

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF HERTFORD TOWN COUNCIL
HELD IN THE ROBIN ROOM, THE CASTLE, HERTFORD ON
MONDAY, 13 OCTOBER 2008

The Mayor, Councillor Miss K P Darby

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor P A Ruffles

Councillors, Mrs H P Durbin, Miss C J Geall, Mrs D M Hone,
Mrs B S Haddock, Mrs S M Newton, D R Poole, R A K Radford, Dr L E
Radford, Miss J C S Sartin and N Wilson

Miss N L Villa, Town Clerk

Miss Mandy Challis, Assistant to the Town Clerk

Rev Jo Loveridge, the Mayor's Chaplain

Mr B Hoadley – representative for the Hertford Branch of the Royal British
Legion

Mrs J Pickering – representative for the Ron Pickering Memorial Fund

Prayers - The Mayor's Chaplain, Rev Jo Loveridge, led the opening prayers

Presentations – Councillor R A K Radford, Past Mayor made presentations to the Hertford Branch of the Royal British Legion and the Ron Pickering Memorial Fund – his chosen charities for his Mayoral year.

139. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mrs H P Durbin declared a prejudicial interest in Item 8 as a member of Hertford Essential COnections.

Councillors Miss K P Darby, Miss C J Geall, J C Hedley, Mrs D M Hone, and R A K Radford all declared prejudicial interests in Item 10, as trustees of Hertford Charities.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

Dr L E Radford take the chair whilst Item 10 was discussed.

140. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor congratulated Councillors Dr L E Radford and Miss J C S Sartin on their appointments as Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council respectively.

Councillor Miss C J Geall was thanked for her service as retiring Leader of the Council.

141. THE MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 14 July be approved as a correct record and the Chairman authorised to sign the same.

142. QUESTIONS AND/OR STATEMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Mr Andrew Goodman, representative of Hertford Essential COnections spoke to update the Council on the plastic bag campaign as follows:

Hertford Essential COnections – Plastic Bag Campaign

I don't propose going through HECO's paper circulated with the meeting agenda. I would like to update members on a few matters and mention the potential wider benefits of this project to produce and sell a reusable 'town bag'.

Update

- Personal visits to independent retailers have started. A single invitation letter from HECO is being left with the retailer; there isn't

the second letter of endorsement from the Mayor, MP and East Herts' leader mentioned in para. 5(a) of our paper.

- Before visits started, we were aware of 4-5 retailers who are interested in the proposal – one with respect to sponsorship, all with respect to stocking and selling the bag.
- It would be very helpful if members could use any contacts in the wider business community to generate endorsement from non-retailers.
- Hertfordshire Graphics in St. Andrew Street have suggested that a competition is organised for graphic design students at Hertford Regional College. The shop has offered a prize of goods to the value of £100.00. We are considering this proposal.
- We have learned of a couple of retailers who currently have stocks of non-plastic bags. We will need to keep under review the quantity of bags to order; as this will have a bearing on the number of sponsors required and the price per bag, we will discuss this in full at the November 6th meeting.
- We probably have a preference for the jute bag option because it has a shorter growth cycle that is better for the farmers. Organic cotton is in short supply, and jute/cotton mix does not use organic cotton.

Benefits

- a) As Hertford residents, we are very pleased and encouraged that this initiative has been so well received by Town and District Councils and MP because there is value in collaboration and partnership.
- b) This is something that we hope can be extended into other areas that will build sustainability within the town – in the full economic, social as well as environmental meaning of the term.
- c) We believe it is an opportunity for the county town of Hertford to provide a lead in Hertfordshire.
- d) Because of the proposed financial structure of the project in which costs are covered and some profit can be made by the 'wholesaler', we hope that it will be a vehicle to provide some ongoing funding for HECO. This would enable us to continue to act in the role of "ally" to the Town and District Councils, as we all work together towards improving the sustainability of Hertford over time. We think that improving sustainability contributes towards improving the health and well being of residents and people who work in the tow, and we are keen to make our contribution towards this.

Conclusion

The campaign would benefit so much from your continued support and involvement and we hope and trust that you will want to be involved in the way outlined in the paper.

Thank you.

Mrs P Jill Geall spoke to the Council about the amalgamating of Hertford Charities as follows:

Good Evening

Thank you for this opportunity to speak to the Full Town Council on Agenda item 10 headed Hertford Charities.

I think a little background information to set the scene could be helpful.

The four charities, on which I will elaborate further, are all Hertford and area based. Of course there is an historical story to tell about all of them, but sadly their capital bases are low, and therefore their individual incomes also. Once the three charities have merged with Ann Dimsdale, the plan is to change the name of Ann Dimsdale, in order that all the four names can be incorporated in some way into the new name.

I have felt for several years that it would be to the benefit of the individual charities to merge, in order that they could be run as one body. This would have several benefits.

There would only be the need for one body to meet 3-4 times a year, instead of four bodies meeting 2-4 times a year. The combined capital sums of the charities might be able to generate a higher income. Under the proposal there will be ten trustees, therefore lightening the load under the present system. However, the most important advantage of merging the charities would be to the needy residents of the Hertford district. One charity for people to contact, with more funds to distribute, able to react in a meaningful way when real need is identified – something that the state and welfare system has proved incapable of doing on many occasions in the recent past.

I am Chairman of both the Nobles Charity and Ann Dimsdale, which are run independently.

The Mayor for the time being is presently the Chairman of both Hertford Relief in Need and Miss Jourdain's. Both these charities meet at The Castle and are now administered by an officer of the Council, with financial and general advice available.

I am sure those Councillors present who have been the Mayor in past years will agree with me that it is not easy for the Mayor to provide continuity to the charities, even if they have spaces in their busy diaries to attend the meetings.

Under the present proposal it would be written in to the Charter that the Mayor for the time being would be one of the three Town Council nominations, thus maintaining the 'civic' involvement.

The Proposal put before you this evening under 3.4 on your Agenda does, as I understand it, reflect what has happened in the past, though not the immediate past, for both Miss Jourdain's and Hertford Relief in Need (which by the way was an amalgam of two small charities several years' ago) i.e.

the charities were administered by an officer of the council, with the Town Clerk sitting in on the meetings and therefore available to give advice.

The difference however, would be that there would only be at the most four full meetings each year of the one new charity, as against at least six a year at present.

Thank you once again Councillors.

143. COMMUNITY SERVICES

Councillor N Wilson moved the report of the Community Services Committee held on 1 September 2008.

Minute 98 – St Leonard’s Garden and Holy Trinity Maintenance – Councillor C J Geall enquired about the latest situation regarding maintenance of St Leonard’s garden. The Town Clerk confirmed that the Council is now sourcing an alternative contractor for the maintenance. Councillor C J Geall stated that she was aware of several local gardeners who may be interested in providing this service.

Councillor H P Durbin asked whether this was something that the Probation Service Community Payback Scheme could undertake. The Town Clerk advised that Mayoral Projects must have a definable start and finish date and therefore they would not consider an ongoing project such as this.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The report of the Community Services Committee held on 1 September 2008 be received.

144. DEVELOPMENT AND LEISURE

Councillor Miss J C S Sartin moved the report of the Development and Leisure Committee held on 15 September.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The report of the Development and Leisure Committee held on 15 September 2008 (this included the relevant reports of the Planning Sub-Committee meetings of 2, 16 and 30 June, 14 and 28 July, 11 August and 1 September 2008) be received.

145. FINANCE, POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION

Councillor Miss C J Geall moved the report of the Finance, Policy and Administration Committee held on 29 September 2008.

Councillor C J Geall also enquired whether the latest newsletter was available and the Town Clerk advised that it was currently being printed.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The report of the Finance, Policy and Administration Committee held on 29 September 2008 be received.

146. HERTFORD ESSENTIAL Connections

Councillor H P Durbin left the room

The Town Clerk provided an update on the latest developments and advised that the Council continues to play a key role in the project.

Councillors N Wilson and R A K Radford queried whether the £100 requested in the report was adequate. The Town Clerk advised that this was the amount requested by the group at this stage and that they may approach the Council at a later date for further funding.

Councillor Miss C J Geall expressed support of the initiative, and requested that the Council continued to offer support to HECO by allowing the use of meeting rooms free of charge during normal office hours.

The Council **RESOLVED** in accordance with its powers under section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 that the Council should incur the following expenditure, which in its opinion is in the interest of the area, or its inhabitants and will benefit them in a manner commensurate with the expenditure:

Hertford Essential COnections be awarded £100 to assist with administrative costs of the project.

The Council **RESOLVED** to continue to offer the use of meeting rooms free of charge provided that, wherever possible, meetings are held during the working day.

Councillor H P Durbin returned to the room.

147. REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COUNCIL

It was **RESOLVED** that:

a) That para 2.2 of the Internet Policy be amended to read 'Email will be responded to within 1 working day. Where this is not possible, an acknowledgement will be provided within 1 working day and a full response provided within 5 working days.

b) Subject to the amendment above, the attached policies should be adopted for inclusion in the Council's Constitution.

148. HERTFORD CHARITIES

The Mayor and Councillors J F Hedley, C J Geall and Mrs D M Hone left the room.

Councillor Dr L E Radford took the Chair.

The Town Clerk introduced the item and outlined the current situation. She explained that although administrative support had previously been provided on an unofficial basis, the role did now form part of an officer's job description, which made it problematic to change, which prompted the compromise solution outlined in the report.

Councillor S M Newton stated that when she was Mayor, there was some confusion over the role of the officer assigned to the Charities and the duties they were expected to undertake. The Town Clerk confirmed the job description of the Council's officer administering Hertford Charities is merely "to provide administrative support".

Councillor N Wilson expressed his support for the recommendation, stating that he experienced similar problems to Councillor S M Newton in his term as Mayor.

Councillor R A K Radford also voiced his support, highlighting that the amalgamation should reduce workload of the officer concerned.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Council agree the request to provide on going support for the emerging Hertford charity
- b) The Council approve formal adoption of the emerging Hertford charity and support arrangements outlined in para 3.4 of agenda Paper C

The Mayor, Councillors J F Hedley, Miss C J Geall and R A K Radford returned to the room.

The Mayor resumed the Chair.

149. MOTION – BUSINESS MOTION

Councillor P A Ruffles had given written notice in accordance with Standing Order 2.1(1.10) and moved the following motion:

"Hertford Town Council has long had concern about the plight of those passengers who arrive by train at Platform One of Hertford North Station and being elderly or disabled face the inevitable challenge of two long flights of steps to ground level. There is no lift.

It asks the rail company responsible for healthy and safe passenger access what advice it publishes for such passengers and when in its schedule of works it plans to provide a lift"

Councillor S Newton offered her support in her capacity as Champion for Older People with Hertfordshire County Council. Councillor Ruffles thanked her for this offer and advised that he may call upon such support at a later stage.

Councillor J C S Sartin asked what assistance is already in place for the disabled at the station. Councillor P A Ruffles advised that previously a member of staff would have been available to assist a disabled person across the track but that this service is no longer available.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Town Council approve the motion.

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

It was **RESOLVED** that:

In view of the confidential nature of the following item, which related to the business matters of other individuals and organisations, the public be excluded whilst the following item was discussed. This was in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as amended by the Local Government Act 1972.

150. STAFFING ISSUE

The Town Council received a verbal report on a staffing issue.