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NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

ROYSTON AND DISTRICT COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD IN THE HARDWICKE HALL, ROYSTON TOWN HALL, MELBOURN
ROAD, ROYSTON

ON WEDNESDAY, 9TH JUNE, 2021 AT 7.30 PM

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors: Councillor Tony Hunter (Chair), Councillor Sarah Dingley (Vice-Chair), Ruth Brown, Adam Compton, Jean Green, Gerald Morris and Carol Stanier*

In Attendance: *Ashley Hawkins (Community Engagement Officer) and Anna Gouveia (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer)*

Also Present: *At the commencement of the meeting 2 members of the public, including registered speakers.*

1 WELCOME

Audio recording – 1 second

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer welcomed everyone to the Royston and District Committee meeting.

2 ELECTION OF A CHAIR FOR THE CIVIC YEAR 2021/22

Audio recording – 16 seconds

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer called for nominations for Chair of the Royston and District Committee for the Civic Year 2021/22.

Councillor Gerald Morris proposed, Councillor Jean Green seconded, and there being no further nominations it was:

RESOLVED: That Councillor Tony Hunter be appointed Chair of Royston and District Committee for the Civic Year 2021/22.

Councillor Tony Hunter thanked the Committee for the nomination and took the Chair.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio recording – 1 minute 32 seconds

No apologies for absence had been received.

4 ELECTION OF A VICE-CHAIR FOR THE CIVIC YEAR 2021/22

Audio recording – 1 minute 39 seconds

The Chair called for nominations for Vice-Chair of the Royston and District Committee for the Civic Year 2021/22.

Councillor Tony Hunter proposed, Councillor Adam Compton seconded and there being no further nominations it was:

RESOLVED: That Councillor Sarah Dingley be appointed Vice-Chair of Royston and District Committee for the Civic Year 2021/22.

5 MINUTES - 17 MARCH 2021

Audio Recording – 2 minutes 44 seconds

Councillor Tony Hunter proposed, Councillor Jean Green seconded and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 17 March 2021 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

6 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio recording – 3 minutes 7 seconds

There was no other business notified.

7 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio recording – 3 minutes 15 seconds

- (1) The Chair welcomed those present at the meeting, especially those who had attended to give a presentation;
- (2) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be audio recorded;
- (3) The Chair 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 Chair welcomed newly-elected Councillors Sarah Dingley and Adam Compton to the Committee.

8 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - ROYSTON COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Audio recording – 3 minutes 58 seconds

Ms Gillian Morland, Royston Community Association, thanked the Chair for the opportunity to address the Committee in support of the grant application and gave a presentation including:

- The Association was seeking £1500 for the purchase of 30 padded chairs for the Coombes Community Centre in Burns Road;
- The set of chairs which was currently in use had been declared a fire risk during an inspection 3 to 4 years ago;
- The Association was a registered charity which had struggled financially during the last year with the pandemic.

The following Members commented and asked questions:

- Councillor Adam Compton;
- Councillor Sarah Dingley;

- Councillor Tony Hunter.

Ms Morland answered questions from Members as follows:

- The new chairs would be fire retardant and stackable which meant they were less likely to rip and create a fire hazard;
- They had been sourced on the internet and were considered to represent good value;
- They were comfortable and were expected to last a long time.

The Chair thanked Ms Morland for her presentation.

9 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - ROYSTON TOWN YOUTH FOOTBALL CLUB

Audio recording – 9 minutes 3 seconds

Ms Simone Robinson, Royston Town Youth Football Club, thanked the Chair for the opportunity to address the Committee in support of the grant application and gave a presentation including:

- The Club was the main user of the Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) at King James Academy which it used in the evenings from Tuesday to Friday, coaching football to children and young people from ages 3 to 18;
- The Club was seeking funding of £794 towards the cost of replacing both AGP nets;
- The existing nets had holes in them which represented a safety hazard for the children while playing football.

The following Members commented and asked questions:

- Councillor Ruth Brown;
- Councillor Sarah Dingley;
- Councillor Tony Hunter.

Ms Robinson answered questions from Members as follows:

- The Club was looking for funding to replace the AGP in future at a total cost of approximately £200,000;
- Over 500 children from Royston were catered for by the Club each week.

The Chair thanked Ms Robinson for her application.

10 GRANTS & COMMUNITY UPDATE

Audio recording – 13 minutes 28 seconds

The Community Engagement Officer presented the report entitled Grants and Community Update together with the following appendix:

- Appendix 1 – 2021/2 Financial Year Budget Sheet

He advised Members that:

- The total budget for the Committee for the year was £7,145, made up of the £6,000 base budget and £1,145 carried forward from last year;
- £1,500 had already been taken out of the budget for the Free After Three parking initiative;

- If the Committee was minded to award the grants as requested at this meeting and continued to fund the Free After 3pm parking initiative, this would leave a remaining budget of £3,351 for the rest of the year.

Councillor Tony Hunter clarified for newly-elected Members that the Committee had to be mindful that £1,500 funding for the Free After 3pm parking initiative would come out of the budget before the next financial year.

Councillor Tony Hunter proposed, Councillor Jean Green seconded and it was:

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

11 GRANT APPLICATION - ROYSTON COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Audio recording – 16 minutes 15 seconds

Prior to consideration of the item, Councillors Tony Hunter and Carol Stanier declared a declarable interest as North Herts District Council representatives on the Association and advised that they would not vote on this item.

The Community Engagement Officer advised the Committee on the following:

- Royston Community Association was seeking £1,500 (overall project cost of £1,800) for 30 new padded, stackable chairs, required following a health and safety inspection which concluded that the current chairs did not meet the required fire safety standards;
- This was the first time that the Association had approached the Committee for funding;
- The difficulties faced by community centres during the pandemic was acknowledged.

The following Members asked questions and took part in debate:

- Councillor Ruth Brown;
- Councillor Tony Hunter;
- Councillor Gerald Morris.

The following points were raised in debate:

- As the grant application represented nearly 30% of the Committee's budget for the year, two tranches of funding could be considered;
- Buying fewer chairs or 30 chairs at a lower cost could be an alternative option;
- The real need for the 30 chairs at the Community Centre was acknowledged.

In response to points raised Ms Morland advised that:

- The Association had received government grants totalling £17,500 for loss of income during the pandemic which had enabled them to stay open;
- Buying chairs in two tranches may mean they would not all match;
- All 30 of the current chairs needed to be replaced to be fire safety compliant.

Councillor Ruth Brown proposed, Councillor Adam Compton seconded and it was:

RESOLVED: That grant funding of £1,500 be awarded to Royston Community Association to assist with costs for the purchase of 30 new padded and stackable chairs for the Coombes Community Centre.

12 GRANT APPLICATION - ROYSTON TOWN YOUTH FOOTBALL CLUB

Audio recording – 24 minutes 01 seconds

Prior to consideration of the item, Councillor Carol Stanier declared a declarable interest in that her son played for the Royston Town Youth Football Club and advised that she would not take part in the debate or vote on this item.

The Community Engagement Officer advised the Committee on the following:

- Royston Town Youth Football Club was seeking funding of £794 to replace two pitch divider nets;
- It had been a difficult time for the Football Club which had lost income during the pandemic;
- The Club supported over 500 children in Royston, ages 3 to 18, male and female;
- The Club had received match funding from County Council with the condition that match funding was granted by the Royston and District Committee.

The following Members took part in debate:

- Councillor Adam Compton;
- Councillor Tony Hunter;
- Councillor Ruth Brown.

The following points were made by Members in debate:

- Should the nets not be replaced, it was likely that the Club's insurance premiums would go up, or a claim would be made against the insurance following an incident caused by the unsafe nets;
- The Committee could consider increasing the grant given to bring it closer to the £900 offered by County Council;
- The Club served many youngsters and it was great to see them engaged in something active and outdoors;
- There was a safety issue with the nets;
- The nets were also used by the hockey club and others;
- There was some concern over the longevity of the pitch but it was clear that the Club was working to address the matter of a new pitch.

Ms Robinson confirmed that the Club had Football Association (FA) insurance above the basic level to ensure the club and children were well covered.

Councillor Adam Compton proposed, Councillor Ruth Brown seconded and it was:

RESOLVED: That grant funding of £794 be awarded to Royston Town Youth Football Club to assist with costs for the purchase of replacement pitch divider nets for the artificial pitch facility at King James Academy.

13 HIGHWAYS ISSUES

Audio recording – 28 minutes 48 seconds

The Chair led a discussion regarding Highways Issues.

County Councillor Fiona Hill gave the Committee a verbal update on some of the major highways works and projects which were underway including:

- Kneesworth Street near the railway bridge at the station was now resurfaced and a number of other areas had also been carried out which had been on hold due to utility works;
- Other carriageway works were planned on The Ridings, Green Street near Gage Close and Morton Street, and Grange Bottom, also on London Road, the A10 Melbourn Road and Royston Bypass, as well as various schemes in the villages;
- Footpath resurfacing works were programmed for this financial year in Coltsfoot Drive, Lingfield Road, Wheatfield Crescent and Kingsway;
- Proposals for safety improvements in Burns Road near the Community Centre were awaited, following the Feasibility Study there regarding speeding and safety issues;
- Also looking at moving one of the speed indicator devices or putting another one in at Melbourn Road which would compound the work going on with Drivesafe;
- The A505 safer crossing work was ongoing. This was a cross-party, cross-border project which had approval from the Greater Cambridge Partnership and the Melbourn Greenway was being progressed – it was hoped that this would continue after recent changes in administration;
- Grass cutting had been taking place along the A505 and was not yet completed and some litter picking had been carried out at the same time while one lane of the carriageway was closed;
- Various drainage issues in the system were earmarked for work soon, as reported at the previous meeting;
- Regarding yellow lines at Layston Park, the consultation had been carried out and ways of addressing the issues were being looked at;
- The idea of a safer refuge on the Baldock Road was being progressed and on the A505 some of the improvements had been carried out between Royston and Baldock with others planned;
- Speed checks were being carried out, working with the Police, wherever possible in various areas in Royston and the villages.

The following Member asked a question:

- Councillor Sarah Dingley

County Councillor Hill confirmed that a Feasibility Study had been carried out at Burns Road and safety improvement proposals were now awaited from Hertfordshire County Council, and the Committee would be kept updated. There was the possibility of a speed table by the Community Centre near Hardy Drive.

Councillor Dingley thanked County Councillor Hill for all the work she had done in this area.

The Chair thanked County Councillor Hill for her comprehensive report.

14 WARD MATTERS AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS - MEMBERS' REPORTS

Audio recording – 34 minutes 51 seconds

The Chair led a discussion on ward matters and outside organisations. The following issues were discussed:

Royston First BID

Councillor Ruth Brown advised that:

- The BID had held its AGM on 28 April 2021;

- It had done exceptionally well at getting the levy in, achieving something like 95% of its income, and had received a top-up from government grants to make up the rest;
- Its financial position was better than expected at this stage with £150,000 to spend on projects in the coming year - £20,000 would go on new projects and the rest would go on existing projects such as policing (e.g. Operation Artemis - policing on the industrial area), parking, Town Centre trails (one was coming soon), the Information Centre and the safe re-opening project between North and East Herts which had also received some funding from the EU;
- The Shop Safe, Shop Local campaign was being marketed with brochures being delivered to households – there were three phases to the re-opening of the High Street and Town Centre with lots of things planned.

The Chair conveyed the thanks of the Committee to the North Herts officers who had been working to get the money in on behalf of the BID.

Black Squirrel Access Point

Councillor Sarah Dingley advised that:

- The Black Squirrel Access Point had re-opened at the Coombes Community Centre;
- It had been quite quiet but was usually busy in August as lots of people needed grants for uniforms.

Coombes Community Centre Re-opening

Councillor Carol Stanier advised that:

- The re-opening of the Coombes Community Centre seemed to be going well;
- People were impressed with the cleanliness of the Centre, the hirings were picking up again and the future was looking brighter.

Melbourn Area Youth Development

Councillor Carol Stanier advised that:

- They had planned to have a course over half-term but had to cancel that due to lack of interest (thought to be due to many people going away over half-term);
- There would be a meeting soon to discuss the plans for the summer holidays;
- Due to a change in staffing, the provider Groundwork were not able to offer quite as much or provide as much flexibility as they could in the past;
- They had some exciting things on offer.

Evangelical Church Youth Club

Councillor Sarah Dingley advised that:

- The Evangelical Church had started their youth club that day;
- It was good to see some youth club provision in Royston, in the Palace area.

The meeting closed at 8.10 pm

Chair

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