

**North Herts Council  
LETCWORTH AREA FORUM**

**Meeting held at North Herts Council  
Council Offices, Gernon Rd, Letchworth Garden City, SG6 3JF –  
Wednesday, 28 February at 7:30pm**

**NOTES**

**Present:**

*Cllr Tom Plater (Chair), Cllr Sean Prendergast (Vice Chair), Cllr Daniel Allen, Cllr Mick Debenham, Cllr David Levett, Cllr Ian Mantle, Cllr Tamsin Thomas*

**In Attendance:**

*Danny Pearson (DP) (Community and Partnerships Team Officer)*

**Also present:**

*At the commencement of the meeting there were 5 members of the public, 9 registered speakers.*

Meeting Started at **7:33pm**

**1. Chair's Announcements**

**Cllr Tom Plater welcomed everyone in attendance.**

Cllrs were made aware that both Cllr Tom Plater and Cllr Sean Prendergast had decided it was best to not Chair this meeting (and the reason why) and to elect a stand in Chair, from the floor, for this meeting.

**NEWLY ELECTED CHAIR – Cllr Daniel Allen**

- Highlighted that it's an informal, inclusive meeting to share ideas.
- Informed everyone in attendance that we would be receiving presentations from Letchworth Garden City Samba, Home-start Herts and Letchworth Garden City Bowls Club seeking grant funding.
- Members were reminded they are making recommendations and not decisions for grant applications.
- Members were reminded to make declarations of interest **before** an item

they may wish to abstain from voting if they have an interest, but they are merely making recommendations and not decisions.

**Apologies for absence:** *Cllr Amy Allen, Cllr Phil Weeder, Cllr Sean Nolan, Cllr Daniel Marsh, Cllr Terry Hone, Cllr Simon Bloxham.*

## 2. MINUTES - AREA COMMITTEE MARCH 23

Cllrs were unable to approve the minutes of the meeting of the Area Committee held on the 15 March 2023 as the Minutes had not been uploaded for this Forum meeting. Officer to investigate why this was the case.

## 3. Public Participation – Grants

Danny Pearson, the Community and Partnership Officer, updated Members of community grant budgets.

The community grant base budget for Letchworth Area Forum 2023/24 is **£11,000**.

The grant budget carried over from 2022/23 is **£84**.

In addition, Letchworth Area Committee grants previously awarded to Wilbury & Icknield Schools Parents Association and Garden City Samba, totaling **£2,600**, were paid back to the Council during the year, meaning a total resource available to the Letchworth Area Forum for community grants in 2023/24 of **£13,684**.

**£8,072** has been allocated to date in 2023/24, leaving **£5,612** available to allocate for community grants.

If the applications outlined in Appendices 2, 3, and 4 are recommended and approved, there would be **£652** available to carry forward into the 2024/25 budget, subject to approval from Cabinet.

**Letchworth Garden City Samba** – Ian Hamilton (Treasurer) from Letchworth Garden City Samba presented.

Letchworth Garden City Samba asked for **£400**. As part of giving back to the local community, each year Garden City Samba (GCS) like to give several free performances. These are offered to local charities and good causes, and for whom their normal performance fee would be unaffordable. Examples of free performances they gave last year are the Stand-By-Me children's bereavement charity, the Letchworth Make Lunch food project and a Letchworth Lions event raising money for Ukraine. Although these events were offered free to the clients, GCS do still incur costs, such as rehearsal costs, music director fees, instrument

wear and tear and travel to and from the gig.

They estimate that a typical gig costs GCS around £200, depending on location. Honouring a commitment to perform for free may also mean that they must turn down an alternative paid performance request for the same day, which results in a loss of income for the band. Nevertheless, they would like to increase the number of free performances they are able to offer in the year ahead.

This year they'd like to commit to a minimum of six free performances, which would cost them around £1200. This will approximately have an impact on 1200 people based on six events with an average of 200 people attending each event. Between April & December 2024. Typically, they perform with a group of around 20 drummers, bringing Brazilian carnival music full of colour & high energy to local events, which consistently goes down well with the public and organisers.

Ian was able to give extra information and answered the Cllrs questions.

*Proposed by Cllr Tom Plater and seconded by Cllr Mick Debenham.*

**Unanimous vote in favour of providing £400 to Letchworth Garden City Samba.**

Cllr Daniel Allen thanked Letchworth Garden City Samba for the presentation.

**Letchworth Garden City Bowls Club** – Tony Sinclair and Peter Bailey from Letchworth Garden City Bowls Club presented.

**Letchworth Garden City Bowls Club** asked for **£2,500**. The Bowls Club is a very active local sports and social group. The Clubhouse is built so that changing facilities, storage, and toilets are on ground level and the social area, bar and kitchen and a viewing area are on the first floor accessed by a steep flight of stairs. The physical structure and arrangement of facilities cannot be changed, and the Club needs a stairlift to allow access to the essential facilities on the first floor. Currently members with disabilities cannot access the refreshment area, or social events or shelter in comfort. A stairlift would give accessibility and allow full enjoyment of club activities and encourage new members.

They took advice from local people and other local groups and decided that they wanted to use a local firm. Three quotes have been obtained from local firms, all of which have provided testimonials and have track records of several years' experience. The firm that they have chosen to use, if they are successful in raising the funding required, is Herts Stairlifts Ltd, who submitted the lowest quote and will also provide a 2-year warranty and a lifetime parts warranty. They have also approached the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation for the remaining funding needed for the stairlift. This will be considered at a meeting on 15th March.

Several of their current membership have restricted access to the full facilities and

activities offered by the club. The club is very keen to expand the membership by offering physical and social activities to older members of the community and those with disabilities. The stairlift will enable the Club to do this. Currently the Club has 31 members. They hold an open day each year when they hope to attract new members. The next open day is provisionally planned for May 2024.

The Bowls Club is a community space for residents. It provides a sporting activity with training and support for all ages but tends to be a popular sport for older people. They believe it is a valuable leisure activity which supports the physical and mental health of their members by keeping them active and involved. They provide opportunities for friendly competitions within the club, and formal matches with other clubs across Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire from beginners to county players. They also provide activities such as quizzes, Friday night pizza socials and other evening events during the year, which is why a stairlift is essential for both members and guests when they host competitions.

*Proposed by Cllr David Levett and seconded by Cllr Tamsin Thomas.*

### **Unanimous vote in favour of providing £2,500 to Letchworth Garden City Bowls Club**

Cllr Daniel Allen thanked Letchworth Garden City Bowls Club for the presentation.

### **Home-start Herts – Liz Le Coze from Home-start Herts presented.**

Home-start Herts asked for **£2,060**. Home-Start Hertfordshire (HSH) are engaged with 21 families across North Hertfordshire. 14 are receiving active support and a further 7 have had their initial assessment and are waiting for support to commence. 3 of the families waiting for support are located in Letchworth. This funding would support 1 of those families in need of support.

Their early intervention, preventative model provides significant social value and exceptional return on investment; it is well evidenced that early interventions are effective in reducing the number of families and children that go on to need high-cost interventions from service such as children's services, mental health services, youth offending provision, education welfare and others.

Home-start Herts receive referrals from agencies such as Social Services to fill gaps in provision and work one on one with families in a more intensive way than the statutory authorities can. This vulnerable family is struggling and needs support with the complex issues they are facing. HSH offers early intervention, because they know children's future outcomes are impacted in these desperate situations. The cost to support one family for up to 9 months is £2,060.

Through a tailored package, support is delivered by a trained and skilled volunteer Family Mentor. The family will be provided with weekly support for 2-3 hours, for up to 9 months. Their Family Mentor will build a trusted relationship with the family

in the surrounding of their own home. Here they feel safe and secure, so that they can learn to face the challenges they are experiencing, learn some coping strategies and help parents build their confidence to support their children.

They have successfully received funds from the Baldock Area Forum (£2,060) and are also applying for funds from the Hitchin Area Forum (£2,058). Across all three Area Forums they are asking for £6,178.

*Full amount to be paid Proposed by Cllr Tom Plater and seconded by Cllr Sean Prendergast.*

Debate followed between Cllrs.

*Vote*

Cllr Daniel Allen and Cllr David Levett abstained.

**Majority voted to approve this grant proposal.**

Cllr Daniel Allen thanked Home-Start Herts for coming to the Forum to answer Cllrs questions.

#### **4. Presentations**

##### **PRESENTATION – RESILIENTOGETHER**

Presentation from Katie Searles and Sharon Russell-Verma from ResilienTogether followed by Q&A.

A very full and informative presentation was given through slides and verbal updates. There were questions from Cllrs, and the public, which Katie Searles and Sharon Russell-Verma were able to answer.

The presentation is available on slides and has been circulated amongst the Cllrs. The slides are available upon request: [Community@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:Community@north-herts.gov.uk)

Cllr Daniel Allen thanked ResilienTogether for the presentation.

##### **PRESENTATION – HERTFORDSHIRE POLICE**

Presentation from Sergeant Lisa Perks from the North Herts Safer Neighbourhood Team followed by Q&A.

Another very full and informative presentation was given through verbal updates. Sergeant Lisa Perks was able to give extra information and answered the Cllrs, and public's, questions. Questions around graffiti, ASB hotspots, E-scooters, and

delivery drivers, domestic abuse and how crime figures are recorded were discussed. Statistics are available upon request.

Cllr Daniel Allen thanked Sergeant Lisa Perks for the presentation.

## **5. Information Note: Grants & Community Update**

Danny Pearson, Community and Partnerships Team Officer, gave a presentation on the Community Update. Most of which can be seen in the report. These included:

### **Districtwide Community Updates**

- The Community Investment Fund has now closed. Successful grant applicants have been informed.
- Coordinating voluntary support response to Asylum Seekers based in North Herts.
- The winners of the North Herts Heroes awards have all been contacted and filming is underway. The Awards ceremony will take place at the Chair's Civic event on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> March.
- Co-ordinating various local and district wide Network Groups including Youth Action, Food Provision, Arts and Culture and Green and Growing Group.
- Continuing to facilitate NHC Councillors' Community Surgeries.
- Sharing and disseminating information on social media and to mailing lists, keeping in touch with the community, voluntary, statutory, and non-statutory agencies.
- The Community Partnership Team met with the Royal British Legion and Letchworth BID to discuss this year's Letchworth Remembrance Day Parade and how they can recruit more members from across North Herts.
- Holocaust Memorial Day hybrid event took place in the North Herts Council Chamber and can be viewed on the Council's YouTube channel.

### **Area Community Updates**

- Meeting with the Jackmans Community Centre about their roof and a potential food pantry with Settle and Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation.
- Also linking up the Jackmans Community Centre team with Create Community.
- Attended the Letchworth - What is your part to play in the future of Letchworth? hosted by Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation.

- Meeting with Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation, Garden Square Shopping Centre, and Letchworth BID as part of the Town Centre Strategy Group.
- Attending a key stakeholders *Grange Recreation Ground* workshop that the Planning Policy Team are hosting.
- Attended a Fenners building meeting hosted by Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation.
- Met with Letchworth Bid and local events manager to discuss a potential family friendly music event at Broadway Gardens.
- Dates for the Emil Dale Academy community coffee morning, March 22<sup>nd</sup>, and grand opening, September 21<sup>st</sup>, were shared.
- Meeting planned with the Howard Garden Social Centre team for an update. John O'Conner will be at the Bee Part of It event at Howard Park on the 23rd of March. They will be there promoting the bee corridor.

Cllr Daniel Allen thanked the Officer for the presentation.

## 6. Open Discussion

Cllr Tom Plater formally voted for recommendation,

1 - Ask relevant NHC Officers to review the current Community grants criteria.

2 - Chairs of the Area Forums are to see the Public Packs before they get published.

*Proposed by Cllr Tom Plater and seconded by Cllr David Levett.*

**Debate** - No debate

**Vote** – Unanimous.

Other topics were also discussed including the Fenners building and St Michaels Church.

## 8. WARD MEMBERS ACTIVITIES

**None**

## 9. Topics for future Letchworth Area Forums

**CHAIR** asked for suggestions for future topics for discussion and possible future venues in Letchworth. We suspect the next Area Forum will be June 5<sup>th</sup> – *to be confirmed*.

Noted that it was asked at the January Forum if we Letchworth BID could be invited to come along to give members an update. It was decided not to have them at this (February's) Forum as the Police and ResilienTogether were already scheduled to attend.

Cllrs wanted to explore inviting Letchworth Bid and Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation to future meetings so they can give updates.

Noted that if there are any further thoughts from Cllrs, then they will discuss and send ideas to the Chair. The Chair will then bring these to the Community & Partnerships team ASAP.

Cllr Tom Plater wished everyone well as this was his last NHC Area Forum meeting as a Letchworth Cllr.

**Meeting closed 9:45pm**