

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE

**MEETING HELD AS A VIRTUAL MEETING
ON THURSDAY, 25TH JUNE, 2020 AT 7.30 PM**

MINUTES

- Present:** *Councillors: David Barnard, John Bishop, George Davies, Steve Deakin-Davies, Faye Frost, Ian Moody, Lisa Nash, Claire Strong and Terry Tyler*
- In Attendance:** *Claire Morgan (Community Engagement Team Leader) and Hilary Dineen (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager)*
- Also Present:** *At the commencement of the meeting 2 members of the public, including registered speakers.*

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Audio Recording – 1 second

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager welcomed everyone to this virtual Southern Rural Committee that it was being conducted with Members and Officers at various locations, communicating via audio/video and online.

She then gave guidance as follows:

Attendance

A roll call was undertaken to ensure that all Members and Officers could hear and be heard.

Live Streaming

The meeting was being streamed live on the Council's You Tube channel. If live streaming failed the meeting would adjourn. If the live stream could not be restored within a reasonable period then the remaining business would be considered at a later date.

If for any reason the meeting was not quorate an Officer would notify attendees by interjecting the meeting. The meeting would adjourn immediately. Once the meeting was quorate the meeting would resume. If connection could not be restored within a reasonable period, then the remaining business would be considered at a later date.

Only Members present for the entire debate and consideration of an item were entitled to vote. If technology failed for a Member during the debate and they rejoined the meeting, they would not be able to vote on that item.

Noise interference

Electronic devices should be muted and all present should have the mute button on their tablet or computer activated when not speaking.

Rules of Debate

The raise hand button (located under participants) should be used to alert the Chair that you wish to speak. Please wait for the Chair to invite you to speak before doing so.

Voting

Voting would be undertaken using the Green tick for “Yes”, Red Cross for “No” and Blue Raise Hand for “abstain”, located in the participants section at the bottom of the screen. To enable the votes to be counted, votes should not be cleared until requested to do so.

Details of how Members voted will not be kept or minuted unless a Recorded Vote was requested or an individual requests that their vote be recorded, and it will not be heard or seen on the audio and YouTube recordings of the meeting.

2 ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR THE CIVIC YEAR 2020/21

Audio Recording – 3 minutes 3 seconds

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager called for nominations for Chair of the Southern Rural Committee for the Civic Year 2020/21

Councillor John Bishop proposed, Councillor George Davies seconded and it was:

RESOLVED: That Councillor Claire Strong be appointed as Chair of the Southern Rural Committee for the Civic Year 2020/21.

Councillor Claire Strong took the Chair.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio recording – 3 minutes 52 seconds

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Sam North.

4 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR FOR THE CIVIC YEAR 2020/21

Audio Recording – 3 minutes 58 seconds

The Chair called for nomination for Vice-Chair of the Southern Rural Committee for the Civic Year 2020/21.

Councillor Claire Strong, Councillor Ian Moody seconded and it was:

RESOLVED: That Councillor Faye Frost be appointed Vice-Chair of the Southern Rural Committee for the Civic Year 2020/21.

5 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio recording – 4 minutes 33 seconds

There was no other business notified.

6 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio recording – 4 minutes 42 seconds

- (1) The Chair welcomed those present. particularly speakers at Public Participation;
- (2) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council policy this meeting was being audio recorded as well as filmed. The audio recordings would be available to view on Mod.gov and the film recording via the NHDC YouTube channel.
- (3) Members were reminded to make declarations of interest before an item, the detailed reminder about this and speaking rights is set out under Chair's Announcements on the agenda.

7 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - YOUNG PEOPLE'S PUPPET THEATRE

Audio recording – 5 minutes 48 seconds

Ms Caitlin Duschenes, Young People's Puppet Theatre, thanked the Chair for the opportunity to address the Committee in support of their grant application as follows:

- The Young People's Puppet Theatre was a charity running 40 projects across the County;
- The planned project was for 25 children aged 9 -11 years in Breachwood Green;
- Each child would design and make a marionette, collaborate on set design and perform a show;
- Research found that every child developed a range of creative and transferrable skills, particularly disadvantaged children;
- It was particularly important to engage with children returning to school after the Coronavirus;
- Due to the prolonged lockdown children would not be used to using communication skills with peers;
- There was no other organisation in the County like this;
- The project was designed to be led by local people for the benefit of local people.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor David Barnard;
- Councillor Terry Tyler;
- Councillor Faye Frost.

In response to question Ms Duschenes advised:

- They were applying for grant funding of £1,500 with the total project costing £6,500;
- They had applied to Herts Community Foundation for funding and were looking for other sources of funding;
- Using high quality equipment helped children learn more and achieve more.

The Chair thanked Ms Duschenes for her presentation.

8 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - OFFLEY RECREATION AND COMMUNITY CENTRE

Audio Recording – 19 minutes 44 seconds

Mr Trevor Ward, Offley Recreation and Community Centre thanked the Chair for the opportunity to address the Committee in support of their grant application as follows:

- Having been involved with the club for many years and been Vice-Chair, he had taken on responsibility for the upkeep of the grounds since last year;
- The current mower was circa 30 years old;
- It was unsafe, with none of the modern safety features;
- The recreation ground was used for football, cricket, tennis and general exercise and recreation activities and had been well used during the Covid-19 pandemic.

NB: Councillor Barnard advised that he had given a grant from his HCC Locality Fund and would therefore not vote on the grant application.

The Chair thanked Mr Ward for his presentation.

9 GRANTS AND COMMUNITY UPDATE

Audio Recording – 24 minutes 50 seconds

The Community Engagement Team Leader presented the report entitled Grants and Community Update together with the associated appendix below:

- Appendix 1 - 2019/20 financial year budget sheet.

She drew attention to the following:

- The 2020/21 budget contains £8,700 in addition to the £6482 from 2019/20 provides a total budget of £15,182;
- There was a Covid-19 Community Support Fund available for groups such as the Knebworth Covid Response Team and Ickleford Community Larder to apply for grant funding;
- Members were asked to direct any enquiries from groups supporting Covid 19 related activities to the Community Engagement Team.
- The table at Paragraph 8.3 of the report listed the known groups providing a variety of activities in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

RESOLVED: That the actions taken by the Community Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being for the Southern Rural Area be endorsed.

REASON FOR DECISION: To ensure the Committee is kept informed of the work of the Community Engagement Team.

10 GRANT APPLICATION - YOUNG PEOPLE'S PUPPET THEATRE

Audio Recording – 27 minutes 1 second

It was proposed by Councillor Claire Strong, seconded by Councillor Ian Moody and:

RESOLVED: That grant funding of £1,533 be awarded to the Young People's Puppet Theatre towards a project based at Breachwood Green JMI in King's Walden as outlined in Paragraph 8.1.1 of the report.

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

11 GRANT APPLICATION - OFFLEY RECREATION AND COMMUNITY CENTRE

Audio Recording – 29 minutes 11 seconds

Councillor Barnard had previously advised that he had given Offley Recreation and Community Centre a grant from his HCC Locality Fund and would therefore not vote on the grant application.

It was proposed by Councillor Faye Frost, seconded by Councillor Claire Strong and:

RESOLVED: That grant funding of £ £2,000 be awarded to Offley Recreation and Community Centre towards the purchase of a commercial standard lawn mower as outlined in Paragraph 8.1.2 of the report.

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

12 WARD MATTERS AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS - MEMBERS' REPORTS

Audio Recording – 35 minutes 51 seconds

The following issues were discussed:

Parish Council Meetings During Lockdown

Councillor Claire Strong advised that Parish matters had been relatively quiet during lockdown, with some Parish Council's meeting remotely and others having suspended meetings.

Fly-tipping

Councillor David Barnard informed Members that fly-tipping had escalated dramatically during the Covid-19 pandemic and expressed concern that NHDC officers did not seem to be receiving the support of the Police.

Drug dealing activity

Councillor David Barnard advised that there seemed to be a high increase in drug dealing in the villages. The Police were aware of this problem.

He suggested that the Police be invited to a future meeting to explain actions being taken regarding this and fly-tipping.

Councillor Claire Strong advised that she had attended the Police Priority Setting meetings and that fly-tipping and higher police visibility were priorities for them. She would however bring up these issues at the next meeting.

2020 Year of Culture

Councillor Steve Deakin-Davies drew Members attention to the 2020 Year of Culture and asked what NHDC was doing to support this initiative.

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Council and Committee Meetings

Councillor Faye Frost queried how long it would be until meetings were again held face to face.

The meeting closed at 8.17 pm

Chair