

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

LETCHWORTH COMMITTEE

**MEETING HELD IN THE FOUNDATION HOUSE,
ICKNIELD WAY, LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY
ON WEDNESDAY, 6TH DECEMBER, 2017 AT 7.30 PM**

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors Councillor Mike Rice (Chairman), Councillor Paul Marment (Vice-Chairman), Clare Billing, John Booth, Julian Cunningham, Terry Hone, Ian Mantle and Lynda Needham*

In Attendance: *Claire Morgan (Communities Officer) and Hilary Dineen (Committee and Member Services Officer)*

Also Present: *At the start of the meeting 5 members of the public.*

24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lorna Kercher, David Levett and Sandra Lunn.

25 MINUTES - 6 SEPTEMBER 2017

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 6 September 2017 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

26 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business notified.

27 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (1) The Chairman welcomed those present at the meeting, especially those who had attended to give a presentation;
- (2) The Chairman advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be audio recorded;
- (3) The Chairman drew attention to the item on the agenda front pages regarding Declarations of Interest and reminded Members that, in line with the Code of Conduct, any Declarations of Interest needed to be declared immediately prior to the item in question.

28 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - LETCHWORTH PARK RUN

The Communities Officer advised that the grant application for Letchworth Park Run had been deferred.

29 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - KINGS COMMUNITY CHURCH

Mrs Christine Wheatley, Kings Community Church, thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee and gave a verbal presentation regarding their application for grant funding as follows:

- This was a community based church that wanted to give back to the community;
- They had been running clubs on the Jackmans estate for 10 years;
- The Holiday Club was not church based;
- The marquee was an extension to the building and allowed them to hold more events;
- The existing 12 year old marquee had been badly damaged by high winds;
- The application for grant funding was to enable the purchase of a substantial marquee.

Erin, a Holiday Club user, told Members that the club was fun and gave good experiences and that she would be sad if they did not have the club. She said that that it would be really useful to have the marquee for summer events.

Kim, a Holiday Club user, informed Members that she had relocated from another area and that the Club gave children something to do. This year she had acted as a helper.

The Club allowed children to have fun and gave children confidence, it was something that was really needed and there was now a youth group for older young people.

Kim said that the Church had helped so many people.

Members asked whether most children attending the Club came from the Jackmans area and asked for confirmation that any marquee purchased would stand up to bad weather.

Mrs Wheatley confirmed that most children were from the Jackmans area and advised that the previous marquee had stood the test of time and had lasted well.

In response to a question Mrs Wheatley advised that this was a Baptist Church that had 35 members and not a lot of money.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Wheatley for her presentation.

30 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - GROUNDWORK HERTFORDSHIRE

Mr Chris Dungate, Groundwork Hertfordshire, thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee and gave a verbal presentation regarding their application for grant funding.

Mr Dungate informed Members that the grant application for £2,968 was to fund delivery of Wellies in the Woods.

This was a family programme designed to train parents to play outside with their children.

Benefits included:

- Exercise
- Learning
- Improved relationships
- Improved child behaviour
- Family enjoyment of open spaces
- Parents will be able to run activities time and time again

Families would be referred to Wellies in the Woods by the Childrens Centres.

Each session was limited to 14 children, although there was no limit on the number of adults.

The aim was to work with 16 – 20 families over the course of the programme by delivering one session per week.

It was possible to train the staff at the Childrens Centres to run the programme.

The types of activities included:

- Den building
- Scavenger art
- Sensory activities
- Activities linked to a book
- Mud Kitchens
- Magic potions

In response to a comment from a Member regarding the success of these courses in other places, Mr Dungate advised that the programme had been very successful in Hertsmere, where sessions were booked as soon as they were advertised.

Members queried whether January and February were the best time to hold these sessions and why they were working only with these particular childrens centres.

Mr Dungate that the Childrens Centres identified families and they generally turned up for the sessions. Running sessions at this time of year gave the opportunity to give additional information such as appropriate clothing to wear and sometimes poor weather added to the enjoyment.

CMS had been nominated for the Tesco Bags of Help Scheme and had hoped to receive £4,000, but were only successful for £1,000, this meant that they had to provide a reduced programme.

They had already worked with Chestnut Tree in Westmill and the Icknield Centre and therefore wished to continue with these,

Members asked for clarification regarding what funding would pay for.

Mr Dungate advised that funding would pay for the delivery of 12 sessions including the development of the project management plan and the production of information packs.

One person would deliver the session and in this would be supported by project management and include overheads for Groundwork

Members suggested that funding be sought from the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation and that they talked to the Friends of Norton Common.

In response to a query, Mr Dungate confirmed that the programme could be held later in the year.

The Chairman thanked Mr Dungate for his presentation.

31 GRANTS AND COMMUNITY UPDATE

The Communities Officer presented the report entitled Grants and Community Update and drew attention to the following:

Youth Engagement

There was a temporary officer working on youth engagement who was currently micro mapping what youth activities were available in Letchworth, it may be that much of this would be faith based.

He had also organised a youth enterprise group session on 16 December 2017 between 6 and 8 p.m.

In response to a query, she clarified that in this instance, youth meant between 11 and 18 years of age.

Members expressed concern that much of the work being undertaken was in the prevue of Hertfordshire County Council and that any work undertaken should be co-ordinated.

Cycle Rack Project

Installation of cycle racks, funded by Section 106 contributions, was taking place in schools and facilities all around the town

She was working with Planning and the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation to consider the placing of and style of racks in the Town Centre.

Members asked that a list of where racks were to be installed be circulated to all Members of this Committee.

Members acknowledged that the decision making process lay with the Planning Department, who worked in conjunction with the Communities Team. But expressed concern that a very large sum of money was being spent on bike racks.

They queried what other spending options had been considered for this funding and how were people made aware that this funding was available.

They questioned whether the provision of bike racks could be classed as sustainable transport and were concerned that this was not a valid use of funds. They were also concerned that other organisations should have access to these funds.

Members asked for a full report on the background to this particular decision and the process used to allocate funding to a project, this report to include details of who else was invited to ask for the money.

The Communities Officer asked Members to let her know if there are any projects that Section 106 funding could be spent on.

Grant Applications

Members felt that they did not receive sufficient information to make a decision on many grant applications and that the amount of information provided had reduced over the years.

They asked that the Communities Officer provide more details in future, including details of any previous funding awarded by NHDC.

They also expressed concern at the suggestion that monies be set aside for unspecified purposes.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the budgetary expenditure, balances and carry forwards from the Development and Visioning Budgets be noted;

- (2) That the actions taken by the Community Development Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being for Letchworth Garden City be endorsed;
- (3) That the Communities Officer be requested to circulate a list of where cycle racks are to be installed to all Members of the Letchworth Committee;
- (4) That the Communities Officer be requested to provide more details regarding grant applications, including details of any previous funding awarded by NHDC;
- (5) That the Development and Conservation Manager be requested to provide a report detailing the background to the decision to use Section 106 funding for the purchase of bike racks and the process used for allocating Section 106 funding to any project and present this at the next meeting of this Committee;
- (6) That the £1,000 allocated to Impact Youth Group be returned to the main Discretionary Budget.

REASON FOR DECISION: To keep Members of the Committee apprised of the latest developments in community activities in Letchworth Garden City.

32 GRANT APPLICATION - KINGS COMMUNITY CHURCH

RESOLVED: That grant funding of £450 be awarded to Kings Community Church from the 2017/18 Discretionary Budget towards the cost of purchasing a gazebo style marquee.

REASON FOR DECISION: To improve services provided by local organisations and groups which are accessed by the community.

33 GRANT APPLICATION - GROUNDWORK HERTFORDSHIRE

Members supported the aims of the programme, but were concerned as to whether this represented value for money as it seemed to be a lot of money for a limited number of people over a relatively short period of time.

It was proposed and seconded that the grant application be deferred to enable the Communities Officer to gather more detailed financial information, which should then be circulated to all Members of this Committee.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Communities Officer be requested to make further enquiries regarding the financial detail regarding the proposed sessions for families to engage with the natural environment on Norton Common and circulate this information to all Members of the Letchworth Committee;
- (2) That the grant application for Groundwork Hertfordshire be deferred until the information requested in (1) above is received and circulated.

REASON FOR DECISION: To improve services provided by local organisations and groups which are accessed by the community.

34 GRANT APPLICATION LETCHWORTH PARK RUN

The Communities Officer advised that the grant application for Letchworth Park Run had been deferred.

35 INFORMATION NOTE - GREEN SPACE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Committee received an information note entitled Green Space Management Strategy.

36 WARD MATTERS AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS - MEMBERS' REPORTS

Members asked that the Letchworth Garden City BID Manager make a presentation to the next meeting of this Committee

RESOLVED: That the Committee and Member Services Officer be requested to invite the Letchworth Garden City BID Manager to make a presentation to the next meeting of this Committee.

REASON FOR DECISION: To keep the Letchworth Committee apprised of the work and activities of the Letchworth BID.

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm

Chairman