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NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

LETCHWORTH COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES, GERNON ROAD, LETCHWORTH
ON WEDNESDAY, 14TH DECEMBER, 2022 AT 7.30 PM

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors: Councillor Daniel Allen (Chair), Councillor Sean Prendergast (Vice-Chair), Simon Bloxham, Morgan Derbyshire, David Levett, Ian Mantle, Tom Plater and Phil Weeder*

In Attendance: *Danny Pearson (Assistant Community Engagement Officer), Aimee Flack (Assistant Community Engagement Officer) James Lovegrove (Committee Member and Scrutiny Manager) and Louis Mutter (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer)*

Also Present:

At the commencement of the meeting approximately 6 members of the public, including registered speakers.

72 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio recording – 1 minute 12 seconds

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Terry Hone, Adem Ruggerio-Cakir, Tamsin Thomas, Amy Allen and Sean Nolan.

73 MINUTES - 21 SEPTEMBER 2022

Audio Recording – 1 minute 35 seconds

As Chair Councillor Daniel Allen proposed and Councillor David Levett seconded and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 21 September 2022 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

74 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio recording – 1 minute 50 seconds

There was no other business notified.

75 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio recording – 2 minutes 8 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.

76 LETCHWORTH HERITAGE FOUNDATION - SOLAR PANEL POLICY

The Chair invited Ms. Claire Pudney to address the Committee.

Ms. Claire Pudney of the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation thanked the Chair for the opportunity to speak and gave a visual presentation to the committee, providing a background to the Heritage Foundation and an in-depth explanation of Solar Panel/ PV policies.

Ms. Claire Pudney highlighted the following key points:

- Letchworth Heritage Foundation work with the original leases from when Letchworth Garden City was first constructed;
- Following the Leasehold Reform Act 1967 leaseholders were able to enfranchise their properties. Letchworth properties fell under Section 19 of the Act; a Scheme of Management was established which is still in place today;
- Covenant 6 states that any owner shall not carry out any development, redevelopment or alteration materially affecting external appearance of the franchised property without the consent of the LHF;
- The Heritage Advice Service provides a Heritage Character Area, which directs design principles;
- 2015 saw a modification of the Character Area (an additional modification as made in 2020);
- In most cases the installation of solar panels/PV cells is acceptable following the criteria of the Modern Character Area;
- LGCHF updated their Energy Efficiency Guide in light of recent energy price increases;
- The most up-to-date information on the installation of solar panels can be found in the Photovoltaic Panels Guidance by LGCHF;
- You can check the Character Area of your property via the Heritage Foundation website.

The Chair thanked Ms. Claire Pudney for her presentation.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Sean Prendergast
- Councillor Daniel Allen
- Councillor Tom Plater

In response to questions, Ms. Claire Pudney advised:

- The Heritage Foundation used to consult neighbours in the process of applying for solar panels but that has now been taken out;
- The Heritage Foundation does not charge for solar panel applications; the only charges are to those who have carried out the work without the consent of LGCHF;
- The application process has been advertised on the Heritage Foundation's website, its Facebook page and are conscious of those not using social media.

77 LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY BID MANAGER

Audio recording – 23 minutes (N.B. The Chair moved this item ahead of Public Participation)

Mr Richard Harbon, Acting Letchworth Garden City BID Manager, thanked the Chair for the opportunity to address the Committee and gave a verbal presentation regarding the issues and activities in Letchworth Garden City Town Centre. Mr. Richard Harbon highlighted the following key points:

- Mr. Harbon was hired as the Acting Events Manager but has filled in as the BID Manager due to staff shortages;
- The BID have delivered the Green Festival, the Beer, Food and Music Festival and the Christmas Light Switch-on Event;
- The BID have hired an admin assistant, social media marketing manager and a finance manager;
- The Christmas event had just over 19,000 people visiting Letchworth that day;
- One of the BID Trustees has been actively looking for a full-time BID Manager.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Daniel Allen
- Councillor Tom Plater
- Councillor Simon Bloxham
- Councillor David Levett

In response to questions, Mr Richard Harbon advised:

- For next Christmas the BID do not have the funds to pay for all of the lights, the Heritage Foundation will not be paying either; the BID will be working out how to reach out to stakeholders and ask what they would like to do for the event;
- Mr. Harbon is not part of the process for selecting the BID Manager so cannot advise why no one has been hired yet;
- Tuesdays and Thursdays are the days the BID work together;
- The BID remain at the same office in the Arcade.

Councillor Tom Plater remarked that it would be a good idea to invite the Trustee mentioned to highlighted the difficulties the BID have been facing.

78 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio recording – 35 minutes 28 seconds

The Chair invited Mr. William Armitage to address the Committee.

Mr. William Armitage thanked the Chair for the opportunity to speak and gave a verbal presentation on how the Letchworth Area Committee could improve its reach and have a greater audience.

Members took part in a discussion regarding utilising various halls in Letchworth for hosting a Town Talk 4 times a year.

The following Members and officers took part in a discussion:

- Councillor Daniel Allen
- Councillor Tom Plater
- Councillor David Levett
- Councillor Sean Prendergast
- Assistant Community Engagement Officer

79 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - HONG KONG CONNECT

Audio Recording: 54 minutes 12 seconds

Prior to the presentation the Assistant Community Engagement Officer provided an update on Area Committee's grant budget.

The Chair then invited representatives of Hong Kong Connect to address the Committee.

A verbal presentation was given by Mr. Charles Chong and Ms. Carolyn Cole Rodrigues de Souza regarding their grant application. They highlighted the following key points:

- The UK government has issued 150,000 VISAs to British Nationals Overseas, including those born in Hong Kong; many have settled in Letchworth and the surrounding area;
- The language barrier has prevented these people from integrating with the wider British society;
- Hong Kong Connect would like to set up an English language class so they they can learn English with people in a similar situation;
- The project will aim to help them in their adaptation and acculturation into British culture and the English language.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Tom Plater
- Councillor David Levett
- Councillor Sean Prendergast

In response to questions, the representatives of Hong Kong Connect advised:

- The previous funding from the NHDC pump priming budget supported finding the location, the Icknield Centre, and funding for the teacher. This lasted 3 months; the classes continued without any funding where the centre allowed them to be there for free;
- Hong Kong Connect have being involving local people in their activities to promote integration.

80 GRANT APPLICATION - HONG KONG CONNECT

Councillor Tom Plater proposed and Councillor Sean Prendergast seconded and following a vote it was:

RESOLVED: That grant funding of £1,980 be awarded to Hong Kong Connect towards their English Language Course.

81 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - NORTH HERTS AFRICAN AND CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY

Audio Recording: 1 hour 14 minutes 33 seconds

A verbal presentation was given by Ms. Kava Johnson on behalf of the North Herts African and Caribbean Community regarding their grant application.

Ms Kava Johnson highlighted the following key points:

- North Herts African and Caribbean Community aim to put on various events and activities for the whole community to learn about African and Caribbean History and Culture;

- The organisation was founded in 2020, felt sharing culture helped understand each other better;
- The organisation aim to have history lessons, mentoring, personal development, fundraising and community events;
- Some events would be free and others subsidised to encourage attendance.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Daniel Allen
- Councillor David Levett
- Councillor Tom Plater

In response to questions Ms. Kava Johnson advised:

- The North Herts African and Caribbean Community has received funding from the Hitchin Area Committee;
- This organisation does not have any links with the North Herts Minority Forum;
- The events will be hosted in Letchworth and Hitchin.

82 GRANT APPLICATION - NORTH HERTS AFRICAN AND CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY

Councillor David Levett proposed and Councillor Tom Plater seconded and following a vote it was:

DECISION: That grant funding of £1,424 be awarded to the North Herts African and Caribbean Community to provide a year of subsidised and free events and activities for the whole community to learn about African and Caribbean history and culture.

83 GRANTS & COMMUNITY UPDATE

Audio Recording: 1 hour 27 minutes 50 seconds

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

- Letchworth Councillors visited local schools as a part of the Local Democracy Week;
- Community surgeries take place on Saturday mornings;
- Sharing information about 'warm hubs' across North Herts; Letchworth are leading the way and an information document will be available on the website;
- In the process of organising a Holocaust Memorial Day taking place in the Council Chamber on the 27th January;
- 13 November – Letchworth had its own Remembrance Day event;
- The Tractor Parade will be taking place on the 17th December;
- The NCT group attended the last meeting for a grant; pictures in the agenda pack show one of the events taking place.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Tom Plater

In response to questions the Assistant Community Engagement Officer advised:

- Councillor David Levett provided advice to a previous grant applicant, The Letchworth Centre for Healthy Living who will be returning with new quotes at the next Letchworth Area Committee meeting.

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.

84 WARD MATTERS AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS - MEMBERS' REPORTS

Audio recording – 1 hour 35 minutes 39 seconds

Councillor Daniel Allen stated that he and Councillor David Levett were involved in a new charity in Letchworth, the Letchworth Garden Shed Project.

Councillor Tom Plater highlighted that the last Wilbury Café was very popular and the next meeting is on the 14th January and everyone is welcome.

The meeting closed at 9.09 pm

Chair