



09 July 2021

Our Ref Cabinet Panel CE&CD/19.07.21
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To: Members of the Committee: Judi Billing MBE (Joint Chair), Sam Collins (Joint Chair), Daniel Allen, Ruth Brown, Sarah Dingley, Jean Green, Tony Hunter, Mandi Tandi and Kay Tart

Substitutes: Councillors Ian Albert, Juan Cowell, Michael Muir, Lisa Nash and Terry Tyler

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN OF A

**MEETING OF THE CABINET PANEL ON COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT AND COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

to be held as

A VIRTUAL MEETING

On

MONDAY, 19TH JULY, 2021 AT 7.30 PM

Yours sincerely,

Jeanette Thompson
Service Director – Legal and Community

****MEMBERS PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU DOWNLOAD ALL AGENDAS AND REPORTS VIA THE MOD.GOV APPLICATION ON YOUR TABLET BEFORE ATTENDING THE MEETING****

Agenda **Part I**

Item	Page
1. WELCOME AND REMOTE/PARTLY REMOTE MEETINGS PROTOCOL SUMMARY Members are requested to ensure that they are familiar with the attached summary of the Remote/Partly Remote Meetings Protocol. The full Remote/Partly Remote Meetings Protocol has been published and is available here: https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/council-and-democracy/council-and-committee-meetings .	(Pages 5 - 6)
2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Members are required to notify any substitutions by midday on the day of the meeting. Late substitutions will not be accepted and Members attending as a substitute without having given the due notice will not be able to take part in the meeting.	
3. MINUTES - 7 JUNE 2021 To take as read and approve as a true record the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on the 7 June 2021.	(Pages 7 - 12)
4. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS Members are 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 Chair 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.	
5. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS Members should notify the Chair of other business which they wish to be discussed at the end of either Part I or Part II business set out in the agenda. They must state the circumstances which they consider justify the business being considered as a matter of urgency. The Chair will decide whether any item(s) raised will be considered.	
6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION Members of the public to introduce themselves and their organisations.	

7. **INFORMATION NOTE AND GROUP DISCUSSION** (Pages
INFORMATION NOTE OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR – COMMERCIAL 13 - 14)

To consider the Information Note entitled 'Utilising Social Media Platforms for Effective Community Engagement'.

8. **MEMBERS' DISCUSSION**

The Chair to lead a Members' discussion on potential actions arising from the Group Discussion.

9. **ACTIONS ARISING AND WORK PROGRAMME**

To record any actions arising from the Group Discussion for inclusion in the Panel's Work Programme for 2021/22.

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REMOTE/PARTLY REMOTE MEETINGS PROTOCOL SUMMARY

A protocol regarding remote meetings has been devised as a result of The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 No.392 ('the Regulations') to provide guidance for the conduct of any remote meeting of the Council, and its various Committees and Sub-Committees, held under the provisions of the Regulations and subsequent changes to the Constitution.

The full Remote / Partly Remote Meetings Protocol has been published and is available to view on the Council's website via the following link: <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/council-and-democracy/council-and-committee-meetings>

The Council's adopted Constitution will continue to apply to meetings of the Council and its various Committees and Sub-Committees. Where there is a conflict between the protocol and Constitution the Constitution takes precedence.

The protocol applies to this meeting. It outlines processes for conducting remote meetings. Some key points are highlighted here for guidance:

- Prior to the start of a meeting the Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer/Manager ('The Officer') will confirm the meeting is being streamed live. They will confirm that they can see and hear all participating Members, Officers and/or members of the public at the start or upon reconvening a meeting.
- Any person attending the meeting remotely should join no later than 15 minutes prior to allow for technical checks. They should ensure that their name on screen appears in the agreed format, as indicated in the Protocol. They should mute their microphone when not speaking. Their background should be nondescript or virtual/blurred if possible. Headsets are recommended to reduce audio feedback.
- Remember to stay in view of the camera. While on camera everything you do is visible; please observe as far as possible the etiquette you would as if attending a meeting in person.
- Be careful to prevent exempt or confidential papers being seen within the video-feed. When a meeting is in private session there should be only those entitled to be present in the room. The live stream will continue with a holding card displayed.
- If a Member wishes to speak, they should use the raise hand function. Please wait to be invited by the Chair to address the meeting. The normal procedure rules with respect to debate and speaking times will apply as per the Constitution.
- If a Member has declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and is required to leave the meeting during the consideration of an item, they will be placed in the waiting room. It is the responsibility of the Member in question to remind the Chair at the start of such item. The Officer will remind the Chair to return the Member as appropriate.
- Members will need to use the tools in the "Participants" function to vote: using a green tick to indicate 'for', a red cross to indicate 'against', or the "raise hand" tool to indicate an abstention. Where a Member has had to dial into the meeting by telephone, the Chair will ask for verbal confirmation as to how they wish to vote. Leave the vote in situ until told otherwise by either the Chair or Officer.
- The Officer will clearly state the result of the vote and the Chair will then move on.
- Details of how Members voted will not be kept or minuted unless a Recorded Vote is requested or an individual requests that their vote be recorded, although voting may be seen and/or heard on the video recording.
- If there are Part 2 (confidential) items Members will be invited to join a breakout room for these items. You must accept this invitation.
- Once Part 2 (confidential) discussions have concluded Members will need to leave the breakout room. Please do not leave the meeting.

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Agenda Item 3

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET PANEL ON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT

**MEETING HELD AS A VIRTUAL MEETING
ON MONDAY, 7TH JUNE, 2021 AT 7.30 PM**

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors: Judi Billing MBE (Join Chair) and Sam Collins (Joint Chair), Daniel Allen, Ruth Brown, Sarah Dingley, Tony Hunter and Ian Albert (In place of Kay Tart)*

In Attendance: *Claire Morgan (Community Engagement Team Leader) and Danny Pearson (Assistant Community Engagement Officer), Hilary Dineen (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager) and Anna Gouveia (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer)*

Also Present: *At the commencement of the meeting approximately 21 members of the public, including registered speakers.*

1 WELCOME AND REMOTE/PARTLY REMOTE MEETINGS PROTOCOL SUMMARY

Audio recording 14 seconds

The Chair welcomed everyone to this virtual Cabinet Panel on Community Engagement and Co-operative Development meeting that was being conducted with Members, Officers and Arts and Culture Representatives at various locations, communicating via audio/video and online, and advised that there was the opportunity for the public and press to listen and view proceedings.

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer undertook a roll call and referred Members to the Remote/Partly Remote Meetings Protocol Summary included with the agenda and the full version which was available on the Council's website which included information regarding:

- Live Streaming;
- Noise Interference;
- Rules of Debate; and
- Voting.

The Joint-Chair, Councillor Judi Billing, started the meeting proper.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio recording – 6 minutes 20 seconds

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Kay Tart.

Having given due notice Councillor Ian Albert advised that he would be substituting for Councillor Tart.

3 MINUTES - 21 OCTOBER TO 09 NOVEMBER 2020

Audio recording – 6 minutes 29 seconds

Councillor Judi Billing proposed, Councillor Keith Hoskins seconded and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meetings of the Committee held on 21 October 2021 and 09 November 2021 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

4 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio recording – 8 minutes 03 seconds

- (1) The Chair advised that the meeting was about Community Engagement with a focus on the Arts. The meeting would take the form of a discussion on how arts providers, and their audiences, planned to recover from the pandemic and how to thrive in the new world;
- (2) The Chair welcomed those present at the meeting, especially those attending from arts and culture organisations from across the district;
- (3) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be audio recorded as well as filmed. The audio recording would be available on the Council's website and the film recording via the NHDC YouTube channel;
- (4) 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;
- (5) The Chair welcomed Councillor Sam Collins as the new Joint Chair of the Panel, and thanked Councillor Keith Hoskins for all his work as Joint Chair during the previous civic year.

5 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio recording – 9 minutes 24 seconds

There was no other business notified.

6 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - INTRODUCTIONS

Audio recording - 9 minutes 28 seconds

Representatives from arts and culture groups across the district briefly introduced themselves and their organisations as follows:

- Sarah Core, Co-ordinator for Digswell Arts Trust. The Trust provides hundreds of hours of arts education and artist studios for emerging artists. They currently have two sites – 'The Fenners' in Letchworth and 'The Forge' in Welwyn;
- Keiron Jones, representing Hitchin Folk Club. The club had been running in Hitchin for around 57 years, previously based at the Sun Hotel, but now had a new home at Hitchin Cricket Club where concerts had been held before lockdown;

Monday, 7th June, 2021

- James Willis, Independent Artist, Exhibiting Artist and Leader of Arts Education, Author, and contributor to Hitchin Festival and various other arts groups in the town. Currently working on a big exhibition next year in Hitchin with Carl Laubin the architectural painter;
- Sascha Gustard-Brown, Supporter Engagement Officer at Hitchin Town Football Club, assisting the club with improving and developing supporter and community engagement;
- Val Lawson, Artist, representing Herts Visual Arts which had been going for over 30 years. Held virtual events during lockdown, about to re-open exhibitions and open studios. Had seen a drop in membership due to the lack of live events and hoped this would reverse this year;
- Hilary Robertson, Local Musician, Writer and Teacher, volunteer at Benslow Music – wanting to help to get the arts going again after lockdown;
- Glyn Doggett, Actor and Producer, representing the Market Theatre in Sun Street, Mostly Comedy (comedy club) which was due to start again in July, Hitchin Festival and The Dell outdoor venue;
- Alison Gentle, representing Baldock Arts and Heritage Centre. They showcase local artists, support local studios, support festivals in the town and are currently seeking more volunteers;
- Christina Armstrong, Artist, representing Open Art Box which runs projects for people living with dementia and their carers. They set up an art box delivery service for home workshops during the pandemic. Looking to continue this as well as face-to-face workshops in the Mrs Howard Memorial Hall;
- Simon Efford, Chairman of Letchworth Garden City Eagles Football Club, which has around 600 players across 45-50 teams, a mix of mens, seniors, ladies, youth, boys and girls, with around 80 volunteers, supporting the local community;
- Rory Reynolds, Artistic Director of the Queen Mother Theatre which had been open for about 38 years. The theatre has a full programme of plays leading up until December and is involved in a new project linking up with locals schools around theatre technician training;
- Peter Hewitt from Benslow Music which had been operating for 90 years or so. The organisation was back up and running now after lockdown with short, residential courses for amateur musicians across the UK, and a concert series including the Hitchin Festival; income had ceased during lockdown;
- Adam Tyler, Writer, Director and Host of Hollowdell Media, an independent film making and podcast production company who had made their first professional short horror movie when lockdown happened at the time of release;
- Richard Clayton, Chairman of Royston Arts Society which had been going for 43 years and had 90 members. The society usually offered 2 painting sessions a month, around 9 professional art demos per year and a couple of exhibitions. During lockdown they had held three online exhibitions at roystonarts.org.uk; they were slowly opening up with socially distanced events;
- Carl Filby, Chair of Creative Royston, a not-for-profit organisation run by volunteers, which stages Royston Arts Festival during the last weekend of September each year;

- Stuart Sapsford, Director of Communities, Culture and Heritage at the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation. The Foundation is responsible for the Broadway Studio and Galleries, Garden City Collection, International Garden City Exhibition, and the museum at One Garden City in Letchworth, as well as a series of community programmes and activities including cultural learning; currently implementing a new operating model for arts, culture and heritage services and looking at driving a Culture Strategy for Letchworth;
- Tom Hardy, Hitchin Town Centre Manager, responsible for the Hitchin Business Improvement District (BID), working with businesses delivering events for the Town Centre with a lot happening from June onwards;
- Rebekah Nicolas, Hitchin Library Manager. Library membership is down due to lockdown and income generation also down. Events are planned for Hitchin Festival and the Summer Reading Challenge, with an artist in residence programme scheduled for the Autumn;
- Lee Simmons, Local Artist; attending as an observer and to offer up any ideas/thoughts;
- Anji Archer, Artist and Co-Director of Open Art Box, based in Stevenage and North Herts; also involved in other community and education partnerships and undertaking a doctorate in Fine Art at the University of Hertfordshire;
- Jim McNally representing Baldock Events Forum. The Forum organised events and also collaborated with and supported other events providers within Baldock.
- Kava Johnson representing North Herts Diversity and Culture Group, also a Fine Artist with a studio. Many events for Black History Month had been deferred or held online. There were a lot of events planned for the future such as exhibitions and workshops.

7 INFORMATION NOTE AND GROUP DISCUSSION

Audio recording – 32 minutes 33 seconds

The Chair led a discussion on how arts providers, and their audiences, planned to recover from the pandemic and how to thrive in the new world.

Comments included:

- Hertfordshire Year of Culture 2020 had not been able to take place as planned due to the Covid-19 pandemic;
- North Herts had a fantastic arts and culture community and the purpose of this meeting was to connect people with the aim of keeping the sector buoyant in spite of the pandemic and to give mutual support to each other to keep the arts thriving;
- Some podcast audiences had decreased during lockdown, but were starting to build up again;
- A short online film festival launched during the first lockdown had a good response;
- The theatre was seeing a tentative return and numbers had to be limited, including cast numbers;
- Many people needed reassurance to return to arts events and this benefitted from a slow approach;
- The Queen Mother Theatre could be used as a venue for the next meeting of this group;
- Some artists had found it hard to be creative during the pandemic and the return to the studios had been managed sensitively and led to a sense of kindness – creativity was fragile and needed to be supported;

- People were desperate to come back to music courses and musicians were thrilled to play to live small audiences again. Live streaming had picked up people from all over the world; a blend of online and physical delivery of music performances/courses at Benslow Music was envisaged in future;
- Royston Arts Festival was keen to return to live performances due to the technical demands of online operation; online concerts commissioned with local artists did not attract as large an attendance as they would have done in person;
- Baldock Events Forum was thinking about moving towards a more collaborative model in terms of running festivals and mixing areas of the arts. This had been successful in Baldock, working with other events organisers and suppliers to provide joint ventures;
- Open Art Box collaborated with the North Herts and Stevenage Museums which had encouraged participants to visit the museum;
- It would be useful to have a network of rentable spaces which arts and culture organisations could use for rehearsals, filming, screening films, exhibitions, etc.;
- One idea which had come out of recent meetings was to establish a district-wide artists and creatives network which would meet once a month, for a breakfast meeting for example; James Willis was gathering names but North Herts District Council could help to organise this; North Herts Museum had offered a space for the first meeting and the Market Theatre had also been offered once social distancing requirements were not required; the network would enable participants to support each other's projects, share facilities, resources, work on joint projects, etc.;
- Hitchin Football Club was keen to incorporate arts and culture its initiatives, particularly with the younger supporters and families, as a way of engaging with the community, with initiatives such as design a kit and design a painted rock. The club was keen to build partnerships and networks and collaborate with other organisations in Hitchin to bring arts and football together; they looking to work with local artists in the new children's zone 'The Aviary', and encouraged interested artists to get in touch;
- One positive of the pandemic was that it had brought community organisations together in some ways and Zoom did facilitate this in terms of attending meetings, particularly from a district-wide perspective;
- A lot of collaboration historically happened in the open studios in September and Herts Visual Arts was actively seeking partners willing to host a small group of artists with art which would be promoted on social media;
- The theme for the Summer Reading Challenge was Wild World Heroes which had potential for collaboration with arts organisations.

8 MEMBERS' DISCUSSION

Audio recording – 1 hour 12 minutes 45 seconds

The Chair led a discussion amongst Members on how the Council could support arts and culture organisations at the present time.

The following Members commented:

- Councillor Sam Collins;
- Councillor Tony Hunter;
- Councillor Daniel Allen;
- Councillor Sarah Dingley;
- Councillor Ruth Brown;
- Councillor Ian Albert.

Comments included:

- Following the recent election, Councillor Sam Collins had been appointed Executive Member of the Cabinet with responsibility for the Arts, and he considered the arts essential and crucial to everything we do;
- It was great to see the willingness of all the organisations to collaborate;
- In terms of collaboration spaces, there were some exciting opportunities which could be explored;
- The idea of a network or register where people could contact each other to discuss venues, collaboration, etc., was enthusiastically supported;
- It would be good to keep the new connections made during the pandemic going, i.e. connections that would not have happened without the pandemic;
- There was already a list of halls and community centres available for hire on the NHDC website;
- The forum was really valuable for networking and collaboration;
- The Council could work with local groups and use some of its resources, e.g. communications, to help publicise events;
- There was value in district meetings and local town meetings as well;
- The Council might be able to support some local groups with further tranches of pandemic grant funding from County Council and Government;
- The Council could support local groups in looking for community spaces, and what could be done to improve community facilities across the district and make better use of existing facilities;
- Thanks to all who attended and gave their ideas, there was some exciting work to take forward, and it had been a really useful discussion.

9 ACTIONS ARISING AND WORK PROGRAMME

Audio recording – 1 hour 19 minutes 30 seconds

The Assistant Community Engagement Officer advised that the main point to come out of the meeting had been the wish of all parties to continue to network and collaborate and North Herts District Council would undertake to facilitate this through the creation of an email distribution list and take it from there. He thanked all for attending.

The Community Engagement Team Leader advised that everyone would be 'blind copied' into an email to ask if they would like to be part of a distribution list to use as a networking group and then another joint working virtual meeting would be set up, looking at what time of day suited people best. The Council's Community Engagement Team would start this off and once up and running could hand it over to the group.

RESOLVED: That the Community Engagement Team Leader be requested to update the Work Programme with the following action point arising from the evening's discussion:

To create an email distribution list of arts and culture providers to facilitate further networking, with a view to setting up another virtual meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.59 pm

Chair

**CABINET PANEL ON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CO-OPERATIVE
DEVELOPMENT
19 JULY 2021**

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

**TITLE OF INFORMATION NOTE: UTILISING SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS FOR
EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

INFORMATION NOTE OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR COMMERCIAL

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

PRIORITY: BE A MORE WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE COUNCIL AND ENABLE AN
ENTERPRISING AND CO-OPERATIVE ECONOMY

1. SUMMARY

1.1 This note highlights proposed items scheduled in the work programme for the Cabinet Panel on Community Engagement and Co-operative Development for 2021/22 following the initial meeting.

2. STEPS TO DATE

2.1 The Cabinet Panel for Community Engagement and Co-operative Development held on Monday 9th November 2020, discussed Community Engagement in the age of Social Media. The following three questions were raised to facilitate discussion on this topic:

- Where and how do you get information from the Council?
- What is effective about the way the Council communicates?
- What is missing or could be improved about communication from the Council?

The minutes and outcomes of this meeting are available to view on line:

<https://democracy.north-herts.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=296&MId=2470&Ver=4>

3. INFORMATION TO NOTE

3.1 This Cabinet Panel will provide the opportunity for community partners and admin from local community social media groups to use the meeting as a sounding board and feedback on how the authority can best utilise all aspects of social media and online platforms to connect with the public.

3.1.1 The Service Director Commercial and Communications Manager will also provide a verbal update to the Panel where appropriate. The discussion will focus on:

- Brief update on plans for new NHDC website;
- Social media update including; the new Waste Warriors Facebook group and Artificial Intelligence tools to scan social media, to understand the key issues of importance to the community;
- Proposals to introduce a new online consultation / community engagement tools, as part of a forthcoming review of our consultation strategy.

- 3.2 The Panel will seek to ensure that consideration of agenda items minimises additional burdens on staff resources. Wherever possible, requests are made for the presentation of documents already in existence rather than the production of new documents specifically for the Panel.
- 3.3 Attendance from external bodies and members of the public is actively encouraged.
- 3.4 This is a non-decision-making advisory body and therefore this or any notes/reports to the Panel do not include a recommendation on a key Executive decision and have not been referred to in the Forward Plan. However, recommendations for action from the Panel for consideration by Cabinet may do so. This will therefore need to be borne in mind for any recommendations of the Panel.

4. NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 Other topics for consideration and inclusion in the Panel's work programme will be considered at each meeting. When considering additional topics, their risk assessment and prioritisation will ensure that the most appropriate items are taken forward to the work programme

5. APPENDICES

None

6. CONTACT OFFICERS

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7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None