

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE  
HELD ON MONDAY, 10 JUNE 2013 AT 7.30PM IN THE CASTLE, HERTFORD**

PRESENT The Mayor, Councillor P Moore, in the Chair at the start of the meeting

Councillors P Boyle, Mrs B Haddock, Mrs S Newton, P Ruffles, R Willis and N Wilson.

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

**Note:** Cllr Boyle and the Town Clerk joined the meeting at 7.45pm, following an earlier meeting.

**45. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

Councillor N Wilson was elected Chairman for the forthcoming Civic Year. The Chairman then took the chair for the remainder of the meeting.

**46. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

Councillor P Ruffles was elected Vice Chairman for the forthcoming Civic Year.

**47. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillors D Poole (Home Commitment) and M McCormick (Work Commitment)

**48. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**49. THE MINUTES**

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2013 were approved as a correct record of the proceedings and the Chairman was authorised to sign same.

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

Allotment Mentoring and Showcasing

The Committee was advised that the mentoring scheme had commenced, with letters being sent to new tenants at Cromwell Road to advise them that a mentoring scheme existed and contact the Council if they wished to be put in touch with a mentor.

It has not been possible to set a date for a showcasing event due the recent spell of poor weather which had meant that crops were a long way behind, and there was currently very little to showcase. The Committee therefore agreed that the showcasing event could be postponed until the following year.

### Community Gardening Projects

The Committee noted with disappointment that Highways had not responded to requests to set up Community Gardening Projects in the Town. The Committee was however keen to ensure that the beds at Bluecoats were maintained to a high standard, given that they were situated at an important gateway to the Town. It was requested that a letter be sent to Hertfordshire Highways to request that the beds were completely dug out, with new soil and planting added and a proper maintenance regime set in place to ensure the beds became a fitting display for a town gateway.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The action sheet be noted.

### 51. QUESTIONS AND/OR STATEMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

None.

### 52. ALLOTMENTS – STATISTICS AND MAINTENANCE

The Committee received a report detailing the latest statistics for the Council's allotment sites, and also maintenance work which had been carried out on the sites.

It was noted that there continued to be a few vacancies on Cromwell Road, but that new tenants were continually joining the site.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The allotment statistics and maintenance details be received and noted.

### 53. ALLOTMENTS – MUDLARKS COMMUNITY GARDEN PROJECT

The Committee received a report from Mudlarks regarding the recent activities of the project, and Ms Vic Hobson spoke briefly to the Committee regarding the recent changes to the benefit system which were impacting on the service users of project. Ms Hobson advised that the changes were having a dramatic effect both on the clients and on

the volunteers, who were now finding that they had to assist clients in re-applying and preparing for re-assessment for important benefits.

Ms Hobson stated that the work undertaken for the Council, far from being a burden, was proving to be something of great pride to the client group and the money received from the Council for these works was of enormous benefit to the group. The Committee noted in particular the beauty of the Sensory Garden at present.

It was recommended that Ms Hobson speak to the Executive member for Adult Care Services at Hertfordshire County Council to advise him of the problems the group was experiencing following the changes to the benefit system and the cuts in social care.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee notes the report.

**54. NORTH ROAD PLOTHOLDERS GROUP**

The Committee received a report regarding the recent activities of the North Road Plotolders Group and it was noted that the Group continued to invest in the infrastructure of the site to the benefit of the allotment tenants.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee notes the report.

**55. RENEWAL OF NORTH ROAD PLOTHOLDERS' LEASE**

The Committee noted that the North Road Plotolders' Lease was due for renewal at the end of the year and it was therefore agreed to set up a working group to discuss any alterations that may be required to the list.

The following members were nominated to the Working Group:  
Councillors: Wilson, McCormick, Boyle, Poole and Willis

It was **RESOLVED** that:

Councillors Wilson, McCormick, Boyle, Poole and Willis be nominated to form a working group to discuss the terms of the new North Road Plotolders' Lease.

**56. SELE ROAD REPORT**

The Committee received a report regarding the progress of the Sele Road Site and noted that the recent dry spell of weather had resulted in the water harvester running dry. A neighbouring property owner had kindly allowed the group to use a hose from their property but clearly, without rain, the situation would worsen. The Town Clerk agreed to seek an alternative method for refilling the water harvester. The group was

also going through a crucial phase in the handover of responsibility and were working hard to ensure more volunteers came on board.

The report also contained a copy of the proposed Constitution for the group and it was agreed that delegated authority be given to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman to approve the detail of the Constitution.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

Delegated authority be given to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman to approve the Constitution of the Sele Road Lovely Grub Garden.

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

The Committee received a report outlining the recent burials and interment of ashes statistics at the Cemetery along with details of the maintenance work programme. The large increase in burials on the previous year was noted along with the fact that the trend did not appear to be continuing this year. No pattern therefore seemed to be emerging at this stage to judge future burial needs.

It was noted that John Dyer, a member of the cemetery staff had retired after 27 years service and his replacement was due to start on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2013.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee notes the report.

**58. BLOCK J**

The Committee received a report requesting consideration for minor alterations to the design of Block J.

Following discussions with the Cemetery Supervisor it had become clear that minor alterations should be made to the master plan design for Block J in order to ensure the plan worked well within the cemetery environment.

It was suggested that a proposed path to the right of the holly tree not be installed, since this would involve a 1 metre dig, and as a result of the gradient of the land the steep slope would require a retaining wall and railings for safety. It was further suggested that instead of tarmac the area under the holly tree, bark chippings would be more environmentally friendly and protect the roots of the tree. The bark being retained using half round log edging.

It was also requested that the tablet section at the top of the block be laid in straight rows as opposed to on a curve to ensure neatness and prevent weed/grass growth between the memorials.

A further request was for the pre laying of paving slabs (10) on the first row of the tablet section to allow the clear marking out of the plots and to enable the memorials to be placed on top, as in the current garden of rest. Similarly, it was requested that 18 slabs be placed on the first row of the headstone section to mark the plots, however the slabs in this section will be re-used as ashes are interred.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee approves the following aspects of the design of Block J:

- a) The proposed path to the right of the holly tree be removed from the design.
- b) Bark chipping and edging be placed under the holly tree instead of tarmac to protect the tree roots.
- c) The tablet section of the design be placed in straight lines instead of on a curve.
- d) That paving slabs be installed on the first rows of the tablet and headstone sections in order to mark out the plots.

#### **59. GRAVE MAINTENANCE**

The Committee received a report requesting consideration to introduce a limited grave maintenance service of tidying and grass cutting to new graves at a cost of £55 per annum.

It was noted that the proposal was for a very limited service at this stage due to the pressure of work on the grounds staff and that it could be introduced for a trial period to ascertain the level of interest or take up of the service, before taking a decision to either expand or continue the service.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee **approves** a limited grave maintenance service to new graves at a cost of £55 per annum for a trial period.

#### **60. BRAMFIELD ROAD CEMETERY ENTRANCE**

The Town Clerk advised members of the issue of commuter parking on Bramfield Road, which extended to either side of the Cemetery entrance, which was causing access difficulties into the Cemetery, particularly for hearses and funeral corteges. These issues were causing disruption to funerals and the Town Clerk had been pressing Highways to introduce parking restrictions on the road. The Committee requested that the Town Clerk write to Highways to request urgent action to introduce the parking restrictions to 30m either side of the cemetery entrance in Bramfield Road.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Town Clerk write to Highways to request that urgent action be taken to introduce parking restrictions in Bramfield Road.

**61. SUB COMMITTEES AND ADVISORY SUB COMMITTEES**

Hertford Youth Town Council

The Committee had received copies of the minutes of the Youth Town Council meetings held on 18<sup>th</sup> April and 9<sup>th</sup> May 2013

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee notes the minutes of the Youth Town Council held on 18<sup>th</sup> April and 9<sup>th</sup> May 2013.

**62. FINANCE - END OF YEAR INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2012/13**

The Committee received a report detailing the end of year income and expenditure for the Community Services Committee 2012/13.

The Town Clerk advised that the Chairman of the Finance, Policy and Administration Committee would shortly be meeting with the Committee Chairs to discuss the current financial position and to set out the priorities for each Committee for the current financial year.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- a) The Committee notes the end of year income and expenditure to 31 March 2013
- b) The Committee recommends to the Finance, Policy and Administrative Committee that the unspent budgets identified in section 3.3 should be added to the current budget provision for 2013/14

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm.