

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND LEISURE COMMITTEE
HELD ON MONDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2011 IN THE ROBING ROOM, THE CASTLE,
HERTFORD AT 7.30PM**

PRESENT: Councillor Miss J Sartin in the Chair

Councillors: P Boyle, Miss C Geall, M McCormick, P Ruffles, A Stevenson.

IN ATTENDANCE: Cllr Miss I Sigmac
Mrs N L James, Town Clerk
Ms T Carpenter, Civic Administration Manager
Mr S Davies, Finance Manager
Miss M Challis, Marketing and Promotions Manager
Mr M Caton, Town Centre Coordinator
Mrs S Cousins, Town and Tourist Information Centre Manager
1 member of the public

293. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs S Newton (unwell), D Poole (RBL commitments) and Dr L Radford (family commitments)

294. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

295. THE MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2011 were approved as a correct record and the Chairman authorised to sign the same.

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

Open Air Theatre

It was confirmed that the date for the next open air theatre was 8 July 2012, not 2011 as quoted on Paper A

Internal decoration of Mill Bridge Rooms

Whilst the walls of the Mill Bridge Rooms had been painted recently, improvement works were still required to the floor, kitchen and toilet areas.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The action sheet be received and noted.

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

There were no members of the public wishing to speak.

298. TOURISM AND PROMOTION – TOWN AND TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE

The Committee received a report summarising activity at the Town and Tourist Information Centre.

There had been 15 entries to the Winning Windows competition, with the results being announced on the evening of the Christmas Gala. The winning window display was awarded to The White Hart, with Sugar Smith and Classic Barber being 2nd and 3rd respectively.

180 nominations had been received for the Cheerful Trader competition.

It was noted that income from the sale of merchandise had increased recently, and the 2012 merchandise had proved popular, as had the 2012 calendar. Enquiries and footfall to the T&TIC had also improved over the last couple of months.

It was noted that the cost to hire the T&TIC window was £10 per week.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee agree to the ongoing arrangement for the hire of the T&TIC window
- b) The Committee note the report.

299. TOURISM AND PROMOTION – HERTFORD LIVE!

The Committee had received a report summarising the Hertford Live! scheme in the Town Centre. It was noted that the scheme faced certain challenges which included lack of popularity of certain pitches, complaints received regarding the two popular pitches as well as insurance and licensing obligations.

A discussion ensued regarding the merits of continuing Hertford Live! and how the scheme could be modified to work within the constraints of the PRS licence. The Committee agreed to continue to operate the scheme over the next year from the two most popular pitches only, those in Maidenhead Street and Bircherley Green. It was however recognised that problems existed with Bircherley Green management, and it was therefore decided to relocate that pitch slightly, to outside the Toni and Guy hair salon. It was further agreed that the scheme should be extended to include street entertainment in addition to live music.

The Town Centre Co-ordinator was currently investigating the possibility of various Hertford based music groups using the pitches for Carol singing over the advent season.

The Council's public liability insurance would be checked to ascertain whether the busking scheme was included.

It was RESOLVED that:

- a) The Committee approves the purchase of PRS licences as appropriate for Hertford Live!
- b) The Committee approves a review of the viability of Hertford Live! at its meeting in November 2012.

Note: Cllr Miss C Geall wished it to be recorded that she voted against the proposal to continue the scheme on the basis that the cost implications had not been fully assessed.

300. TOURISM AND PROMOTION – HERTFORD TOWN COUNCIL EVENTS

The Committee received a report summarising the Town Council's events since the September 2011 events programme along with a final draft of the events programme for 2012.

The Committee noted that the Heritage Open Day had been hugely successful and thanked all those who had been involved in the event.

The Marketing and Promotions Manager reported that an approach had been made by a bridal magazine to take over the arrangement of the wedding exhibitions. There would be no cost to the Council and the company would be able to advertise the event more widely. Although the Council would save advertising costs of approximately £500, it would however lose the £3000 it currently receives from the exhibitors. The Committee noted that the wedding exhibitions were relatively simple to organise and officer time was not particularly high and it was therefore considered that the loss of the income stream could not be justified. The dates of the wedding exhibitions would however be altered to ensure that they were held earlier in both the Spring and Autumn wedding exhibition season in order to maximise custom to the Castle.

The 2012 events programme was noted as was the fact that the Friends of Hertford Castle was happy with the proposals. The centenary of the Castle Grounds being open to the public would be marked on 22 July 2012 with exhibitions in the Castle.

The Committee had also been circulated with a proposed street party jubilee pack, which was designed to encourage more residents to organise street parties.

Whilst members were generally happy with the concept of the pack, given that the available budget had been reduced from £2000 to £750 it was not considered feasible to provide 100 party hats for each event and that balloons would be a cheaper option. It was proposed that the pack should include a list of town centre stockists of jubilee party wares, although concern was expressed that it would be difficult to ensure the list was all inclusive. It was further suggested that the pack should include an invitation to the lighting of the beacon event in the Castle on 6

June and also a suggestion that an invitation could be extended to the Mayor to attend the various street parties. Information from the District Council regarding the application for the road closure should also be included, along with a quiz of Hertford.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee approves the events programme for 2012.
- b) The Committee approves the Jubilee Street Party Information Pack subject to minor alterations.
- c) In accordance with its powers under section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 that the Committee should incur expenditure of £750 towards Street Party Packs of bunting and balloons, which in its opinion was in the interest of enhancing local communities and would benefit them in a manner commensurate with the expenditure.
- d) The Committee notes the remainder of the report.

301. TOWN CENTRE UPDATE

The Committee received a report summarising the various projects designed to assist the economic health and development of the town during the current financial difficulties and also received a verbal update from the Town Centre Coordinator

The Chairman thanked all members and staff involved in the recent Christmas Gala event, which had been very successful. It was agreed that in 2012 the Christmas lights throughout the town should be switched on prior to the gala, with the gala evening just focusing on the Christmas tree lights switch on.

The Town Centre Co-ordinator reported that East Herts Council had been very accommodating in allowing free parking on the planned Thursday night late night shopping evenings, and a number of retailers would be remaining open later, with more retailers joining in as Christmas drew closer.

It was further reported that a Shop Local campaign was planned for the Spring which would also see the launch of the town centre website. It had recently been announced that the Olympic torch would be coming through Hertford on 7 July 2012 and it was hoped that the Town Centre could benefit from the event. The route the torch would be travelling had not yet been announced.

Meetings had taken place with Sainsburys to seek ways in which the store could support and cement a link with the town centre once opened. Liaison was taking place between the Museum and Sainsburys for the supply of old images of the town which could be placed on the hoardings around the site.

The Chairman provided an update of a recent meeting she had attended at East Herts Council on parking. The meeting had been constructive with the town's views regarding pay on exit machines in the car parks and no on street parking charges being strongly argued. The traders were also seeking a permit parking system with the provision of dedicated, long stay car parking facilities.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) The Committee **notes** the progress of the Town Centre Coordinator's priorities.

302. VENUE HIRE REPORT

The Committee received an update on the hire statistics for the Castle and Mill Bridge rooms and to consider a proposal to increase hire fees in line with inflation.

The Committee was pleased to note the increase in bookings in the Downshire Suite.

The proposed price increase for the hire of the Downshire Suite and Mill Bridge Rooms was in line with the latest inflation figure of 5.6%. The Committee felt that tariffs for the Downshire Suite should be rounded up or down to the nearest £1.00 and that the tariffs in the Mill Bridge Rooms rounded down to the nearest 50p, in the interests of ensuring the facility remained competitive with other venues in the town.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

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

303. FRIENDS OF HERTFORD CASTLE

The Committee had received a report outlining the activities of the Friends of Hertford Castle, along with a copy of the latest minutes of the group's meeting.

A concern had been raised regarding the use of the Traveller's chair during Castle Tours. Members considered that the chair could be potentially dangerous, that it currently had a faulty mechanism and was also fragile. Generally it was agreed that the chair was an interesting attraction during tours and that it should remain available for occasional use. The cost of the repair of the mechanism would be investigated and the value would be ascertained.

The Friends had also discussed at its meeting ideas for improvements of the appearance of the basement, and whilst recognising that the presentation of the basement as a dungeon was popular with child visitors it was felt that the current display had outlived its usefulness. Suggestions for improvements to the basement included displays depicting how it would have been used in the 18th century as a kitchen and wine cellar, installation of improved lighting, tidying of the privy, and opening of the store rooms.

The Committee considered that such improvements would be medium to long term projects but that in the meantime it was thought that some improvements could be made to displays in cooperation with the Museum.

The Committee also considered whether it would be appropriate for children to handle the Sword and the Mace, however given their value and historical significance it was felt that this would not be appropriate. Nevertheless, it was thought that it may be possible to create objects of a similar weight so that children could experience the weight.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

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

304. CARNIVAL

The Committee received a verbal report confirming that arrangements for the Carnival were progressing reasonably well, that the Town Clerk was currently working on the road closure and health and safety aspects and that the Committee was working on all other arrangements.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee notes the verbal update.

305. PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE CASTLE

The Clerk provided a verbal report regarding photography in the Castle. Whilst there was currently 'No Photography' signage throughout the Castle the Committee was asked to consider whether this was still appropriate. The Committee considered that the only area where photography should still not be permitted was in the basement, in the interests of security. No objections were raised to the sword and mace being photographed provided they were not located in the basement at the time. It was requested that the Friends of Hertford Castle be advised of the Council's decision.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee notes the verbal report.

306 . CCTV STATISTICS

The Committee had received a report outlining the CCTV statistics for 2011. The Committee was pleased to note that the cost of CCTV provision to the Council was reducing whilst the service level maintained

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The CCTV report and statistics be noted.

307. PLANNING TRANSPORT AND TRAFFIC - PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) The minutes of the Planning Sub Committee held on 5 September, 19 September, 3 October, 17 October and 31 October 2011 be received.

308. FINANCE –FIRST HALF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2011/12

The Committee received a report on the first half income and expenditure for 2011/12. The Committee was pleased to note that all expenditure had remained within budget.

It was requested that a new 'Welcome to Hertford' sign be erected in Bengoe to replace the old green sign currently in situ.

It was further agreed that the next two Business Enterprise Workshops be provided free of charge.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) The Committee **notes** the report on the income and expenditure to 30 September 2011.

309. FINANCE – BUDGET ITEMS 2012/13

The Committee received a draft of the budget for 2012/13.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) The Committee notes the draft budget.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm.