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## NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### MEETING OF THE MEMBERS OF THE LETCHWORTH COMMITTEE

**MEETING HELD AS A VIRTUAL MEETING  
ON WEDNESDAY, 16TH JUNE, 2021 AT 7.30 PM**

#### MINUTES

**Present:** *Councillors: Amy Allen, Daniel Allen, Kate Aspinwall, Simon Bloxham, Gary Grindal, Terry Hone, Ian Mantle, Sean Prendergast and Adem Ruggiero-Cakir*

**In Attendance:** *Claire Morgan (Community Engagement Team Leader) and Anna Gouveia (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer)*

**Also Present:** *At the commencement of the meeting approximately 3 members of the public, including registered speakers.*

#### 1 WELCOME

*Audio recording – 7 seconds*

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer welcomed everyone to this virtual meeting of Members of the Letchworth Committee that was being conducted with Members and Officers at various locations, communicating via audio/video and online.

She undertook a roll call to ensure that all Members, Officers and members of the public could hear and be heard.

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer outlined the meeting procedure as follows:

- This was not a formal meeting of the Letchworth Committee;
- At the request of Members this virtual meeting had been called to allow for informal discussion of ward matters and to keep Members informed of local issues;
- This meeting had no decision-making power;
- The reports presented at this meeting were for Members' information only;
- Members should observe the usual guidance on the conduct of remote meetings as outlined in the previous Remote/Partly Remote Meetings protocol;
- Members should note that the normal requirements to declare interests remained in place for this meeting.

#### 2 TO ELECT AN INDIVIDUAL TO CHAIR THE VIRTUAL MEETING

*Audio recording – 3 minutes 07 seconds*

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer advised that the first order of business was to elect a Chair for this meeting.

Any Member elected as Chair would be for this meeting only. The Chair of the Committee for the Civic Year 2021/22 would be elected either at full Council or at the next meeting of this Committee.

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer called for nominations for a Chair of this meeting.

Councillor Ian Mantle proposed that Councillor Daniel Allen be elected as Chair of the meeting. Councillor Gary Grindal seconded the proposal.

There being no other nominations it was:

**AGREED:** That Councillor Daniel Allen be elected as Chair for this meeting of the Members of the Letchworth Committee.

### **3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

*Audio recording – 4 minutes 01 second*

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Morgan Derbyshire, David Levett, Sue Ngwala and Mike Rice.

### **4 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS FOR DISCUSSION**

*Audio recording – 4 minutes 20 seconds*

There was no other business notified.

### **5 TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS**

*Audio recording – 4 minutes 37 seconds*

- (1) The Chair thanked Members of the Committee for the nomination;
- (2) The Chair welcomed those present at the meeting, especially those who had attended to give a presentation.

### **6 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - MAKE LUNCH LETCHWORTH**

*Audio recording – 4 minutes 52 seconds*

Mr Chris Brothers and Ms Emma Vernon, Make Lunch Letchworth, thanked the Chair for the opportunity to address the Committee in support of their grant application and delivered a PowerPoint presentation as follows:

- Make Lunch Letchworth was a charity which provided children with hot meals as well as activities during the school holidays;
- Statistics showed that one quarter of children in Letchworth were in poverty;
- This was a national initiative which had been taken up by New Life Church, Letchworth in the summer of 2019, working with a number of churches across the town;
- Before the pandemic, a Lunch Club was organised with activities and food;
- Food boxes and Christmas bags had been delivered during the pandemic;
- A blended model was planned for Summer 2021 with Lunch Clubs and recipe boxes, the group was hoping to reach 40 families.

The following Members commented and asked questions:

- Councillor Daniel Allen;
- Councillor Gary Grindal;
- Councillor Sean Prendergast;
- Councillor Terry Hone.

Comments from Members included:

- The charity may wish to approach Housing Associations to identify referrals;
- Councillor Terry Hone would consider a funding request from his County Council Locality Budget.

Mr Brothers and Ms Vernon advised that:

- Make Lunch Letchworth were aware of the provision of food to families from other charities, but for data protection reasons there was no definitive list of families in receipt of support;
- A grant had also been requested from Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation;
- Referrals were received from schools and churches.

The Chair thanked Mr Brothers and Ms Vernon for their application.

The Community Engagement Team Leader advised that, as this was not a formal meeting, the Committee would be asked to make a recommendation which would be considered after the meeting by the Executive Member for Community Engagement.

## **7 PRESENTATION BY LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY HERITAGE FOUNDATION**

*Audio recording – 27 minutes 03 seconds*

Mr Alistair Stewart, Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation, thanked the Chair for the opportunity to address the Committee and gave an update on the activities of his organisation as follows:

- The cinema had re-opened and had been very popular. Sci-fi film week was being held between 25<sup>th</sup> June to 8<sup>th</sup> July 2021;
- The farm was open on a ticket-only basis and had been popular;
- Arts, culture and heritage were now being supported with a mixed funding model;
- The gallery had been hosting ticket-only events;
- The café area in the gallery was being developed as a community area;
- An outreach programme was being developed to take art out into the community, this would start with family art sessions at the Jackmans estate;
- A Youth Arts Forum had been set up for ages 16-23;
- The museum had been taken out into the community;
- Feedback had been received on the types of activities that people would like to see in the community and funding would be sought for these;
- Work was being undertaken with other organisations on a town-wide approach to the Happy Project – four hours of activities per day, four days per week, in the holidays for children who received free school meals; there were places for 60-90 children per week;
- In order to provide cooked meals, it was hoped that Herts Catering would be able to set up a base in Letchworth otherwise the meals will be a 30 minute drive away; the funding application was around £46,000;
- Continued support for foodbanks with grants as there was still a clear need;
- They were halfway through their community-based grants programme;
- Grants had been awarded to Growing People (mental health support), TTL, MS Therapy Centre, Letchworth Swimming Club, Letchworth Corner Sports Club and Kings Community Church; the next grants committee meeting was at the end of July;
- The need for financial management support and advice had been identified as a strategic priority and they were working with partners on this and gathering data;
- Grant support continued for the Letchworth Family Support Team who worked to support children at risk of being excluded from school – there was a higher level of need in Letchworth than nearest neighbours Hitchin and Baldock;

- The Foundation was moving away from grant funding to look at more long-term commissioning work to support key strategic aims;
- Social action volunteering was being developed;
- The Foundation was looking at audience development in the commercial sector (cinema, farm and gallery).

The following Members commented and asked questions:

- Councillor Daniel Allen

Mr Stewart advised that:

- Individual companies had been considered for the hot meals initiative, however the funding application had to fit with the government guidelines on healthy eating and school meals which was very prescriptive;
- Spirella Ballroom was being 'mothballed' while the Foundation considered how best to utilise it, the difficulty being that the ballroom was on the top floor and Covid-19 restrictions strictly limited the use of the lift;
- Should Members wish to know more about any of the elements of the update, they were welcome to email Mr Stewart.

The Chair thanked Mr Stewart for his presentation.

## **8 LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY BID MANAGER**

*Audio recording – 53 minutes 39 seconds*

Mr Chris Wilson, Letchworth Garden City BID Manager, was unable to attend the meeting.

## **9 GRANTS & COMMUNITY UPDATE**

*Audio recording – 53 minutes 40 seconds*

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

- Appendix 1 – 2021/22 Financial Year Budget Sheet.

She informed Members that the Committee had a budget of £11,000 plus unallocated funds carried forward from the 2020/21 Civic Year bringing the total available to allocate during the 2021/22 Civic Year to £13,800.

She further updated Members on the following:

### Food Provision Network

- Some funding and supermarket vouchers had been provided to groups across the district such as the Wilbury Community Forum, Letchworth Foodbank, Kings Community Church and the Letchworth Schools Partnership;
- There was some funding left which could potentially be used to top up the Make Lunch Letchworth project.

### Food and Drink Festival

- The Letchworth Food and Drink Festival was going ahead on 25<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> June 2021 and had some great food and drink stalls participating.

### Grant Funding

- Make Lunch Letchworth were seeking grant funding of £2,940 for food and educational activities during school holidays for families in receipt of free school meals;
- They had also submitted a grant application to Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation for £2,000 which would be considered in July;
- Members could consider recommending the £940 and if the grant application to the Heritage Foundation was unsuccessful, then Make Lunch Letchworth could come back to the Committee in October for further funding.

The following Members took part in debate:

- Councillor Gary Grindal;
- Councillor Ian Mantle;
- Councillor Kate Aspinwall;
- Councillor Terry Hone.

The following points were made in debate:

- This was the first meeting of the Civic Year and there was a chance that the Committee could be inundated with requests for support from many worthy good causes in the months ahead;
- It was possible that the Heritage Foundation and County Councillor Hone would be able to provide some funding support;
- If there were any difficulties obtaining the remaining funding then the applicants were welcome to come back to the Committee;
- The suggestion was made that the two other County Councillors covering parts of Letchworth could be approached for funding;
- The use of emergency powers could be considered again in future to ensure that the organisation could continue to operate;
- The Committee was supportive of the great work being done by Make Lunch Letchworth.

Councillor Gary Grindal proposed that the Executive Member for Community Engagement be advised that the Members of the Letchworth Committee supported the award of grant funding of £940 to Make Lunch Letchworth as detailed in the report. Councillor Mantle seconded the proposal and it was:

#### **AGREED:**

- (1) That the Members of the Letchworth Committee support the award of £940 in grant funding to 'Make Lunch Letchworth', for food and educational activities during school holidays for families in receipt of free school meals;
- (2) That the Executive Member for Community Engagement be requested to consider and support the grant funding application, as detailed in (1) above.

**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION:** The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allow the Committee to further the aims of the Council Plan.

## **10 WARD MATTERS AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

*Audio recording – 1 hour 32 minutes and 58 seconds*

The Chair led a discussion regarding Ward Matters and Outside Organisations.

The following issues were discussed:

Letchworth Civic Trust Grants

Councillor Daniel Allen advised that:

- The Letchworth Civic Trust gave grants to anyone from the town who was going to university or undertaking further education or an apprenticeship, and all were encouraged to apply.

The meeting closed at 8.35 pm

Chair