

**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**LETCHWORTH COMMITTEE**

**MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES,  
GERNON ROAD, LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY  
ON WEDNESDAY, 19TH JUNE, 2019 AT 7.30 PM**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** *Councillors Gary Grindal (Chairman), Helen Oliver (Vice-Chairman), Daniel Allen, Kate Aspinwall, Morgan Derbyshire, Terry Hone, David Levett, Ian Mantle, Sean Prendergast, Sue Ngwala and Adem Ruggiero-Cakir*

**In Attendance:** *Claire Morgan (Community Engagement Team Leader), Lea Ellis (Assistant Community Engagement Officer), Katie Staddon (Assistant Community Engagement Officer) and Hilary Dineen (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager)*

**Also Present:** *At the commencement of the meeting approximately 8 members of the public.*

**4 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

*Audio recording – Start of Item – 45 seconds*

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mike Rice and Deepak Sangha.

**5 MINUTES - 5 DECEMBER 2018**

*Audio recording – Start of Item – 1 minute 7 seconds*

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 5 December 2018 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

**6 MINUTES - 6 MARCH 2019**

*Audio recording – Start of Item – 1 minute 17 seconds*

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 6 March 2019 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

**7 MINUTES - 21 MAY 2019**

*Audio recording – Start of Item – 1 minute 39 seconds*

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 21 May 2019 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

## 8 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

*Audio recording – Start of Item – 2 minutes 2 seconds*

There was no other business notified.

## 9 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Audio recording – Start of Item – 2 minutes 26 seconds*

- (1) The Chairman thanked those who attended Town Talk and welcomed those who were speaking at Public Participation;
- (2) The Chairman thanked those who were no longer Members of this Committee, former Councillors Julian Cunningham, Paul Marmont and Lynda Needham;
- (3) The Chairman welcomed Councillors Morgan Derbyshire, Sean Prendergast and Adem Ruggerio-Cakir who were new to the Committee;
- (4) The Chairman advised that, in accordance with Council policy this meeting was being audio recorded. Members of the public and the press may use their devices to film/photograph, or do a sound recording of the meeting. Please do not use flash and disable any sound notifications that may emit from your device.
- (5) Members were reminded that any declarations of interest in respect of any business set out in the agenda, should be declared as either a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Declarable 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 Disclosable Pecuniary Interest must withdraw from the meeting for the duration of the item. Members declaring a Declarable Interest, wishing to exercise a 'Councillor Speaking Right', must declare this at the same time as the interest, move to the public area before speaking to the item and then must leave the room before the debate and vote.

## 10 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - KIP EDUCATION

*Audio recording – Start of Item – 6 minutes 45 seconds*

Ms Charlotte Gordon, KIP Education, thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee and gave a PowerPoint presentation regarding their grant application.

The following Members asked questions, which were answered by Ms Gordon:

- Councillor Sue Ngwala;
- Councillor Kate Aspinwall;
- Councillor Daniel Allen;
- Councillor Helen Oliver.

The Chairman thanked Ms Gordon for her presentation.

**11 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - SMALL ACTS OF KINDNESS**

*Audio recording – Start of Item – 21 minutes 25 seconds*

Mr Chris Hamill, Small Acts of Kindness, thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee and gave a verbal presentation regarding their application for grant funding.

The following Members asked questions, which were answered by Mr Hamill:

- Councillor Gary Grindal;
- Councillor David Levett;
- Councillor Ian Mantle;
- Councillor Sean Prendergast

The Chairman thanked Mr Hamill for his presentation.

**12 LETCHWORTH TOWN CENTRE BID MANAGER**

*Audio recording – Start of Item – 41 minutes 6 seconds*

Prior to the item being discussed Councillor David Levett declared a disclosable interest in that he was a Director of the Letchworth BID. He advised that, as no decision was required, he would remain in the room for the presentation.

Mr Chris Wilson, Letchworth Garden City BID Manager, thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee and gave a verbal presentation regarding the issues and activities in Letchworth Town Centre and drew attention to the following:

- He had been in post since 1 April 2019;
- Anti social behaviour had been a focus, with a meeting taking place. An alert group had been set up and banning orders and exclusion notices were now able to be used;
- Herts County YC had set up an outreach service in the Town Centre to engage with the young people;
- Events in the near future included the Food Festival and the Vintage Festival;
- There was a movement to reinstate the Letchworth Carnival, which was being looked at.

The following Members asked questions, which were answered by Mr Wilson and Councillor Levett

- Councillor Gary Grindal;
- Councillor Daniel Allen;
- Councillor Sue Ngwala;
- Councillor Terry Hone.

The Chairman thanked Mr Wilson for his presentation.

### 13 GRANTS AND COMMUNITY UPDATE

*Audio recording – Start of Item – 50 minutes 31 seconds*

The Community Engagement Team Leader presented the report entitled Grants and Community Update and drew attention to the following:

- Restructure of the Community Engagement Team;
- Review of the Grants criteria

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor David Levett.

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee endorses the actions taken by the Community Engagement officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being for Letchworth.

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

### 14 GRANT APPLICATION - KIP EDUCATION

*Audio recording – Start of Item – 53 minutes 46 seconds*

The Community Engagement Team Leader advised that matched funding of £5,000 was being provided to KIP Education from the Police and Crime Commissioners fund

The following Members asked questions and entered into the debate:

- Councillor Gary Grindal

It was proposed, seconded and

**RESOLVED:** That grant funding of £1,200 be awarded to Kip Education CIC to cover the cost of providing workshops in secondary schools regarding awareness of gangs and knife crime.

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

### 15 GRANT APPLICATION - SMALL ACTS OF KINDNESS

*Audio recording – Start of Item – 57 minutes 59 seconds*

The Community Engagement Team Leader advised that Letchworth and Royston had been identified as the places in North Hertfordshire with the largest population of elderly and frail people.

The sum of £1,800 was being requested from this Committee and a further application was being made to the Royston and District Committee.

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

- Councillor David Levett;
- Councillor Daniel Allen

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It was proposed by Councillor Levett that grant funding of £3,600 be awarded with £1,800 being released this year and £1,800 next year

Councillor Derbyshire seconded the proposal

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That, subject to (2) below, grant funding of £3,600 be awarded to Small Acts of Kindness towards the care packages for socially isolated frail elderly in Letchworth;
- (2) That in respect of (1) above £1,800 be made available to Small Acts of Kindness as soon as possible and £1,800 be paid to the organisation in June 2020.

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

**16 INFORMATION NOTE - CHRISTMAS TREES IN LETCHWORTH**

*Audio recording – Start of Item – 1 hour 3 minutes 38 seconds*

The Chairman introduced the Information Note entitled Christmas Trees in Letchworth.

The District Council would in future provide some fund to Letchworth BID to purchase a Christmas Tree for the Town.

The Council also traditionally provided a Christmas tree to Garden House Hospice, although they have indicated that a tree was not required this year as they had building works planned.

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Terry Hone;
- Councillor David Levett.

The key points of the discussion were:

- That discussions should be held with the Town Centre Manager to seek their view of placement of the tree;
- That consideration should be given to where the tree should be placed, wither in Broadway Gardens or the Town Centre.

**17 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - PLINSTON HALL**

*Audio recording – Start of Item – 1 hour 8 minutes 53 seconds*

Mr Oren Boder thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee and gave a verbal presentation regarding his vision for Plinston Hall as follows:

- He currently ran a theatre company in North West London that offered theatre events, training courses and workshops;
- He started making enquiries about Plinston Hall, that had been closed for some time;
- He opened discussions with Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation regarding bringing the Hall back into use for the arts;
- The plan was to have a dance studio, with sprung flooring, a recording studio, a media and broadcasting studio, café, Hackspace and a theatre space in order to make an arts hub;
- His research had shown that music improved peoples ability to learn new things;

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- The aim was apply this research in an educational framework to help people to enrich their learning;
- It was also planned to open a drama school in the Grammar School.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Gary Grindal;
- Councillor Sue Ngwala;
- Councillor David Levett;
- Councillor Daniel Allen;

In response to those questions Mr Boder advised that:

- That there was a lot of work required on the building;
- The plan was to have something up and running in early 2020;
- There was a 3-5 year plan to complete the whole project;
- The Heritage Foundation would complete the core works on the building, which they estimated would cost approx. £100K;
- He had many people and businesses interested in supporting the project and grant applications to the Arts Council and Sports England would be submitted;
- He had no concerns regarding competition from other theatres as the main activity would be for education.

The Chairman advised that he had visited Plinston Hall with Mr Boder and was very excited by the project.

The Chairman thanked Mr Boder for his presentation and asked that he keep the Committee updated with progress.

## **18 WARD MATTERS AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS - MEMBERS' REPORTS**

*Audio recording – Start of Item – 1 hour 24 minutes 30 seconds*

The Chairman introduced the item and Members gave reports on the following:

### Memorial to the Late Peter Underwood

Councillor Ian Mantle advised that on Tuesday 9 July 2019 at 11.00 am in Mrs Howard Hall a plaque would be unveiled in memory of the late Peter Underwood, who undertook much work to get that hall back into use as a community venue.

### Health Hub

Members noted that the Health Hub was going ahead, although this Committee had not been informed of any plans or been involved in any discussions.

The Chairman had discussed the situation with the Deputy Chief Executive.

Councillor Terry Hone advised that the Heritage Foundation was keen to get this project moving forward and that the scheme may include children's services and dentists.

### Plastics Recycling

Councillor David Levett advised that plastics recycling machine would be delivered in the next few weeks that would issue tokens in exchange for plastics deposited. This was partly funded by Section 106 funding.

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Councillor Terry Hone advised that NHDC had taken part in the Governments consultation on waste and recycling issues including deposit and returns schemes.

Letchworth Multi Storey Car Park

Councillor Daniel Allen noted that this car park was now being closed from 7pm each evening. There have been complaints from commuters and parking had increased on roads in the area. He queried when this early closing would stop.

Councillor Ian Mantle advised that he would be talking about this issue at a briefing he was attending on 20 June 2019.

Access to Meetings

Councillor Hone noted that the doors to the Council Offices were closed before meetings ended, which prevented people from getting into the building to attend meetings.

The Chairman advised that he would take this matter up with relevant officers

The meeting closed at 9.07 pm

Chairman