

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE
HELD ON MONDAY, 8 JUNE 2009 AT 7.30PM IN THE CASTLE, HERTFORD**

PRESENT: Councillor Miss K P Darby

Councillors Mrs H P Durbin, B S Haddock, J C Hedley, Mrs S M Newton, D R Poole, R A K Radford, N Wilson and Mrs B M Wrangles.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Miss J C S Sartin, Dr L E Radford and P A Ruffles
Mrs N L Villa, Town Clerk
Mr S Davies, Responsible Finance Officer
Miss M Challis, Assistant to the Town Clerk (minutes)

26. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

It was **RESOLVED** that:

Cllr Miss Kim Darby be elected Chairman for the forthcoming civic year.
Cllr Darby took the chair for the remainder of the meeting.

27. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

It was **RESOLVED** that:

Cllr Mrs Beryl Wrangles be elected Vice Chairman for the forthcoming civic year.

28. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None were received.

29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mrs B M Wrangles declared personal interest in item 8 relating to allotments and item 11 (Community Grant applications) relating to North Road Allotment Group as she is an allotment holder.

Councillor Mrs H P Durbin declared a personal interest in agenda item 8 relating to allotments as her son is an allotment holder. She also declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 11 (Community Grant applications) relating to Sele Youth and Community Forum as she is the chair of the committee, and also relating to Hertford Music Club as she is a committee member.

Councillor P A Ruffles declared prejudicial interests in agenda item 11 (Community Grant applications) relating to Hertford Division St. John Ambulance as a member of the organisation

Councillors R A K Radford and Dr L E Radford declared personal interests in agenda item 11 (Community Grant applications) relating to

Hertford Music Club as they have piano lessons with the Chairman of Hertford Music Society.

Councillor N Wilson, Councillor J Hedley and the Town Clerk declared prejudicial interests in agenda item 11 (Community Grant applications) relating to Hertford & Ware Sea Cadet Corps as they are members of Sea Cadet Corps.

Councillor B S Haddock declared prejudicial interest in agenda item 11 (Community Grant applications) relating to Pinehurst Community Association as a regular hirer of the group's mini bus.

Councillor Mrs S M Newton also declared a personal interest in this agenda item as she works in this area as a councillor.

Councillor D R Poole declared prejudicial interest in agenda item 11 (Community Grant applications) relating to Hertford Division St John Ambulance as the group is one of his nominated charities for his Mayoral year. Councillor N Wilson declared a personal interest in the same agenda item as a member of St. John Ambulance.

30. THE MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2009 were approved as a correct record and the Chairman authorised to sign the same.

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

The Committee received an updated Action Sheet.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Action Sheet be received and noted

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

There were no members of the public wishing to speak.

33. ALLOTMENTS – NORTH ROAD ALLOTMENTS SITE

The Committee received a written report from the Secretary of the North Road Plotolders Group.

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that the Council had previously received a Local Strategic Partnership Health Inequalities grant of £2000 towards a project to provide a disabled access ramp at Cromwell Road allotments. This project is no longer feasible due to impracticality and cost, and so the LSP have agreed that this funding can now be

used to provide improved access to the toilet facilities at North Road allotment site.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The report from the North Road Plotolders Group be received and noted.

34. ALLOTMENT - STATISTICS

It was suggested that in order to help eliviate the waiting list for allotments, plots are spilt in to smaller sizes as they become vacant. The Town Clerk confirmed to the Committee that vacant 10 pole plots are being divided into five poles to cope with the demand for allotments but that splitting the plots would create significant additional administrative burden.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) The allotment statistics be received and noted, and
- (b) The Ground staff and Allotment Officer be thanked for their work in the administration and management of the allotment sites, particularly as the number of plots has increased.

35. ALLOTMENTS - MAINTENANCE

The committee received a report on a list of works completed across the allotments sites since the beginning of November. The committee also received a report asking them to consider increasing the number of toilet maintenance visits on the allotment sites from two visits per annum to three due to high demand.

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It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) The report on allotments maintenance be received and noted, and
- (b) The grounds staff be thanked for their hard work in managing the allotment sites.
- (c) The Committee approve three services of the toilets per year.

36. ALLOTMENTS - REVISED RULES AND REGULATIONS

The Committee received the revised updated Rules and Regulations for approval.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee approve the updated rules and regulations for allotment sites.

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

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The report on the statistics for burials and interment of ashes is noted.

38. CEMETERY AND CLOSED CHURCHYARD - MAINTENANCE

The Committee received a report on the maintenance of the cemetery and Closed Churchyards. The Town Clerk informed the Committee that there has been a number of incidents vandalism at St. Leonard's Garden where small trees are being pulled out at the roots. The contractor will be monitoring this situation and will review appropriate planting accordingly.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) The report on the maintenance work programme for the Cemetery and Closed Churchyard be received and noted.

39. CEMETERY AND CLOSED CHURCHYARD – COLLAPSED WALL AT ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

The Committee received a report to update them on the situation regarding the collapsed wall at All Saints' Church.

The actual maintenance responsibility for the wall is still in considerable doubt, although it is clear that Hertford Borough Council refused to accept responsibility when asked in 1996. Either Hertfordshire County Council or the Diocese of St Albans would appear to responsible and this is currently being investigated. Although Hertfordshire County Council had suggested that they may be willing to consider a contribution towards the cost of repair to the wall as a gesture of goodwill, this has now been withdrawn.

The collapse is believed to be due to the build up of flood water as a result of blocked culvert grills which are the responsibility of East Herts. Council.

As the site is on the main through route for Hertford, the damaged wall is an eyesore and is in urgent need of repair.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) The Committee note the report
- (b) The Committee re-affirm the Town Council's position which is that it does not accept responsibility for the wall as per the resolution of Hertford Borough Council on 16 February 1966.

- (c) The Committee recognising the importance of the church as a key feature in the town and that a legal challenge concerning maintenance responsibility may be lengthy and costly, delegate authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman, to accept the best value quotation and place an order for the work to be undertaken
- (d) The Committee instruct the Town Clerk to continue to liaise with Hertfordshire County Council, East Herts Council and the Diocese of St Albans in order to attempt to reach a long term agreement regarding maintenance and the potential contribution of these authorities to the current required repairs.

40. CEMETERY AND CLOSED CHURCHYARDS – REPAIR OF THE GRADE II LISTED SAUNDERS TOMB

The Committee received a report recommending that the Town Council carry out repairs to the damaged Grade II Listed Saunders Tomb in All Saints' Churchyard. The estimated cost of repair is £2,500. Permission to undertake the work has been granted by virtue of an Archdeacon's Letter of Authority.

An application for grant aid from The Pilgrim Trust has been made, and if successful will allow the Town Council to carry out repairs to important memorials in churchyards across Hertford, including this tomb. However, the Town Council does have a limited existing fund for repair of memorials which may be used if the grant application is unsuccessful.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) The Committee note the report
- (b) The Committee approve the repair of the Grade II Listed Saunders tomb from existing budgets as a priority, due to its historic importance and "at risk" status.

41. CEMETERY AND CLOSED CHURCHYARDS – CEMETERY SIGNAGE

The current signage at North Road Cemetery is temporary and there is no formal signage indicating opening times.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) The Committee note the report.
- (b) The Committee approve the purchase of a new sign for the main entrance of the North Road Cemetery, the design of which will be decided by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman of Community Services Committee.

42. CEMETERY AND CLOSED CHURCHYARDS – MEMORIAL TESTING

The Committee received a report to clarify the position and way forward for memorial testing at North Road Cemetery.

Although the Ministry of Justice have revised its guidance on memorial testing, it does not override the guidance of the Health and Safety Executive. Hertford Town Council's policy is based on the guidance of the Local Government Ombudsman and ICCM. Hertford Town Council attempted to accommodate both sets of guidance in its recent testing process and the Town Clerk has written to the Ministry of Justice to raise her concerns about the testing process and the damage it obligates the Town Council to undertake in order to meet its Health and Safety obligations.

It is hoped that repairs to memorials within North Road Cemetery will be completed within six months, however more time will be needed for the closed churchyards, as a Faculty is required from the Diocese of St Albans prior to proceeding with repairs.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) The Committee note the report
- (b) The Committee thank the Officers in handling the number of complaints regarding memorial testing in a professional manner.
- (c) The Town Clerk is to write to the Ministry of Justice, on behalf of the Town Council, pointing out the lack of clarity in its guidance for memorial testing.

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

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) The Minutes of the Hertford Youth Town Council meeting held on 12 February and 2 April be received and noted.

44. COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATIONS

The Committee considered a number of Community Grant applications.

Councillor Mrs H P Durbin and P A Ruffles left the room.

North Road Plholders Group made an application for £1,200 to clean communal areas, replace composting enclosures and re-site toilets.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Local Strategic Partnership Health Inequalities funding grant of £2000 originally intended for the project to provide a disabled access ramp at Cromwell Road has recently been provided to North Road Plot Holders and it was therefore proposed to defer this application to the next meeting, as the funding may no longer be required.

Hertford Methodist Church made an application for £1,000 to enhance and introduce facilities that are missing from the church buildings to make them more suitable for wider community use.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

This application be rejected as the Town Council has a policy of not granting funding to places of worship.

Sele Youth & Community Forum made an application for £500 undertake a project to evaluate the activities of young people and to monitor their effectiveness in promoting community cohesion and reduction in nuisance behaviour.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The group be asked to justify their activities in more detail; how the money will be used and how the outcome will benefit the community. The Committee will then be in a better position to consider the application.

Hertford Football Club made an application for £1,200 towards the provision of new facilities at the ground. The Club were awarded a grant of £1,000 in September 2008.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The application be rejected as only one application will be considered in any 12 month period.

Southfield School made an application for £50 towards its summer fair.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The application be rejected as it is unclear if any of the pupils are resident of Hertford.

The Committee considered the following applications and **RESOLVED** in accordance with its powers under section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 that the Committee 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 Music Club be awarded £1,000 be made towards the purchase of a new GE grand piano.

Councillors J C Headley and N Wilson, and the Town Clerk left the room.

Hertford & Ware Sea Cadet Corps be awarded £810 towards boating tuition and fees and for health and safety materials for the unit headquarters.

Councillor N Wilson and the Town Clerk returned to the room.

Councillor Mrs B S Haddock left the room.

Pinehurst Community Association be awarded £1,200 towards the purchase of a second hand mini bus.

Councillor Mrs B S Haddock returned to the room.

Home-Start East Herts be awarded £600 towards the costs of room hire and equipment and a summer outing.

5th Hertford Brownies be awarded £100 towards the cost of a coach from Hertford to Skegness.

Councillor D R Poole left the room.

Hertford Division St John Ambulance be awarded £600 towards re-cladding of their hall.

Councillor D R Poole returned to the room.

Cruse Bereavement Care be awarded £500 towards the provision of a new training course designed to help recruit more volunteers.

Master Alex Fisher – Hertfordshire Scouts be awarded £135 towards his participation in a community project in Swaziland, on the condition that he sends a report to the Committee on his return.

Councillors Mrs H P Durbin and P A Ruffles returned to the room.

45. YEAR END ACCOUNTS FOR 2008/09

The Committee received a report on the year end accounts for the Community Services Committee 2008/09.