

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND LEISURE
COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 1 DECEMBER 2014 IN THE ROBIN ROOM, THE
CASTLE, HERTFORD AT 7.30PM**

PRESENT: Councillor Miss I Sigmac, in the Chair

Councillors: P Boyle, Mrs B Haddock, Miss J Sartin and A Stevenson

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms N L Villa, Town Clerk
Ms T Carpenter, Civic Administration Manager

288. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Miss C Geall (Business Commitment) and Cllr Mrs S Newton (Previous engagement)

289. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

290. THE MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2014 were approved as a correct record and the Chairman authorised to sign the same.

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

Town Signage

The Town Clerk advised members that she was continuing to work out full costs for the proposed town signage but had established that the cost of 8 signs was in the region of £20,000 to supply. Installation costs were not yet known but the Town Clerk was in discussion with Hertfordshire Highways to establish these.

Jean Riddell, The Civic Society and Hertford Museum had all been consulted on the proposed Heritage Trail, but to date, no response had been received from either the Civic Society or the Museum.

The Town Clerk was requested to bring further information regarding costs to the next meeting as the scheme could not be approved without the full information.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The action sheet be received and noted.

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

There were no members of the public wishing to speak.

293. TOURISM AND PROMOTION – TOWN AND TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE

The Committee received a report summarising activity at the Tourist Information Centre (TTIC). The Committee was pleased to note the upward trend on all enquiries and that ticket sales were also up. The Town Clerk was asked to establish whether the new stock had been delivered and that it was displayed in an uncluttered manner. The Town Clerk confirmed that the job specification for the new post was currently being drafted and would be advertised shortly.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee **notes** the report.

294. TOURISM AND PROMOTION – HERTFORD TOWN COUNCIL EVENTS

The Committee received a report reviewing the events which had taken place in 2014.

Wedding Exhibition

The Committee required further information on the reason for consideration being given to bringing the organisation of the Wedding Exhibition back in-house given the long discussions that had taken place to outsource the event last year. The Committee resolved to keep the event outsourced until such time as more detailed information was referred to the Committee outlining the reasoning for bringing the event back in house.

Christmas Gala

The Committee were pleased with the success of the Christmas Gala and had received positive feedback from members of the public.

It was requested that in future, after each event, the Marketing and Events Manager writes to all those who took part to seek both positive and negative feedback on each event in order to aid continual improvement of the events programme.

The Committee requested that no stalls be sited on Salisbury Square at next year's Gala. The noise from the generators drowned out the acts on stage, and the stalls themselves, sited as they were, caused people to congregate in the road, when watching the stage performances and whilst queuing to purchase from the stalls.

The members of St John Ambulance were not happy with the positioning of their ambulance and it was felt that a more appropriate site for next year would be on Bull Plain.

The Town Clerk advised members that there had been a lack volunteers to act as stewards at the Gala, which had now become so popular it may be necessary to employ security staff next year to ensure crowd safety.

Event cost breakdown

The Committee noted the breakdown of event costs and noted that some events cost more than others, and particularly queried the relatively high cost of the Community Sports Day. The Committee requested a breakdown of the costs for this event to establish the reason for it being disproportionately high. A discussion took place regarding whether this event should continue next year, however it was decided to reassess after next year's event.

It was requested that the Committee be advised of the cost of hiring the large billboard adjacent to North Road Station.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee **notes** the report.

295. DRAFT EVENTS PROGRAMME 2015

The Committee received a report outlining a proposed Event Programme for 2015 and raised the following queries for which confirmation would be sought from the Marketing and Events Manager:

- a) That the times for Carols at the Castle are confirmed.
- b) That the Committee is advised of the proposed cost of the tickets for the Valentine's Day activities.
- c) That the Rotary event 'Carnival at the Castle' is clearly marketed as a Rotary event with the byline 'supported by Hertford Town Council'.

The price of the ticket for the Open Air Cinema was confirmed as £6 and the Committee awaited advice as to confirmation of the film to be screened. It was suggested that the GoHertford website be used to establish preferences for next year's choice of film.

The Committee approved the inclusion of Mayoral and Civic Events that are open to the general public within the printed events programme provided the method of applying to attend the event was clearly outlined in the programme.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee approves the proposed 2015 events programme.

- b) The Committee approves the price of the Open Air Cinema ticket at £6
- c) The Committee approves the inclusion of Civic and Mayoral Events which are open to the public to be included in the Events Programme.

296. TOWN CENTRE UPDATE

The Committee received a report summarising the various projects designed to assist the economic health and development of the town centre.

Concern was expressed that the Council would lose the funding from East Herts Council for the signage if the matter was not concluded before the end of the financial year. The Town Clerk advised that she had asked the Finance Manager to invoice the District Council now on the basis that the installation will take place shortly. The Committee requested that regular updates on progress are provided to members via the Weekly Bulletin.

A discussion took place regarding Social Media activity by Officers and it was confirmed that the Civic Administration Manager provided information to the Marketing and Events Manager to tweet on Council matters, such as meeting dates and times. The Town Clerk felt that it was preferable that tweets were funnelled through one officer to ensure that the information was released at appropriate intervals.

Officers were reminded to be mindful of national news stories to ensure that postings were appropriate in the event of a major news story.

The Committee requested that some work be undertaken to refresh the GoHertford website in terms of links to events. It was felt that website was not well set up for finding information and the information architecture of the site required some work. It was requested that recommendations for improvements be brought to a future meeting.

The Committee discussed the town centre wifi project and understood that the cost of the scheme in Bishop's Stortford was £10,000 per 5 access points with 2.5 years access. It was understood that Bishop's Stortford had 18 access points. The Chairman and Cllr Miss J Sartin agreed to visit Bishop's Stortford to check the coverage. Whilst members considered that it was important for the Town Centre Co-ordinator to lead the project, he should seek the advice and expertise of both the Finance Manager and Cllr Boyle to bring the project to fruition

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) The Committee **notes** the progress made on delivering the Council's non-event Town Centre activities.
- (b) The Committee **approves** that the Town Centre Co-ordinator should continue his investigations into the provision of free wifi in the town centre and bring a report to the next meeting.

297. VENUE HIRE REPORT

The Committee received an update on the hire statistics for the Castle and Mill Bridge rooms. The report also contained a recommendation for changes to the wedding hire packages and details of the refurbishment of the Millbridge Rooms.

The Committee discussed information to be included in a Lawn Hire Policy, however the Town Clerk reminded the Committee that the Town Council does not own/control the Grounds and cannot therefore enforce a formal policy without agreement from East Herts Council. It was recommended that, instead of adopting a formal policy, that any unusual lawn hire request should be determined by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and the Leader. The term unusual referred to any request for lawn hire apart from wedding hire.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee **notes** the report.
- b) The Committee **approves** the proposed 2015 wedding packages
- c) The Committee **approves** that any unusual lawn hire request be considered by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and the Leader.

298. FRIENDS OF HERTFORD CASTLE

The Committee received a report on the recent activities of the Friends of Hertford Castle.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee **notes** the report.

299. CCTV STATISTICS

The Committee received a report from the Finance Manager outlining the recent CCTV statistics

The Town Clerk reported that she would be arranging to visit Sawbridgeworth Town Council to gain an understanding of the CCTV provision in Sawbridgeworth.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee **notes** the report.

300. PLANNING TRANSPORT AND TRAFFIC - PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE

The Committee had received copies of the minutes of the Planning Sub Committee meetings held on 29 September, 13 October, 27 October, 10 November and 24 November 2014

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The minutes of the Planning Sub Committee held on 29 September, 13 October, 27 October, 10 November and 24 November 2014 be received.

301. MAIDENHEAD STREET REGENERATION PROJECT

The Committee received a report from Cllr Miss J Sartin regarding proposed improvements to Maidenhead Street including new street furniture, lighting, improvements to Evron Place and Honey Lane etc.

The Committee noted that a meeting was due to take place with Hertfordshire Highways shortly to progress the project from a Highways prospective.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

a) The Committee **notes** the report.

302. FINANCE – FIRST HALF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2014/15

The Committee received a report on the first half income and expenditure for 2014/15.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee **notes** the first half income and expenditure for 2014/15

303. REVIEW OF SALARY APPORTIONMENTS

The Committee received a report outlining the apportionment of staffing costs across the service budget headings for the Development and Leisure Committee. The Town Clerk advised that the breakdown was based on just a small snapshot over a five month period and the details would be refined on a longer term basis in future reports.

304. DRAFT BUDGET 2015/16

The Committee received the second draft of the proposed budget for Development and Leisure for 2015/16 which included ongoing support for the taxi marshals, additional noticeboards, basement improvements and event equipment. The Committee requested that the Town Council noticeboards and the Taxi marshalling be funded from the New Homes Bonus, along with the Maidenhead Street Regeneration Project, Town Centre wifi and signage project.

The Committee also requested that the Marketing and Events Manager confirm whether it was still required to set aside £12,000 for marketing of the Downshire Suite.

The Committee further indicated a desire to fund improvements to the Ashley Webb Shelter from the New Homes Bonus.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee approves the list of proposed projects for 2015/16, and noted that a request for additional funding from the New Homes Bonus to fund the signage project, and town centre wifi would be forthcoming when costs were confirmed. Funding from the New Homes Bonus was also requested for Town Centre noticeboards and Taxi Marshalling,

The meeting closed at 21:25