

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE

**MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES,
GERNON ROAD, LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY
ON THURSDAY, 13TH SEPTEMBER, 2018 AT 7.30 PM**

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors Claire Strong (Chairman), Steve Deakin-Davies (Vice-Chairman), Ian Moody and Harry Spencer-Smith*

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

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

THIS MEETING WAS INQUORATE

17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio recording – Start of Item – 29 seconds

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors David Barnard, John Bishop, Faye Frost, Cathryn Henry and Lisa Nash.

18 MINUTES - 14 JUNE 2018

Audio recording – Start of Item – 46 seconds

The Chairman advised that the Acting Committee and Member Services Manager had apologised that the Minutes for 14 June 2018 had not yet been published.

She had provided a copy of the Decision Sheet for information and the Minutes will be agreed at the next meeting.

19 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio recording – Start of Item – 1 minute 19 seconds

There was no other business notified.

20 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio recording – Start of Item – 1 minute 24 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;

- (4) The Chairman proposed that the next meeting of this Committee is held in the Council Chamber and that the Parish Councils be invited to attend for some Christmas festivities and to advise them of some of the support available to them. She asked that Members, when visiting Parishes, ask what subjects they would like to discuss and advise the Clerk or Communities Officer.

21 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - ICKLEFORD CRICKET CLUB

Audio recording – Start of Item – 4 minutes 18 seconds

The Senior Communities Officer Informed Members that the representative from Ickleford Cricket Club were unable to attend the meeting.

She reminded Members that they had made a presentation to the Committee at the June meeting and that Members had suggested that they approach Dipps, a charity that supports organisations to install defibrillators. Unfortunately, the Charity was unable to help on this occasion.

This presentation was to ask for the funding of £1,786, that they had requested in June, to purchase a defibrillator that would be installed in Holwell.

22 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - CASSEL MEMORIAL HALL

Audio recording – Start of Item – 6 minutes 29 seconds

Mr Steve Patmore, Trustee of Cassell Memorial Hall, gave a verbal presentation in support of their grant application for £2,000 to purchase replacement stacking chairs for the Hall.

Mr Patmore gave a description of the events and activities held at the Hall.

He advised they had undertaken some fundraising and had received grant funding of £500 from County Councillor David Barnard and £1,000 from Lilley Parish Council.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Spencer-Smith;

The Chairman thanked Mr Patmore for his presentation.

23 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - ICKLEFORD BURIAL GROUND TRUST

Audio recording – Start of Item – 11 minutes 9 seconds

Mr Philip Crowe, Trustee of Ickleford Burial Ground Trust, gave a verbal presentation in support of their grant application for £375 to purchase a memorial plaque.

Mr Crowe gave a description of the proposed memorial plaque that would commemorate the centenary of the armistice and be placed in Ickleford.

He advised they would hold a centenary event which would be funded by local residents and businesses.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Spencer-Smith;

The Chairman thanked Mr Crowe for his presentation.

24 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - STEVENAGE STARTLETS FC

Audio recording – Start of Item – 15 minutes 35 seconds

Ms Elizabeth Manning, Club Welfare Officer for Stevenage Starlets FC, gave a verbal presentation in support of their grant application for £500 to purchase equipment.

Ms Manning gave a description of the Club and its activities.

The following Members asked questions and gave advice regarding funding:

- Councillor Ian Moody;
- Councillor Deakin-Davies;
- Councillor Spencer-Smith;
- Councillor Strong.

The Chairman thanked Ms Manning for her presentation.

25 GRANTS AND COMMUNITY UPDATE

Audio recording – Start of Item – 30 minutes 56 seconds

The Senior Communities Officer presented the report of the Communities Manager entitled Grants and Community Update. The following Appendix was presented with the report:

- Appendix 1 - Budget 2018-19.

The following Members asked questions and took part in the debate:

- Councillor Spencer-Smith;
- Councillor Strong.

IT WAS AGREED:

- (1) That the £427 currently allocated to Great Ashby Community Garden be transferred to the 2018/19 Discretionary Budget;
- (2) That the Senior Communities Officer be requested to contact the Hexton Community Petanque Project to ascertain whether this project will move forward or not and report he findings to the next meeting of this Committee;
- (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.

26 GRANT APPLICATION - ICKLEFORD CRICKET CLUB

Audio recording – Start of Item – 46 minutes 11 seconds

The Senior Communities Officer advised that the Dipps Charity had been unable to help Ickleford Cricket Club to purchase a defibrillator at this time, although did offer to support them with training.

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Moody;
- Councillor Strong;
- Councillor Deakin-Davies;
- Councillor Spencer-Smith.

IT WAS AGREED: That the Service director – Legal and Community be requested to authorise payment of £1,786 to Ickleford Cricket Club for the purchase of a defibrillator.

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

27 GRANT APPLICATION - CASSEL MEMORIAL HALL

Audio recording – Start of Item – 35 minutes 3 seconds

The Senior Communities Officer advised that the sum of £1,173 allocated to Lilley Village Hall had not been spent and therefore could be allocated to the purchase of the chairs.

This would then mean a further £827 would need to be allocated to make it up to the £2,000 requested.

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Claire Strong;
- Councillor Harry Spencer-Smith.

IT WAS AGREED:

- (1) That the £1,173 allocated to Lilley Village Hall (Cassell Memorial Hall) be allocated to the purchase of stacking chairs;
- (2) That £827 be allocated from the 2017/18 Discretionary Budget to Lilley Village Hall (Cassell Memorial Hall) for the purchase of stacking chairs;
- (3) That the Service Director- Legal and Community be requested to authorise payment of £2,000 (see 1 and 2 above) to Lilley Village Hall (Cassell Memorial Hall) for the purchase of stacking chairs

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

28 GRANT APPLICATION - ICKLEFORD BURIAL GROUND TRUST

Audio recording – Start of Item – 40 minutes 8 seconds

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Deakin-Davies;
- Councillor Strong.

IT WAS AGREED: That the Service Director – Legal and Community be requested to authorise payment from the 2017/18 Discretionary Budget of £375 to Ickleford Burial Ground Trust for the purchase of a memorial plaque.

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

29 GRANT APPLICATION - STEVENAGE STARTLETS FC

Audio recording – Start of Item – 41 minutes 7 seconds

The Senior Communities Officer advised that, although the Club was based in Stevenage, the majority of the Members came from North Herts.

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Strong;
- Councillor Deakin-Davies;
- Councillor Ian Moody;
- Councillor Spencer-Smith.

IT WAS AGREED:

- (1) That the Senior Communities Officer be requested to liaise with the Ward Councillors to ascertain whether they would be prepared to allocate £100 each to Stevenage Starlets FC;
- (2) That the sum of £300 be allocated from the 2017/18 Discretionary Budget to Stevenage Starlets FC for the purchase of equipment;
- (3) That the Service Director – Legal and Community be requested to authorise payment from the 2017/18 Discretionary Budget of £300 plus any Ward Member allocation (see 1 and 2 above) to Stevenage Starlets FC for the purchase of equipment;
- (4) That, should the Ward Members not allocate funding to Stevenage Starlet FC a further discussion take place at the next meeting of this Committee.

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

30 EXPERIENCES REGARDING THE NEW WASTE CONTRACT

Audio recording – Start of Item – 53 minutes 54 seconds

The Chairman led a discussion regarding the new Waste Contract.

She advised that the comments of this Committee would be forwarded to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting due to be held on 18 September 2018 at which the Waste Contract would be discussed.

Members discussed the recent experiences of Southern Rural residents regarding the operation of the Waste Contract and made the following observations:

- The “collect and return service”, for those vulnerable people unable to place their bins out for collection, which had worked under the previous contract, was not now happening. This meant that vulnerable people were having difficulty getting their bins collected.
- The same properties are experiencing problems week on week with the garden waste and food caddy services.
- The contractors are not collecting bins from properties in small closes, even when the residents leave the bins at the previously agreed collection point. The residents in these areas only get the bins collected if they walk them to the main road.
- Outlying houses were being regularly missed.
- Residents living in narrow roads or roads with tight turning spaces are not having their bins collected although they had been collected under the previous contract. Officers had been consulted and advised that smaller lorries should be sent to collect bins from these properties.
- Members were pleased that the food caddy service had been introduced. However, food caddy collection was a problem. The contract operatives had advised that they used small vehicles to collect this waste, which meant they had to unload in Buntingford and return to continue the round. This meant that they could run out of time to complete a round.
- It was the recyclables and brown bins that caused the most problems.
- New residents, particularly those in new houses and those requiring replacements are not receiving bins, despite requesting them.
- Residents who have not taken up the garden waste service have not had their bins collected, despite requesting removal.
- Urbaser seemed to have a high turnover of agency staff resulting in a lack of knowledge of the rounds.
- Whole roads are missed.
- Residents who have not paid for the garden waste collection are getting their bins collected resulting in those who have paid being very dissatisfied.
- Contacting Urbaser by phone remains a major problem with residents and Councillors waiting 30 – 40 minutes for the phone to be answered.
- Members would like data about how many calls are received by Urbaser, the average length of time spent waiting for calls to be answered, the average length of a call and how many calls are abandoned.
- Paid for bulky waste collections have been collected late.
- Waste crews are tipping paper waste into the recycling when collecting causing residents to question why they are separating their waste. Members queried how much paper was removed from the general recycling as a result.

RECOMMENDED TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: That the comments made by the Southern Rural Committee, as noted above, be considered when discussing the new waste contract at the meeting due to be held on 18 September 2018.

REASON FOR DECISION: To enable the Southern Rural Committee to inform the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of issues in the Southern Rural area regarding the new waste contract.

31 WARD MATTERS AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS - MEMBERS' REPORTS

Audio recording – Start of Item – 1 hour 18 minutes

Rands Educational Foundation

Councillor Strong have a brief verbal presentation regarding the work of the Rands Educational Foundation.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Spencer-Smith.

Hitchin Educational Foundation

Councillor Strong have a brief verbal presentation regarding the work of the Hitchin Educational Foundation.

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm

Chairman