

MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 3 MARCH 2008 AT 7.30PM IN THE ROBIN ROOM, THE CASTLE, HERTFORD

PRESENT: Councillor N Wilson, in the Chair

Councillors J F Cook, Mrs H P Durbin, Mrs B S Haddock, J C Hedley
Mrs S M Newton (for part of the meeting), and Mrs B M Wrangles

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor P A Ruffles
Ms N L Villa, Town Clerk
S Davies, Finance and Administration Manager
Mrs M E Aldrich, Administrative Secretary

249. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Councillors Miss K P Darby, D R Poole and R A K Radford.

250. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mrs H P Durbin declared a personal interest in minute 256 - Cromwell Road Allotments – Community Allotment and Orchard. as she had spoken about the project to the scheme organisers.

Councillor P A Ruffles declared a prejudicial interest in minute 265 – Finance, Grant Applications, as he was Chairman of the Trustees of Scout property. He left the meeting whilst this matter was discussed.

251. THE MINUTES of the meeting held on 19 November 2007 were approved as correct record and the Chairman authorised to sign the same.

252. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT DEALT WITH ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

The Committee received and noted the Action Sheet.

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

There were no members of the public wishing to speak.

254. ALLOTMENTS - NORTH ROAD ALLOTMENTS SITE

The Committee received and noted a report from the North Road Plottolders Group.

Matters Arising from the Report

- (a) Overhanging Foliage – The overhanging foliage had still not been cut back and the Town Clerk agreed to investigate why this work had yet to be carried out.
- (b) Potholes at the Entrance to the Allotments - The Town Clerk agreed to arrange for these to be filled in.
- (c) 50 year anniversary of Plot holder - It was agreed that the Town Clerk work with the North Road Plot holders Group in identifying the anniversary of the 50 year plot holder and in arranging a suitable ceremony.

255. ALLOTMENT STATISTICS

The Committee received and noted the allotment statistics.

256. CROMWELL ROAD ALLOTMENTS – COMMUNITY ALLOTMENT AND ORCHARD

The Committee received a report on the progress of the garden and orchard. The original proposals had been considered too ambitious and the revised scheme was more in keeping with the concept of cultivating allotments. The first phase would involve the cultivation of specific allotment plots as outlined in the map accompanying the report and would be sufficient for 3 – 5 people to work. The plots would be worked under a licence agreement which would clearly define the area involved in the initial phase of the project. A rental would be payable and would be calculated on the basis of the annual cost of six plots. The cost of the rental or licence would be met by the sponsors of the project.

The Committee approved the issue of a licence for occupation of the six allotment plots as detailed on the map accompanying the report, for allotment use only, for a period of 12 months. The licence to be issued on a six monthly basis and this would run concurrently.

This would enable the sponsors of the project to progress the second phase which would be the submission of a planning application for the construction of a shed on the site. The orchard could also be developed during this time.

257. ALLOTMENTS MAINTENANCE

The Committee received and noted a report which detailed specific items of allotment maintenance that had taken place since the start of November.

258. CEMETERY AND CLOSED CHURCHYARDS - STATISTICS FOR BURIALS AND INTERMENT OF ASHES

The Committee received and noted the statistics for burials and interment of ashes.

259. CEMETERY AND CLOSED CHURCHYARD MAINTENANCE

The Committee received and noted a report which detailed specific items of Cemetery and Closed Churchyard maintenance that had taken place since the start of November.

Councillor J F Cook commented that the contractors had left the tree stump to the recently lopped Ash tree. It was agreed that the contractors be asked to remove the tree stump.

260. SEASONAL INSPECTION

The Committee received the Seasonal Inspection by the Working Group for North Road Cemetery and the Closed Churchyards.

It was noted that items identified for maintenance work and investigation would progressed by officers and a full programme of works, including financial implications would be presented to the next meeting for consideration.

Members commented on the amount of soil that had been backed up onto the Cemetery fence bordering the Sele Farm estate. The Town Clerk was requested to write to Riversmead Housing Association to ask for the soil be cleared from the Town Council's fence.

Councillor Mrs S M Newton arrived.

It was also agreed that Stuart Baker, Grounds Supervisor should be invited to a future meeting of this Committee.

261. NORTH ROAD CEMETERY

The Committee received an update on the implementation of decisions of the 4 June 2007 Committee and Members were asked to determine the additional issues identified within the report as a way forward for the management of North Road Cemetery.

The Committee agreed the following:

- The commissioning of a new grave plan.
- The retention of the current plot sizing in relation to Block F.
- The amendment of the Rules and Regulations which state all memorials must be fitted in accordance with National Association of Memorial Masons Code of Practice.
- To enforce the new rules regarding kerb stones without retrospective application, except in incidences of obvious breach of the existing regulations or Health and Safety matters and those current plot owners would be given the option, but not compelled, to a purchase formal kerbstone.

- The designation of Block B as a traditional and Block C as lawn graves.
- The use of stone chippings within properly constructed memorials.
- Officers to provide a further report to Committee setting out recommendations in respect of differentiated charging for traditional and lawn graves.

262. SUB-COMMITTEES AND ADVISORY SUB-COMMITTEES - HERTFORD YOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

The Committee received and noted the Minutes of the Hertford Youth Town Council meetings held on 8 November 2007 and 10 January 2008.

263. TOWN CENTRE GATEWAY

The Committee received an update on the current situation regarding the town centre gateway. Members also considered its design and location together with the possibility of the construction of a second gateway.

The project had been successful in being awarded a grant of £5,000 through the "Hidden Hertford" initiative and £300 in donations from local businesses. The Town Council would be contributing approximately £500 for the installation of the gateway in Fore Street and with £5,500 in the budget there would be sufficient funding for a second gateway elsewhere in the town.

The Town Council and the Hidden Hertford initiative were now in a position to further progress this project by seeking advice from the planning officers at East Herts Council.

The Committee agreed:

- The design and location of the gateway in Fore Street.
- That officers investigate the possibility of erecting a second gateway in the town.

264. CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

The Committee received and noted a report from John Barber, Project Manager for the Christmas Lights in 2007. He concluded his report by stating that "the scheme now in place gave a sound platform to extend and improve the town centre Christmas lights for future years".

265. FINANCE - GRANT APPLICATIONS

The Committee noted that there was £4,300 left in the Community Grant budget for 2007/08.

The Committee considered the following applications:

- (a) 2nd Bengeo Scout Group A grant of £1,000 was awarded towards the rewiring of their Headquarters.
- (b) Home-Start East Herts A grant of £1,000 was agreed towards funding the running of the family group.
- (c) Cruse Bereavement Care – Hertfordshire £1,000 was agreed towards the providing of service training for volunteers in disaster and trauma support.
- (d) Herts Area Rape Crisis A grant of £200 was awarded towards general running costs.
- (e) Sele Farm Tree Project £600 was agreed to replace damaged trees. The Town Council had supported this project over the last four years and it was further agreed that this would be the final payment for any replacement trees.

Councillor J F Cook expressed his displeasure at the continued vandalism of the trees on this estate. The organisers of the project had worked long and hard over the years to make this estate more “green” and improve its appearance for the residents only to find their efforts upset by unrelenting vandals. He agreed to contact the local press regarding this problem.

- (f) Sele over 60's Lunch Club A grant of £200 was agreed towards a summer outing for club members.

266. WAIVING OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The Committee noted that due to the urgent nature of work required, the Town Clerk in consultation with the Vice Chairman of Community Services and the Chairman of Finance, Policy and Administration approved the commissioning of tree work at All Saints Churchyard and North Road Cemetery. The Cemetery work totalled £6,600 and the All Saints work totalled £9,320, both of which exceeded the threshold of £2,500 stipulated in the Financial Regulations as requiring competitive tenders.

The Committee ratified this action.

The Town Clerk advised that she was in the process of drawing up a list of approved contractors for cemetery and allotment work to cover the next three years. This was noted.

267. BUDGET SUMMARY OF SERVICES MANAGED BY THE COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

The Committee received and noted a budget summary of services managed by the Community Services Committee.