She informed Members that Children's Centres were being developed in Baldock and Great Ashby; that the local community had been consulted, with the consultation focusing on children under 5, looking at services currently available and where there were gaps; that the key findings of the consultations had been that families wanted holiday events and childcare. She advised that the organisation received funding from Hertfordshire County Council and Government and meetings had taken place with partners, including NHDC. She advised that premises were being sought and various options were being investigated from which free services would be provided and that Section 106 monies had been requested from County as further funding.

The Chairman thanked Ms Colderwood for her presentation.

**12. CHAMPION NEWS AND FINANCE REPORT**

The Community Development Officer presented the report of the Acting Head of Community Development and Cultural Services and drew Members attention to the following:

Rural Grant Fund

The Rural Grants Fund (RGF) had been launched in early May 2009 with good responses from the advice sessions being received.

2009 Village of the Year North Award

The results of this Award would be announced on Thursday 25 June 2009.

2009 Annual Parish & Town Councils (P&TC) Conference

The date for the Annual Parish & Town Councils Conference had been confirmed as 9 July 2009.

SCooTS 2 Wheel Scooter Scheme

This scheme was now operating at full capacity with further scooters being purchased in the future to accommodate demand from clients.

Highways Work Programme

Members attention was drawn to the Appendix which showed proposed works in the Southern Rural Area, with this information being included in future Champions News Reports.

The Committee considered whether any further projects would be suggested for inclusion in the 2009/10 North Hertfordshire Highways Partnership – Joint Member Panel work programme. Members agreed that no further projects would be suggested at this time.

Work Plan

Members attention was drawn to the Appendix which details schemes that had received grant funding from this Committee, with updates on these schemes being included in future Champions News Reports.

Finance Report

Members attention was drawn to the Appendix which detailed that Southern Rural Committee Budgets for 2009/10 and were reminded that unallocated money would be lost if not allocated by 31 March 2010.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the budgetary expenditure, balances and carry forwards from the Ward Development Budgets and the allocated Visioning Budgets be noted;
- (2) That the actions taken by the Community Development Officer to promote greater community capacity and well being for rural communities be endorsed:

**13. GRANT APPLICATION – CODICOTE HEART ACTION TEAM**

**RESOLVED:** That a grant of £1,000 be awarded to Codicote Heart Action Team from the 2009 – 2010 Discretionary Budget, as support funding towards the costs of promoting awareness of cardiac problems in young people.

**14. GRANT APPLICATION – LEA SPORTS (PSG) FOOTBALL CLUB**

**RESOLVED:** That a grant of £1,000 be awarded to Lea Sports (PSG) Football Club from the 2009 – 2010 Discretionary Budget, as support funding towards replacement of seating at the Pirton Recreation Ground.

**15. GRANT APPLICATION – HITCHIN HELPING HANDS**

Members debated that this project benefited a large area in the District and therefore other Area Committees should be requested to support any future funding requests; that any equipment or vehicle funded by NHDC should advertise this by bearing the NHDC logo and that evidence should be provided of matched funded grants from other organisations.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That a grant of £24,000 be awarded to Hitchin Helping Hands from the Capital Visioning Budget, as funding towards a replacement minibus provided that:
  - (i) the NHDC logo together with the words “supported by” be placed on the outside of the vehicle exact wording to be agreed with NHDC;;
  - (ii) Hitchin Helping Hands provide evidence of matched grant funding to the Community Development Officer

**16. HIGHWAYS ISSUES**

Members debated that there were many un-adopted roads in Great Ashby, that were currently not swept and/or have street lights that no longer work and that these roads were fully surfaced and are in daily residential use in a fully developed area. Members considered that letters should be sent to the County Council Portfolio Holder for Transport and the Developers of the sites to request that this issue be resolved.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That Councillor Downie be requested to supply a list of un-adopted road in Great Ashby to The Committee & Members Services Officer:
- (2) That the Committee and Members Services Officer be requested to write, on behalf of the Southern Rural Committee, to the Hertfordshire County Council Portfolio Holder for Transport asking that developer obligations under Section 278 of the Highways Act be enforced;
- (3) That the Committee and Members Services Officer be requested to write, on behalf of the Southern Rural Committee, to Stevenage Borough Council asking that Developer obligations under Section 278 of the Highways Act be enforced.

**17. SECTION 106 AGREEMENT AND UNILATERAL UNDERTAKINGS - UPDATE**

The Planning Control and Conservation Manager presented the report which updated Members on Section 106 Agreements and Unilateral Undertakings. She informed the Committee that the format of the reports had been changed making them more easy to read and that figures for Hertfordshire County Council had been enclosed. She advised that there were very few agreements with pay back dates and drew attention to Appendix E which contained a flow chart showing the process for collection and spending of Section 106 funding and that presentations had been made to senior managers to progress the delivery of schemes. The PCCM informed Members that funds had to be used to mitigate the effect of a development, but it was likely that the Sections 106 funds would be part funding towards a project as it would be unlikely to be sufficient to fund a complete scheme. She advised that PARC had recommended that a Senior Officer be responsible for monitoring progress on the allocation and disbursement of Section 106 monies and Unilateral Obligations. She also advised that she would report back to Area Committees in September 2009 with a further update.

Members asked who would drive the allocation of funds;

The PCCM advised that Officers would drive the allocation of funds however Members and Parishes could suggest where money could be spent, providing the scheme was linked to a Strategy or project approved by NHDC and was linked to the development. She also informed Members that feedback received from Area Committee and PARC would be used to modify future reports to ensure that information is easily accessible and appropriate.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the contents of the report Section 106 Agreements and Unilateral Undertakings – Update be noted:
- (2) That the Planning Control and Conservation Manager be requested to further update the Committee at the meeting due to be held on 1 October 2009 and annually thereafter.

**18. NEXT MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE**

The next meeting of the Southern Rural Committee will be held on Thursday 30 July 2009, the venue for this meeting to be advised as soon as possible.

The meeting closed at 9.40 p.m.

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Chairman