

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

LETCHWORTH COMMITTEE

**MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES, GERONON ROAD, LETCHWORTH, SG6 3JF
ON WEDNESDAY, 21ST SEPTEMBER, 2022 AT 7.30 PM**

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors: Councillor Daniel Allen (Chair), Amy Allen, Morgan Derbyshire, David Levett, Ian Mantle, Tom Plater, Tamsin Thomas, Phil Weeder and Sean Nolan*

In Attendance: *Edward Leigh (Senior Transport Policy Officer), Danny Pearson (Assistant Community Engagement Officer) and Louis Mutter (Committee, Member & Scrutiny Officer)*

Also Present:

At the commencement of the meeting approximately 4 members of the public, including registered speakers.

56 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio recording – 0:55

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sean Prendergast, Terry Hone and Adem Ruggiero-Cakir.

57 MINUTES - 8 JUNE 2022

Audio Recording – 1:15

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 8 June 2022 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

58 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio recording – 2:18

There was no other business notified.

59 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio recording – 2:26

- (1) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be audio recorded;
- (2) 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.

60 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio recording – 3:20

A verbal presentation was given by Ms. Agata Kisicka on behalf of Nova Wellness CIC regarding their grant application, including the following key points:

- Ms. Kisicka is one of the directors of Nova Wellness CIC;
- Nova Wellness is a relatively new company, having been founded just over a year ago;
- Provide group therapeutic sessions both in Stevenage as well as in the local community of Hertfordshire;
- Also provide individual therapy such as acupuncture, chiropractic and massages; any excess profits from these sessions are reinvested in the community through community outreach events;
- The grant funding will be for group therapy sessions, which include: guided meditation, community acupuncture, qigong, mindful movement exercises and other massage therapies;
- Sessions aim to improve the well-being of community members;
- Now on the list of the social prescribing team in Hertfordshire; which has started referring clients to Nova Wellness events;
- The Committee granted grant funding to Nova Wellness last year for 4 wellbeing sessions in collaboration with Create Community Hub; actually delivered 6 after realising how beneficial they were.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor David Levett
- Councillor Tom Plater

In response to questions raised from Members, Ms. Kisicka advised:

- The funding will benefit 60 people; but it doesn't mean they will have just the one session. Most people who come to the sessions come to more than one;
- The application is for four sessions and three additional informal events; so slightly more than just 4 sessions.
- Can have up to 20-25 people per session;
- Participants would attend 2-3 sessions.

The Chair sought advice from the Assistant Community Engagement Officer on funding grants, to which he advised that usually Area Committees can go up to about £2000, knowing the budget isn't huge and has to last until the new year; he also reminded the Committee that full funding could be granted should Members wish.

Councillor Ian Mantle commented that the requested grant is too big a percentage of the total grant budget, while it is a worthy cause its not proportionate considering the other applicants. Councillor Mantle proposed that the Committee provide a smaller grant rather than the full amount, of £1500.

Councillor David Levett agreed with Councillor Ian Mantle's comment but felt £1000 would be more suitable.

Councillor Tom Plater echoed the suggestions of Councillor Mantle and Levett but instead felt half of the grant, £1700 would be suitable.

61 GRANT APPLICATION - NOVA WELLNESS CIC

Audio Recording: 18:15

Councillor Ian Mantle proposed and Councillor Morgan Derbyshire seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That grant funding of £1,500 be awarded to Nova Wellness CIC for help bringing holistic well-being therapy events to Letchworth.

62 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio Recording: 20:05

A verbal presentation was given by Ms. Hannah Lane on behalf of NCT North Herts regarding their grant application, including the following:

- Ms. Lane is a volunteer for the NCT North Herts branch;
- A national charity which supports new parents through the first 1000 days of parenthood;
- The NCT is best known for providing anti-natal courses across the country;
- The charity has a network of branches with around 5000 volunteers, providing support in form of groups and events in the local area;
- The local branch offers four baby and toddler groups, a sling and nappy library, first-aid courses and other events;
- One of the groups on offer is a breastfeeding and post-natal support group which takes place every first and third week at the Mrs. Howard Memorial Hall;
- Also runs a Hitchin version of this group on the second and fourth week;
- Each baby café is run by an NCT qualified, paid for, breastfeeding counsellor; plus a volunteer to provide support;
- Offers parents a social situation to discuss issues and meet others;
- Approx. 60-70 parents have attended the group; avg. of 5-8 people per session;
- Usually the NCT covers the cost through fundraising; but due to the pandemic the reserves have depleted.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor David Levett
- Councillor Daniel Allen

In response to questions from Members Ms. Lane advised:

- She did not have the exact details of the amount of reserves NCT North Herts had but could find out;
- The breastfeeding support network has been running for 4 years; it was originally in Baldock.

63 GRANT APPLICATION - NCT NORTH HERTS

Audio Recording: 25:50

Councillor Tamsin Thomas proposed and Councillor Amy Allen seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That grant funding of £920 be awarded to NCT North Herts for their breastfeeding and postnatal support group.

64 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio Recording: 26:40

A verbal presentation was given by the Assistant Community Engagement Officer on behalf of The Letchworth Centre for Healthy Living regarding their grant application, this included:

- The Letchworth Centre for Healthy Living provide wellbeing classes for all ages; a counselling service, therapy clinic, addressing mental health and wellbeing for young people and teachers with Mindfulness programmes, a wellbeing programme aimed at older people with mobility problems and more;
- Seeking funding for a disability ramp to provide access to their classroom building;
- Rail will benefit anyone who has difficulty mounting steps, people with mobility problems, wheelchair users and mothers with pushchairs;
- Planning on seeking the remaining funding for their own users and from fundraising events; from local supermarkets which have generously funded them in the past and from several grant making trusts that fund small capital projects such as this one.

Councillor David Levett commented that he used to run an engineering company that provided handrails. The projected cost is far higher than what it should be. All the components required to do this together with fitting the handrail come to about £980.

Councillor Amy Allen suggested that, in light of the comments by Councillor Levett, the committee should offer a deferment on this application, to allow the applicants to check their figures and get a better quote.

65 GRANT APPLICATION - THE LETCHWORTH CENTRE FOR HEALTHY LIVING

Audio Recording 30:50

Councillor Amy Allen proposed and Councillor David Levett seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That the grant application be deferred to a later meeting of the committee in order to clarify Member's concerns.

66 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio Recording: 31:30

Before the grant application began Councillor Daniel Allen declared a Pecuniary Interest in that he was Father Christmas in the Imajica Theatre Company Christmas Panto. As such, he and Councillor Amy Allen were to leave the room for the remainder of this item.

As the Vice-Chair of the Committee was not present, a temporary Chair was to be elected.

Councillor Tamsin Thomas proposed and Councillor David Levett seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That Councillor Tom Plater become temporary Chair to facilitate the remainder of the item.

A verbal presentation was given by Ms. Samantha Hough on behalf of Imajica Theatre Company CIC regarding their grant application which included:

- Imajica Theatre creates interactive immersive musicals written with younger audiences in mind but enjoyed by all ages;
- As specialists in relaxed theatre, they adopt a multi-sensory approach to performances. The group use British Sign Language in their choreographies and help develop important life skills in young people which they transpose in everyday life;
- There will be 10 performances over 5 days of their brand-new Christmas Musical show 'Rosie Reindeer and the Christmas Wish';
- The funding provided will be used to provide 50 free tickets per performance to families on low incomes and with SEND needs.

In response to a question from Councillor Tom Plater, Ms. Hough explained that the CIC always invites the Scouts to be involved. This panto will have a tuckshop run by the scouts in order to fundraise the 25th Scouts Jubilee. Hoping that the events in future can be in cooperation with charities that pass out food .

67 GRANT APPLICATION - IMAJICA THATRE COMPANY CIC

Audio Recording: 37:45

Councillor Morgan Derbyshire proposed and Councillor Phil Weeder seconded and, following a vote it was:

RESOLVED: That grant funding of £1,340 be awarded to Imajica Theatre Company CIC towards their Community Panto 2023 project.

Following the end of this item, Councillor Daniel Allen and Amy Allen returned to the room. Councillor Thomas proposed and Councillor Phil Weeder seconded and, following a vote it was:

RESOLVED: That Councillor Daniel Allen be reinstated as Chair.

68 LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY BID MANAGER

Audio recording: 40:05

The Chair reported that Letchworth Garden City does not have a BID Manager, so are unable to attend this meeting. He wished them luck in hiring for this position and hoped they will be present at the next meeting of the Letchworth Committee in December.

69 CONSULTATION ON NORTH HERTS DISTRICT LOCAL CYCLING AND WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

Audio Recording: 40:52

Before the commencement of this item Councillor Sean Nolan declared an Other Interest in that he works for the company that provides this consultation but that as advised by the Monitoring Officer he could still participate as he is not involved in the department which are facilitating it and has had no involvement.

The Senior Transport Policy Officer presented the report entitled Consultation on North Herts District Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and highlighted the following key points:

- The LCWIP is a very detailed set of ideas for improving the safety and convenience of cycling and walking in the towns of North Hertfordshire and between Hitchin and Stevenage;

- The plan will eventually incorporate rural areas as well, but the resources available mean they are looking at the towns to begin with;
- Government funding is reliant on having a detailed plan for infrastructure; by developing this plan with stakeholder groups and following a consultation, it will provide the basis for Hertfordshire County Council to make funding applications to Active Travel England;
- The Consultation starts on Monday 26th September and will run for 6 weeks;
- The Senior Transport Policy Officer will be attending a number of engagement events during the consultation period to answer questions and help understand how to engage;
- One of the engagement events that needs to be organised will be in Letchworth, as there is no Town Talk presently in the area, if any Members have any suggestions for suitable venues and dates please let the Senior Transport Policy Officer know.
- Consultation responses can be made here: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/LCWIP-NorthHerts>

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Sean Nolan
- Councillor David Levett

In response to questions the Senior Transport Policy Officer advised:

- The plans were developed with the emerging Local Plan in mind as well as taking schemes from the Growth and Transport Plan which had been recently adopted;
- Ideally the event in Letchworth would take place before the 31st October

Councillor Tom Plater proposed Councillor Amy Allen seconded and, following a vote it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee:

(1) Notes the report;

(2) Be encouraged to, individually and through the Area Committee, respond to the North Hertfordshire District LCWIP consultation draft attached at Appendix 1, and encourage residents and local organisations to do so too.

70 GRANTS AND COMMUNITY UPDATE

Audio Recording: 50:55

The Assistant Community Engagement Officer presented the report entitled Grants and Community Update and highlighted the following key points:

- The 2022/23 base budget was £11,000 with £956 carried forward from the last year's budget;
- £2050 was granted at the last meeting, leaving a budget of £9906;
- Following from the grants provided today, the budget sits at £6146 for the remainder of the civic year;
- Have resurrected a couple of network groups; which had moved online due to COVID; this works well as we are able to do these network groups in the morning; the Jackmans Network Group and the Grange Network Group are along those resurrected;
- Recently had an Arts & Culture Network Group which was very well attended; Stuart Sapsford was invited to present on their new Culture Strategy;
- Also been asked to be part of a webinar for North Herts CVS on a short online presentation to highlight local support available for Ukrainian refugees, available from 27th September;

- Team are developing youth democracy activities for Primary School Children to celebrate Local Democracy Week.

Councillor Ian Mantle proposed and Councillor Tom Plater seconded and, following a vote, it was:

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

71 WARD MATTERS AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS - MEMBERS' REPORTS

Audio recording – 57:10

Councillor Amy Allen gave information on the Wilbury Community Café, which meets every second Saturday of the month at 10:00am, it is free of entry and welcomes any organisations, charities or start-up businesses to have a table to promote anything they are more than happy to accommodate. The next cafe will be on the 8th of October

Councillor David Levett gave information on the Letchworth Beer, Food & Music Festival is on Saturday the 24th and Sunday the 25th of September at 11-5pm

Councillor Daniel Allen reported that The Grange Community Fun-day event is on Sunday the 2nd of October from 1:30pm-5:30pm at the Grange Community Centre.

Councillor Daniel Allen also commented that the Grange Community Action Day was very successful with Settle, the Police, Citizens Advice and the Fire Brigade did various bits of work around the Grange.

The meeting closed at 8.29 pm

Chair