

**North Herts Council
LETCWORTH AREA FORUM**

**Meeting held at Jackman's Community Centre Annex (Old Library)
On Wednesday 5 JULY 2023 at 7.30pm**

NOTES

Present:

In Attendance:

*Claire Morgan (CM) (Community and Partnerships Team Leader)
Cllr Mick Debenham, Cllr Sean Nolan, Cllr Tom Plater (Chair), Cllr
Ian Mantle, Cllr Terry Hone, Cllr David Levett, Cllr Phil Weeder, Cllr
Dan Marsh arrived later due to work commitments.*

Also present:

*At the commencement of the meeting there were 11 members of
the public, including registered speakers.*

Meeting Started at **7:33pm**

1. Chair's Announcements

Cllr Plater welcomed everyone in attendance.

- Highlighted that it's an informal, inclusive meeting to share ideas.
- Members were reminded they are making recommendations and not decisions for grant applications.

Apologies for absence. Cllr's Daniel and Amy Allen, Tamsin Thomas, Sean Prendergast, Simon Bloxham.

2. Public Participation – Grants

North Herts 50+ Forum Margret Reading Chair – Joan Langford

Been going after covid since oct. Age range 70 to 80 many members are still wary of coming out following pandemic. Monthly forum meetings with speakers, Police talking about scams, someone from the Met about terrorism and fire service. Outings; Christmas Lunch at North Herts College, very popular with members. They enjoy outings, something to look forward to, try to keep the costs down for members as they struggle. Want money to keep costs down of outings and they want an A frame for publicity and leaflets and pull up banner. To use for stalls at events. A successful event was 'know your mobile' with some teens. Was a great success. But didn't raise too much money, but they have organised a quiz night at Mrs HH.

Cllr Levett asked where they meet: at Mrs HH

Cllr Debenham asked how many members: 30 currently

Richard Harbon BID manager asked for flyers and details to display in the Town Centre.

Toby Franklin (TF) - Member of the audience – mentioned he wanted to support as digital exclusion is so important to combat.

Cllr Terry Hone invited the group to apply for his HCC Locality Budget

***Proposed by Cllr David Levett and seconded Cllr Sean Nolan
Unanimous, vote in favour of providing £884 to North Herts 50+ Forum***

Headway - John Archer

Headway, help people with acquired brain injury who are aged 18 plus
They're setting up a group in the Letchworth at the Salvation Army Hall on Norton Way North. Funding is needed for hire hall, occasional speakers. Want to do a family project that is county wide looking at the effect on children of those who have had a brain injury.

Help to support, get them back to work or get them into activities.

Cllr Nolan asked if the funding is agreed will they be able to continue self-funded to keep the group going?

JA: Yes, they have many successful groups across county which are self-funding, they just need help to start up.

Claire Stratford – Herts Sports Partnership asked about activities

JA – yes, social activities to build confidence, they do strategies to help with cognitive function and fatigue. Peer support groups they work together and then help in a home setting. They also do arts and crafts and sports

TF suggested they might look to use Howard Garden Social Centre as the rent might be cheaper.

ACTION: CM Send JA contact for Howard Garden Social Centre

Cllr Levett – asked if they've approached other area forums

Yes, Baldock have given funds for other project to cover activities in their area

Currently have an application in to Letchworth Civic trust.

***Proposed Mick Debenham seconded Phil Weeder
6 out of 7 voted to recommend one abstention on the basis of HCC Locality budget***

3. Information Note: Grants & Community Update

Claire Morgan, Community and Partnerships Team Leader gave presentation on the Community Update

Further to the report, Wilbury and Ickneild Schools Parents Association (WISPA)

received a Grant of £2000 awarded March 2021 that was paid out August 2022 towards the provision of mobile classroom in the grounds of the school to use for sorting tera cycling for the local community.

WISPA have been in contact earlier today to inform the council that the project is not going ahead but would like to use the funds towards an outdoor classroom to use for teaching on Eco/environmental related topics

Cllr Levett proposed ask for the funding back and WISPA reapply for this project. Seek more information making it clear that we expect a community element to the project and not only for the school community.

The forum members agreed with this course of action as the new project is not related to the originally stated use of the grant.

ACTION: Community and Partnership officers will invoice WISPA for the £2000 and liaise with the group to apply for the Outdoor Classroom project.

The £2000 will be put back into the Letchworth Community Grant budget.

CM explained that NHC were working in partnership with Letchworth BID to relocate the Christmas Tree from Broadway Gardens to a Town Centre location. The benefits of the relocation are that the BID can include the tree into the Town Centre Christmas lights display and switch on event.

The tree is subject to vandalism in the current location and people remove the lights. It's also a bit lost in the middle of such a large open space.

The Letchworth Councillors present unanimously supported the relocation of the Letchworth Christmas Tree from Broadway Gardens to a Town Centre location.

4. Presentations

PRESENTATION - HEALTH & WELLBEING

Presentation from North Herts Council's Health and Wellbeing Hub Co-ordinator Louise Ferguson LF and Active in the Community followed by Q&A

Healthy Hub, in North Herts run a virtual healthy hub and sessions across the district in mindfulness, cookery sessions and NHS Health Checks at the Council Offices

Health on a budget – they have funding from the National Lottery to enable the running of seated exercise at supported housing across Letchworth. Also, funded a men's club in Royston and they're starting one in Letchworth at the North Herts Leisure Centre in Letchworth.

This will run every Saturday for a month and provides 8 weeks free membership at the gym for people with a medical condition referral by their GP

Herts Health Walks – New health walk starting from Jackmans 12th July gentle walk (free) to attend.

Cllr Levett – Where do you get referrals from?

LF - People self-refer 11k subscribers for Healthy Hub newsletter.

If someone attends one of the activities, they often talk about other issues and will be signposted to other services / activities that can help.

Adam Howard - Active In the Community said - confidence for people to attend and not be the most unfit, so aimed at 55+ so they are not mixed in with younger fitter people.

Alastair Steward from LGCHF – would like to work in partnership with the Healthy Hub will contact Louise outside of the meeting

Richard Harbon – could North Herts Road Runners be involved with a walk and talk project?

Presentation from Active in the Community (AIC) – Adam Howard and Josh Claire Stratford (CS) – Herts Sports Partnership
AIC are a not-for-profit Community Interest Company (CIC) and they find ways for people of all ages to get more active and connect social isolation to being more active.

They set up projects to help people get more active and combat social isolation
CS Herts Sports partnership - Work with AIC have a health strategy for the County with a range of programs.

Including the Happy camps for school summer holiday provision for families in receipt of free school meals.

They promote sport for social change

Targeted work in place change using sport to tackle social issues

Focus on Letchworth Southeast ward covering Jackmans and Lordship

The men's project started yesterday, and they run seated exercise at Earnest Gardner Day centre

Funding from Opportunities Fund which helps people on low income to get into sports clubs. Providing kit and equipment needed.

OSS fund working with Garden City Academy and trying to get into Highfield School

Making activities accessible and affordable.

Adam asked Councillors for assistance to reach the groups they want to work with.

Cllr Levett – Asked if they've liaised with HCC regarding working in schools

AH - The communication is in place between schools

Cllr Levett suggested that they also liaise with local residents in terms of using facilities afterschool

Cllr Sean Nolan – asked if they're working with settle and asking for access to the notice boards in flats

AH said they have a meeting with settle tomorrow morning

RH said should be working in partnership with sports clubs in Letchworth and we need to start an Active Letchworth forum.

Claire said Herts Sports Partnership have a club forum and will be setting one up for Letchworth

They work in partnership with the Wellbeing team at NHC

RH can we set up a Forum for Sports Clubs in Letchworth

CM said interesting suggestion NHC will investigate it.

AH want to contact the hard to reach

CS said they can work with the all the local groups such as Headway and 50+ forum to help their members into activities.

Joan talked about people who want to be active but are housebound find it difficult to get out – CS talked about community transport available to help people get out an access.

Cllr Tom Plater thanked them all for the presentation

5. Proposed Car Parking Tariffs 2023

Cllr Ian Mantle (Deputy Executive Member) Planning & Transport gave a presentation on the proposed Off-street, Car Parking Charges across North Herts, highlighting the areas of the report relevant for the area forum

Concerns raised by Councillors and members of the public:

Questions/comments

DL: I have a business in the town centre – this narrows the gap between the 1- and 2-hour parking which could encourage to dwell in the town centre.

Cllr Mantle – NHC is looking at alternative systems for ANPR and Pay on exit.

Private companies can look up numberplates, but local authorities can't

Cllr Levett: Letchworth is unique within the district with 3 free hours at Morrisons Not in favour of increase in charges at this time of recession we should freeze the charges.

Cllr Plater: everyone is affected by inflation – councils need to be able to raise funds for services.

Toby Franklin: put the charges up more apart from blue badge holders to stop people driving into the Town Centre improved impact on the environment. Increase the charges by 50p

TP balance between people being able to park and public transport. Comments will go back to Cabinet. NHC Councillor can lobby HCC re bus services.

Joan: complained that she can't access online services, such as paying by phone, looking up bus timetables, other services. (Digital exclusion)

IM people will still be able to pay by cash for parking.

6. Open Discussion

Unity Harvey: Moved here a year ago – perplexed by who does what in terms of District, County and Heritage Foundation – busses are diabolical. From South View takes an hour to get to lister hospital on the bus. 3 and half hours to get to WGC on the bus.

We need to regenerate the town centre

We should fight for the buses. Frequent direct routes between all the main towns, Stevenage, Hitchin, Letchworth Baldock and Royston.

Will not get young people into the leisure centre as there are no busses. They must wait for a lift.

Cllr Hone will be meeting this lady next week one to one and will talk through who is responsible for what.

Cllr Mantle: the bus routes are decided by commercial operators which is a problem

The North Herts Council has a transport officer Called Edward leigh who would be happy to talk to you.

Cllr Levett uses busses, and they do a loop – takes a long time but it goes everywhere

Opened to questions from the floor about any of the agenda items or general questions or issues anyone wishes to raise.

Cllr Plater asked if RH could give a quick update on BID activities

- Primary role to increase footfall in Town Centre
- Planters
- Christmas lights switch on.
- Events
- Food and Drink festival on 15th 16th July 2023
- Election for the BID in December
- Courses for the shop keepers and business in Town Centre
- Just launched new website

Unity Harvey– Grass verges south view – wildflowers lavender or rosemary small shrubs.

ACTION: CM will contact the Green Space team.

RH mentioned that the council are creating a Bee corridor

Cllr Debenham mentioned that John O’Conner’s are doing Bee bombs

Toby Franklin asked for more covered bike racks in the town centre

RH will lead on this bring together Heritage and NHC Transport officer.

Cllr Mantle wants to improve cycle ways

Issues with people cycling on pavements.

Not have shared used facilities they don’t work for bikes or pedestrians

7. Topics for future Letchworth Area Forums

Transport: feedback on the Active Travel Plan consultation

Meeting closed 9.25pm