

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

LETCHWORTH COMMITTEE

**MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES, GERON ROAD,
LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY ON WEDNESDAY, 5TH DECEMBER, 2018 AT 7.30 PM**

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors Gary Grindal (Chairman), Helen Oliver (Vice-Chairman),
Terry Hone, David Levett, Ian Mantle, Paul Marment, Lynda Needham,
Mike Rice and Deepak Sangha*

In Attendance: *Claire Morgan (Senior Communities Officer) and Hilary Dineen
(Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager)*

47 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio Recording – Start time of Item – 30 Seconds

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Kate Aspinwall and Sue Ngwala.

48 MINUTES - 6 JUNE 2018

Audio Recording – Start time of Item – 1 minute 23 seconds

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 6 June 2018 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

49 MINUTES - 19 SEPTEMBER 2018

Audio Recording – Start time of Item – 1 minute 55 seconds

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 19 September 2018 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

50 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio Recording – Start time of Item – 2 minutes 22 seconds

There was no other business notified with the exception of the additional Agenda item which was an urgent request from The White Thorn Bowls Club; who had contacted the Council desperately seeking a Grant to assist with some work they urgently need to undertake.

Audio Recording – Start time of Item – 31 minutes 0 seconds

A late grant application was received which needed to be determined before the next meeting. In accordance with 100b 4 (b) of the Local Government Act 1972 and the urgent procedure rules, as contained within the Council's constitution, it had been agreed that an application from the White Thorn Lane Bowls Club would be considered at this meeting. The application was received subsequent to the publication of the Agenda and should determination of the grant be considered at the next scheduled Area Committee, it would mean that the application would not be able to be considered for potential funding by the Area Committee.

Officer Claire Morgan confirmed that Mr Choudhury from The White Thorn Bowls Club required the funding for ditch walls. The project would need to commence prior to the next meeting in late Feb and really needed to be discussed at this meeting. Any decision would be on the understanding that should all the paperwork be received, all be in order and be deemed compliant with the grant criteria, then funds could be received. These were the conditions to be put on the grant. It would be up to members to decide from the presentation and from any questions they had to see whether they would be willing to provide any funding to the project.

51 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio Recording – Start time of Item – 3 minutes and 9 seconds

- (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.

52 PUBLIC PRESENTATION

Audio Recording – Start time of Item – 4 minutes and 1 second

CRYSTALITES MAJORETTES

Ann Marriage and The Crystalites Majorettes thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the committee regarding their grant application.

- £750 was originally requested for new uniform, dresses and pom-poms. £300 was very kindly donated for the pom poms which allowed them to spend more money on the dresses;
- The girls were using black pom poms for competitions;
- The new pom poms and new uniforms made a huge impact on their dancing and it made them feel much better with improvements in their routines;
- They attended the BMSA 3 weeks' ago and won the National Championship Title;
- Prototype for new dresses was sparkly;
- As there was more money than expected, each member was able to have two dresses, red and blue and also planned to buy turquoise dresses.
- Councillor Terry Hone was the Councillor who presented the £300 funds and was delighted to see them in good use.

The Chairman thanked The Crystalites Majorettes for their presentation.

Audio Recording – Start time of Item – 9 minutes and 0 seconds

WILBURY COMMUNITY FORUM

Sue from the Wilbury Community Forum sent her apologies as she was unwell.

Audio Recording – Start time of Item – 9 minutes 10 seconds

BEST BEFORE CAFÉ

Susie Holding, thanked Councillor Sam Bloxham and Terry Hone for giving the funding in June. The update was:

- Food was collected from Lidl, Tesco, Waitrose, Morrisons, Sainsburys (and hopefully Iceland soon) three times per week.
- Food was weighed and sorted as part of the Food Junk Project and all the data went onto a national food database;
- 80-100 people attended each Wednesdays between 10am-2pm;
- Many food stuffs rescued, no wastage;
- Diverse range of people, including volunteers from all walks of life;
- 3.6 tons of food rescued from September to November and £1,437 was donated. Garden and allotment produce was donated in the summer;
- Majority of customers donated their time and their energy and spent time talking to one another;
- Generosity from community was amazing;
- Once expenses covered, any surplus cash donations over £70 and anything over that was donated to local charities;
- Supper club kept them sustainable as they did not want to ask for further grants;
- Collaboration with St Christopher's School where the head and head chef cooked and the Garden City Brewery gave them the venue for free and £437 donated;
- Food safety rating of 5 for hot and cold food;
- North Herts College students did their 30 hour placement with the café. This built their independent skills by travelling to and from the café and they were allocated a supporter. Positive effect passed to customers.

In response to questions from Councillor Helen Oliver, Susie Holding advised that:

- They were not in need of any new equipment at present.

Counsellor Daniel Allen raised the following:

- There were numerous other groups who were using the Best Before Café as a meeting point and was therefore also helping other Charities.

The Chairman thanked Susie Holding for her presentation.

Audio Recording – Start time of Item – 22 minutes and 12 seconds

GROUNDWORK

Caroline Mallett, thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to thank the committee regarding the funding received in the summer and gave an update:

- Wellies in the Woods scheme provided courses for local families and took them into local green spaces, ideally woodland, and built up the confidence of both children and parents in outdoor play;
- Grant of £2,968 received and £1,000 received from Tesco through their 'Bags of Help' scheme;
- Funding enabled two courses which began in June and finished mid-July. They worked with local children's centres to promote the courses;

Wednesday, 5th December, 2018

- 1st course aimed at those children most in need and 2nd course was available to any families in the local area who accessed the local centres;
- Staff members supported the children aged 9 months to 8 years;
- 100% of parents felt more confident in playing with their children outside and therefore they played with their children more often;
- Excellent feedback received;
- Due to the grant received, Wellies in the Woods had just secured funding for a further two years in Letchworth. In Year 1, they would be running four more courses which would deliver specific staff training at the children's centres and also to child minders and nursery groups. In Year 2 they would deliver two more courses and the children's centres would deliver two courses with further support.

The Chairman thanked Caroline Mallett for her attendance and presentation.

Audio Recording – Start time of Item – 34 minutes 0 Seconds

WHITE THORN BOWLS CLUB

Bill Choudhury, thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee regarding their urgent grant application.

- White Thorn Bowls Club was based in Letchworth and was part of Letchworth Corner Sports Club where various sports were played;
- The Club was founded in 1994 however had existed prior to that under different ownership;
- One of the regulations for having a bowling green and for safety reasons it had to be surrounded by a ditch channel and ditch wall (37m²).
- The playing surface was maintained by the club and divided into 6 lanes;
- The ditch walls were beginning to collapse, part of which had already collapsed and until repairs had taken place, they would be unable to commence the bowling season in the summer;
- Due to poor construction in the past, it would need to be completely redone;
- Costings and grants had been sought and together with funding received and money pledged from club members, £14,500 had been raised;
- Most of the labour would be done by members which would reduce the cost however builders' expertise was needed to construct the ditch walls. Total cost of works was approximately £17,800 therefore short of at least £3,500;
- 59 weekend and weekday games during the summer season and each game involved 50 people between mid-April to mid-September;
- Weekday attendees were mainly pensioners which kept them mentally and physically active;
- County games and league games took place in the evenings and were made up of children and young working people, whose numbers were between 100-1000 players;
- Estimated 2,500 – 3,000 players and 1,000 spectators;
- If funding was not available, they could ask other sports clubs within the Letchworth Corner Sports Club or they could take a loan to complete the work;
- If the club were closed, all the games would need to be cancelled;
- Once work completed, the green keeper would carry out work to ensure the green was in good playing condition.

In response to questions from Councillor Allen:

- There were 38 members in 2018;

- The same people were returning on a regular basis from the same clubs however there would also be different people attending;
- There were 13 clubs from NHDC and surrounding area with 28-30 weekend friendlies and some of these clubs were larger than White Thorn Bowls Club.

In response to questions from Councillor Levett:

- There were 25 members from Letchworth;
- Membership fee £65/year some of which was paid to Letchworth Corner Sports Club as green rented from them;
- Match fees were charged;
- Weekday friendlies £1.50 and the weekend friendlies were £4 and included a meal;
- Competitions county/district match fee £4;
- No charge to visiting clubs and no fee paid when other clubs visited;
- Match fee paid but the club kept the money. What was paid on a home game was recouped for an away game;
- Ground Rent was £1,680;
- Maintenance funded by The White Thorn Bowls Club;
- Grounds owned by Letchworth Heritage Foundation;
- Letchworth Corner Sports Club owned lease and it was thought they would rent from Heritage - £6000 per year was an approximate guess.

In response to questions from Councillor Needham:

- White Thorn Bowls Club was an asset to Letchworth Corner Sports Club with regard to generating income but an asset anyway.
- Letchworth Corner Sports Club did not contribute to repairs.
- If the club ceased to exist, the sports club would lose £1,680 in income plus the money the members spent in the bar on a weekly basis.

The Chairman thanked Mr Choudhury for his presentation.

53 LETCHWORTH BID MANAGER

Audio Recording – Start time of Item – 53 minutes

Patricia Saunders, thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee and updated the Committee regarding the work and activities of the Letchworth BID as follows:

Update

- Halloween Activities during October half-term with free activities for children - Trick or Treat trail was particularly popular and shops had to buy further supplies of sweets.
- Annual light switch was on Saturday 24th November 2018. Successful event with 1000's of people in attendance.
- Christmas lights paid for by Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation. All other activities, stage entertainment, parade, fun fair and fireworks were put on by the bid and were a mix of local community groups offering services free of charge and some more professional jazz bands;
- After entertainment ended at 7:30pm, some then went on to eat and drink which would have boosted the town's economy.
- Thanked Ian Couper, Steve Crowley, the legal team and NHDC for working with the BID and the fireworks company to make the firework display from the top of the car park possible and took into consideration all the safety requirements.
- The Bid had produced a Christmas guide which was available in the Tourist Information Centre and town centre shops. This summarised community activities which were taking place in the town centre area and the free activities available.

BID Re-ballot:

- Businesses were given the opportunity to vote on whether to continue with the BID for another five years. Ballot managed by NHDC and UK engage. Announcement of result was due the next day. It was hoped that BID would continue for 2nd term. Details of plans were found in prospectus with business plan.
- Issue of vermin in town centre raised. Meeting was due to take place that week with Peter Carey, Head of Environmental Health to discuss the matter as part of town strategy meeting;
- As part of BID's support of the plastic-free Letchworth campaign, chairman Chris Gerrard had met with the environmental company, ACM, and explored the opportunity for this business to supply a reverse vending machine as part of a pilot scheme in Letchworth town centre. The intent of the programme would be to reward environmental behaviours, capture consumers into Letchworth retail and reduce town litter. Machine would take consumer plastic bottles and aluminium cans, crush and bale them. It would then supply a retail voucher for use in the in the town centre. For NHDC, this could reduce volumes of waste already collected from street waste bins and homes. ACM were keen to meet the most appropriate person within the council to discuss machine collections. They would also like to look at the possibility of using a local recycling centre to store the clean plastic with a future hope of recycling in to new bottles. Cost of the machine £11,000. company is willing to provide up to 50% of these costs as it is a pilot scheme. Having recently received information on available section 106 monies, Stephanie blunt for public realm activities; Patricia Saunders would submit a proposal on the initiative in the hope of releasing available funds of £4,200. Would then need to find £1,300 to make it all happen. Good initiative and would encourage consumers to get their retail voucher. Location would need to be somewhere for lorries to gain easy access.

In response to questions from Councillor Marment:

- It was early days so Patricia Saunders advised they would definitely look at the volume of bottles that would fit in the machine so as not to leave lots of bottles lying around nearby. Emptying would need to be done regularly.

In response to questions from Councillor Needham:

- Patricia Saunders did not think it would affect Christmas trade in the town centre. The timing of works in the town centre was unfortunate and some businesses had complained about the effect it would have on their trade. This would be ongoing for 20 months so had they not started when they did, it would never have been started. Safety measures had been implemented and shops were still accessible. Councillor Needham said had they thought about timing of start date, it would only have straddled one Christmas. People were not consulted widely. Jack Filbin might be able to give update but coordinating utility companies depended on when the companies concerned were available. .

In response to questions from Councillor Hone:

- County Hall was very interested about the new plastic machine. Herts based partnership might be interested in getting involved.

In response to questions from Councillor Levett:

- Christmas lights – parking briefing and enforcement team extremely complimentary about road handling, traffic management, people management on the day. No real problems.
- The introduction of a hawk in the town centre every two weeks meant that the pigeons relocated to another area of the town.

- The option for development was sold onto a different company who were doing the development, not Garden Square. There were problems getting the appropriate utilities moved particularly electricity and gas. It had taken 3 years to arrange. They did go through all the appropriate licencing arrangements for doing the work with both NHDC and the Heritage Foundation prior to commencement of the work.

54 GRANTS & COMMUNITY UPDATE

Audio Recording – Start time of Item – 1 hours, 15 minutes and 35 seconds

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

Grants in the pipeline:

- Ongoing discussions were taking place between local community groups and local faith groups to do some kind of multicultural event in the summer which would hopefully take part around the time of the Letchworth festival fortnight.
- The food poverty group had tightened up on the way they received referrals so that the people who needed food got it. Some people last year were getting lots of parcels from different agencies. This was now being dealt with via a central point to ensure everyone in need received something rather than too much or too little.

Chairman's Volunteer Achievement Awards

- Nominations were available on the Council website for all categories of Volunteers.
- Deadline for nominations was 21st December 2018.
- The judging panel was due to meet on 9/10 January 2019 to judge the final categories and then those concerned would be notified, invited and awarded their awards at the Chairman's Civic Reception in February.

BID Ballot

BID count was going to be the following day so the result was due to be available sometime that afternoon and would be made public on the Friday.

BUDGET

2017/2018 discretionary grant budget was still being used. £9,932 available to spend from last year's budget with the 2018/2019 budget still intact. In total £25,432 available.

In response to a question from Councillor Cunningham

The part of the report referred to in Section 8.3 was provided by Simon Ellis; so when Section 106 funding was collected for the new developments, it went towards new waste contract.

In response to a question from Councillor Needham

8.1.2. The Food Poverty Network Group. A really comprehensive list of who was invited to attend was provided. The food bank did not attend despite saying they would.

Feed up Warm up

Worked with Shane Cole who had his own street food concession and he was very keen to provide free food for homeless people and rough sleepers somewhere in North Herts. He came from Letchworth and was homeless as a teenager after coming out of the care system and felt very strongly that he wanted to help people especially leading up to Christmas. He had been inundated with offers of help. Letchworth businesses had been extremely generous

Wednesday, 5th December, 2018

donating sleeping bags, clothes, etc. The pilot was starting this evening and throughout December. He would like to carry on throughout the winter months and take it from there. Councillor Billing had linked him in with Susie from Best Before Café because he could also use some of that waste food. She also had a very good ethos having built things up gradually. He would run the project from Hitchin initially.

Councillor Needham knew that it was Shane's intention to offer more than a warm meal from his van and many of the shops had been collecting toiletries and health care supplies e.g. plasters, etc. Having visited the housing officer, it was thought that there were 8 rough sleepers between the Luton and Cambridge borders. Councillor Billing stated that Shane had been to Stevenage town centre to encourage the rough sleepers to come over to Hitchin. There were also hidden homeless and quite a lot of social surfers. It was unlikely that housing people would know how many of those people were around.

In response to a question from Councillor Sangha

Section 8.1.2 - Food Poverty Network. The funds for the purchase of luxury goods were to be donated from church groups and donations from customers in supermarkets and not from the Council.

In response to a question from Councillor Clark

Historically, grant applications seemed to be quieter in December. Last year the same thing happened and £7,000 was allocated in the March meeting. Notifications were put in the local press, Facebook and also local organisations were continually reminded that grant applications were available as long as the local authority grant criteria was fulfilled. Next grant deadline was 1st February 2019.

GRANT APPLICATION - WHITE THORN BOWLS CLUB

Councillor Levett raised the following:

- There were concerns and background paperwork had not been available during the meeting;
- Letchworth Corner Sports Club was receiving reasonable rental for the ground and had been for numerous years and was not contributing to the costs of what was actually an asset for them. It was felt that they should be contributing towards the cost of repairs,
- It was only benefiting a small number of residents which was a big grant request,
- It was felt this was an expensive project.

Councillor Albert raised the following:

- Letchworth Corner Sports Club was probably paying a large rent to the Heritage Foundation and that they were by far the biggest contributor to the scheme. Indirectly they were contributing as the Heritage foundation was pouring money back into the bowling green.
- Letchworth Club Social Club was another community group run by volunteers. They had clearly gone out of their way to raise a great deal of money themselves to support this. The facility was so widely used that it was felt they should be keen to support this.

Councillor Sangha raised the following:

- 25 of the members were Letchworth residents;
- He was concerned that paperwork was not available;
- It was stated that this would be a one off so would not be repeated and there was a plan for regular maintenance so it was self-sustaining;

Wednesday, 5th December, 2018

- Norton bowls club received similar funding on a small scale;
- Needed to keep sports as the social fabric of the town intact but they had made an effort to obtain the money from other sources and as long as they could give assurance, he would be minded to support this.

Councillor Cunningham raised the following:

- The sports club was deriving an income and was surprised that the basic structure of the club was not being sustained by the sports club;
- Staggered by the cost of the repairs £30,000;
- He would propose that £1,500 be given on the condition that the sports club match this.

Councillor Oliver raised the following:

- He confirmed that Letchworth Sports club was not a full profit organisation. If they were approached for funding they, in turn, may then require a grant which given the timescales would seem counterintuitive.

Councillor Rice raised the following:

- Seconded £1,500 and when approached by Norton Bowls club to do a very similar job, £500 was given.

Councillor Mantle raised the following:

- No information about Letchworth Corner Sports Club;
- Do they break even, run at a loss or are they subsidised by the members? How could they have a resolution which involved a total unknown. Grant should not be conditional on anything, it should be straightforward;
- There was a responsibility to help all sports including ones that are less popular. There were a number of minority sports which would need some support;
- We should not be too held up on relatively small numbers of members and was this adding to the facilities for active involvement in sport for people of Letchworth.

Councillor Allen raised the following:

- Norton was asking for plastic mats to go in the back of an existing gully as these gullies had collapsed and needed replacing so it was a totally different request.
- It was felt that information was not available on Letchworth Corner Social Club due to the timescale so it would be impossible to say that they would give money on the condition that someone else does. Their background was unknown and was unfair.

Councillor Hone raised the following:

- Councillor Hone was not happy to make a condition on a 3rd party so agreed with Councillors Mantle and Allen. He was quite content to give £1500. He made a contribution as County Councillor so could have declared an interest. Was committed to making sure it happened. He felt he could not vote but would if he could have supported it.

Councillor Sangha raised the following:

- With the missing information, we could commit to £1500. He would make a proposal of £3,500 if this was seconded. This was the backstop.

Wednesday, 5th December, 2018

It was proposed and seconded that grant funding of £1,500 be awarded to White Thorn Bowls Club

RESOLVED: That grant funding of £1,500 be awarded to White Thorn Bowls Club to contribute towards the costs of rebuilding the ditch gully and ditch wall.

REASON FOR DECISION: To support community groups and activities in Letchworth.

55 WARD MATTERS AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS - MEMBERS' REPORTS

Audio Recording – Start time of Item – 1 hour, 48 minutes, 41 seconds

Howard Gardens Social Club

Councillor Levett reported last time that Howard Gardens Social Club had received a substantial legacy. They received what was thought to be another £13,000 when the estate was finalised. Some of the money was spent replacing all the lights with LED lights which not only improved the lighting but also saved them a lot of money on electricity. They were now looking to replace a lot of the tired furniture and put up a memorial to the gentleman who left them the money.

The meeting closed at 9.18 pm