

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE

**MEETING HELD IN THE FIRST FLOOR ROOMS 2/3, COUNCIL OFFICES.
GERNON ROAD, LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY
ON THURSDAY, 14TH JUNE, 2018 AT 7.30 PM**

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors Claire Strong (Chairman), Steve Deakin-Davies (Vice-Chairman), David Barnard, John Bishop, Cathryn Henry, Ian Moody and Lisa Nash*

In Attendance: *Simon Ellis (Development and Conservation Manager), Claire Morgan (Senior Communities Officer), Milan Johnston (Communities Assistant) and Hilary Dineen (Acting Committee and Member Services Manager)*

Also Present: *At the commencement of the meeting 5 members of the public*

4 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio recording – Start of Item – 24 seconds

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Faye Frost, Harry Spencer-Smith and Terry Tyler.

5 MINUTES - 8 MARCH 2018

Audio recording – Start of Item – 1 minute 45 seconds

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 8 March 2018 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

6 MINUTES - 17 MAY 2018

Audio recording – Start of Item – 2 minutes 11 seconds

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 17 May 2018 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

7 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio recording – Start of Item – 2 minutes 35 seconds

There was no other business notified.

8 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio recording – Start of Item – 36 seconds and 3 minutes 21 seconds

- (1) The Chairman welcomed those present at the meeting, especially those who had attended to give a presentation;
- (2) The Chairman thanked Councillor Barnard for his Chairmanship of this Committee last year and congratulated him on becoming Executive Member for Leisure and Green Issues:

- (3) The Chairman thanked those who were no longer members of this Committee, Jane Gray and Steve Hemingway;
- (4) The Chairman welcomed new Members of the Committee, Councillors Lisa Nash and Ian Moody;
- (5) The Chairman advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be audio recorded;
- (6) 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.

9 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - CODICOTE VILLAGE DAY

Audio recording – Start of Item – 4 minutes 17 seconds

Mr Colin Argent and Mr Charlie Unwin thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee in support of their grant application as follows:

- Codicote Village Day had been around for approximately 30 years.
- During that time there had been an annual fayre and fete in the village.
- The event was inclusive with the whole village being invited to attend this free event.
- The local school designed the posters.
- Charities were given free stalls at the event.
- This was a fun day for the village and an opportunity for local clubs and societies to raise some money.
- The day started with a parade of floats, marching band etc along the High Street
- This was followed by a fete in the Great Field, beyond the church.
- The fete included an arena, trade stalls, a bar and music.
- The event was funded in a variety of ways including the sale of commercial stall places, advertising, food and drink concessions, and grant funding from various organisations.
- This year Codicote Parish Council had paid £780 for the required road closures.
- An application had been made to Tesco's Community Fund, which secured £2,000 for replacement bunting.
- Principal expenses were for the road closure, insurance, music and a headline act for the arena.
- Other arena events included a bird of prey display, local dance troupes, maypole dancing and marching bands.

The grant application was for the replacement of the marquee, which was used as the tea tent and some of the gazebos used during the event.

The marquee and gazebos were lent to other organisations for other events around the village.

Members ask whether they had previously applied for funding from this Committee and queried how the event went last year.

Mr Argent advised that they had received approximately £1,000 from the Committee some 5 years ago and that last year's event made a profit. They were gradually building up reserves, with the aim of having sufficient funds available to pay for everything should the event be washed out, with a current balance of £8,500.

The Chairman thanked Mr Argent and Mr Unwin for their presentation.

10 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - ICKLEFORD CRICKET CLUB

Audio recording – Start of Item – 11 minutes 1 second

Mr Roy Izzard, Ickleford Cricket Club and Parish Councillor Yvonne Hart, Ickleford Parish Council thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee and gave a verbal presentation in support of the grant application submitted by Ickleford Cricket Club as follows:

- This was a simple issue of looking to save lives.
- The Cricket Club used two grounds, due to the number of teams playing.
- The sports ground was the jewel in the crown of Holwell and included a very active bowls club and excellent children's play area.
- In addition the Cricket Club used the ground in the summer and Hitchin Town Youth Football Club used it in the winter.
- The area was very popular with dog walkers and ramblers;
- There were quite a few elderly people in the village;
- This was going to be run by the Parish Council, who would arrange maintenance and training;
- Other sources of funding had been investigated, but they would not fund training and maintenance

In response to questions from Members Mr Izzard and Mrs Hart advised:

- That the equipment would be available to everyone;
- The equipment would be attached to the Bowls Club building;
- All of the organisations using the recreation ground would contribute to the cost of the equipment.

Members drew attention to the Dipps charity that could help provide defibrillator equipment and training.

The Chairman thanked Mr Izzard and Mrs Hart for their presentation.

11 WASTE AND RECYCLING CONTRACT

Audio recording – Start of Item – 59 minutes 53 seconds

The Chairman informed Members that Councillor Weeks had offered his apologies that he was unable to attend this meeting due to another engagement.

Members discussed their recent experiences of the waste contract and made the following observations:

There were two elderly persons residences in Codicote that had not had collections on three separate occasions. These had been reported each time and had been collected the following day.

The general view was that problems had eased.

One of the major problems had been the transfer of data from Veolia, which had resulted in addresses not being put on the system.

It would be useful to see details of the number of complaints since the new service started.

Councillor Weeks had attended the Overview and Scrutiny meeting on 12 June and had advised that the problems were caused by 4 or 5 different themes of issues all happening at once.

The Service Manager advised that, at this time they were not in a position to look at the data as all of their efforts were focussed on fixing the problems and getting the bins emptied.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been advised that the service should be operating at normal tolerance levels in July/August.

That Committee would undertake an in-depth review of the implementation of the waste service in September 2018.

Councillor weeks had advised the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that one of the key issues was that communication should have been better and the Committee agreed that they would, at a late date, undertake a Task and Finish Group on communication and communication in business continuity.

12 GRANTS AND COMMUNITY UPDATE

Audio recording – Start of Item – 19 minutes 37 seconds and 37 minutes 23 seconds

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

Budgets

The amount of unallocated funds were:

2017/18 Development Budget	£2,124
2017-18 Ward Member Budgets	£1,700
2018/19 Development Budget	£7,400
2018/19 Ward Member Budgets	£5,000
Total	£16,224

2017/18 Ward Member Budget – John Clements Centre

Members noted that the John Clements Centre was ineligible for the £500 Ward Member grant and asked where these funds would now show in the budgets.

The Senior Communities Office advised that this amount should be reallocated to the Discretionary Budget

Hexton Community Petanque

Members noted that the Ward Member grant funding, previously allocated to Hexton Community Petanque, had not yet been utilised and asked for an update on the project.

The Senior Communities Officer advised that the project was going ahead, although there had been some issues regarding removing a container from the land.

New Councillors

Members suggested that the Senior Communities Officer discuss the area committee budgets and grant funding with all new Councillors.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the £500 carried forward from former Councillor Gray's 2017/18 Ward Budget, allocated in principal to John Clements Centre, be reallocated to the Discretionary Budget;
- (2) That the Senior Communities Officer be requested to discuss Area Committee budgets with newly elected Councillors;

- (3) That the budgetary expenditure, balances and carry forwards within the Area Committee Development Budget spreadsheet be noted;
- (4) That the actions taken by the Senior Communities Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being in the Southern Rural Area be endorsed.

REASON FOR DECISION: To ensure that the Southern Rural Committee is kept informed of the work of the Communities Manager and to inform Members of the financial resources and current budgetary position.

13 GRANT APPLICATION - CODICOTE VILLAGE DAY

Audio recording – Start of Item – 23 minutes 19 seconds

A Member expressed concern that, if the Committee gave grant funding to one village day, then they should give to all of the village days in the Southern Rural area.

It was noted that, on this occasion, grant funding had been requested for a capital project to purchase equipment and that this equipment would then benefit more than one organisation.

Members queried whether this request would qualify for Section 106 funding.

The Development and Conservation Manager advised that he would consider whether this request would meet the criteria for Section 106 funding.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Senior Communities Officer be requested to liaise with the Development and Conservation Manager in order to ascertain whether Section 106 funding could be allocated to Codicote Village day for the purchase of replacement marquees by 23 June 2018:
- (2) That, should Section 106 funding not being available by 23 June 2018, grant funding of £1,500 be awarded to Codicote Village Day from the 2017/18 Discretionary Budget towards the cost of replacing their small and large marquees.

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

14 GRANT APPLICATION - ICKLEFORD CRICKET CLUB

Audio recording – Start of Item – 33 minutes 6 seconds

It was proposed and seconded that Ickleford Cricket Club approach Dipps to provide a defibrillator and ongoing maintenance and that if Dipps were unable to provide support, grant funding of £1,756 be awarded.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Senior Communities Officer be requested to support Ickleford Cricket Club to apply to Dipps for a defibrillator and ongoing maintenance;
- (2) That, should Dipps be unable to provide defibrillator equipment and ongoing maintenance, grant funding of £1,786 be awarded to Ickleford Cricket Club from the 2017/18 Discretionary Budget towards the cost of purchasing a defibrillator.

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

15 SECTION 106 AND UNILATERAL UNDERTAKINGS

Audio recording – Start of Item – 38 Minutes 37 seconds

The Development and Conservation Manager presented the report entitled Section 106 and Unilateral Undertakings and drew attention to the following;

He would be offering new Members a mini training session on Section 106.

His role was not to find ideas on which to spend the money, but to check that any projects put forward for funding fulfilled the criteria. The projects must be fully costed with a clearly deliverable timetable and have someone who would deliver it before he could approve funding.

Discretionary Section 106 funding was no longer collected and therefore the funds held were diminishing. Since 2015 all Section 106 agreements had been included funding for specific projects only, with no discretionary funding.

He had prepared details for each village of the amount of funding available and the projects agreed and would send these to the relevant Parish Councils.

He would also be providing Planning Committee training and a refresher training session for Parish Councils regarding Section 106 in the next few months.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the contents of the report entitled Section 106 and Unilateral Undertakings be noted;
- (2) That the Development and Conservation Manager be requested to continue to present a report regarding Section 106 and Unilateral Undertakings to this Committee on an annual basis;
- (3) That, other than where a contribution has been negotiated for a specific purpose or project, Ward Members of the area where Section 106 or Unilateral Undertaking funding is generated and the Area Committee be consulted prior to funding being allocated away from that area or from a village location to a town;
- (4) That the Development and Conservation Manager be requested to circulate details of the amount of funding available and the projects agreed to the relevant Parish Councils.

REASON FOR DECISION:

- (1) To ensure that there is a robust system for negotiating and managing Section 106 and Unilateral Undertakings;
- (2) To ensure that this is kept under constant review and that the risk associated with this activity is managed in an appropriate manner.

16 WARD MATTERS AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS - MEMBERS' REPORTS

Audio recording – Start of Item – 46 minutes 45 seconds

Arts Council North Herts

Councillor Deakin-Davies advised that the Arts Council North Herts currently promoted classical music activities in Hitchin and Letchworth by giving out grants, typically of between £200 and £250, although the maximum available grant was £900.

NHDC would no longer be funding this organisation and, as it had not investigated any other funding sources, would likely run out of money around September 2018.

He was working with the Arts Council North Herts to apply for funding from the Arts Council and was trying to get them to understand that arts did not just cover classical music, but also other arts such as dance and mix mastering.

East and North Herts NHS Trust - Involvement Committee

Councillor Deakin-Davies advised that this Trust included the Lister and QEII Hospitals and some community services.

The Trust was changing and was holding a consultation event at the Gordon Craig Theatre.

It was likely that there would be a cancer treatment centre at the Lister Hospital within the next 2 years.

Knebworth Village Trust

Councillor Deakin-Davies advised that Knebworth Village Trust was a private grant giving organisation.

It was given a building, which had been funded by Section 106 funding. The Trust sold the building and invested the funds. They use the interest on those funds to give grants to people who live in the Parish of Knebworth.

The Trust currently held approximately £798,000 in investments and had, over the last 10-15 years, given out grant funding amounting to £1 million.

Hertfordshire Health Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Deakin-Davies advised that Hertfordshire County Council had responsibility, under the NHS and Government Acts, to look at the provision of all care.

The Committee scrutinised all of the NHS Trusts in Hertfordshire twice a year and considered issues such as targets, effectiveness and risks. They also held to account the care commissioning groups.

Currently being taken to Court by Nascot Lawn who were questioning the quality of decisions made.

Planning Matters

Councillor Barnard informed Members that the Public enquiry regarding the Gladman development in Offley started on 12 June 2018 and was due to conclude by 18 June 2018

Members should note that Gladman had other sites in North Herts.

Carla Homes had submitted two appeals regarding the decision made about the construction management plan for the site in Pirton.

Both appeals had been upheld with costs awarded against Council.

London Luton Airport

Councillor Barnard advised that Luton Airport was changing at a rapid pace although there was still a lot of work to be done.

Councillor Moody advised that there had been an open evening in Codicote from Ash Hill last week to look at the proposed development of one of the biggest sites in the village which was attended by approximately 300 people.

Thursday, 14th June, 2018

County Council Matters

Councillor Barnard, in his role as County Councillor, advised:

That many potholes were being filled, although this was a never ending job.

Citybus had suddenly increased their prices, reduced discounts and reduced concessions, this affected many of the villages.

He had been in contact with the relevant County Council Executive Member who would be taking the matter forward.

Members agreed that Councillor Henry be requested to make a presentation regarding Citizens Advice North Herts at the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Henry be requested to make a brief presentation regarding Citizens Advice North Herts.

REASON FOR DECISION: To keep the Southern Rural Committee apprised of matters relating to wards in the area and Outside Organisations.

The meeting closed at 8.39 pm

Chairman