

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE
HELD ON MONDAY, 11 FEBRUARY 2013 AT 7.30PM IN THE CASTLE,
HERTFORD**

PRESENT: Councillor M McCormick, in the Chair

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

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

348. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor D Poole (Home Commitment)

349. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

350. THE MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2012 were approved as a correct record of the proceedings and the Chairman was authorised to sign same.

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

Big Dig

The Committee noted the proposals to take part in The Big Dig, a national event which involved opening three community gardens in towns and cities on a particular day in the summer (to be announced). The ethos behind the scheme was to encourage the public to get growing. The three proposed sites for Hertford would be the new Sele Road Community Allotment, some vacant plots at Cromwell Road and the Mudlarks Garden. Once the Town Council had registered, the Big Dig would provide all the necessary publicity material and it was hoped that this would combine with the Council's plan to showcase the allotments, and encourage new tenants to the allotment sites.

Community Allotment – Sele Road

The Committee noted the incredible transformation of the land at Sele Road and the work that Groundwork and the team of local people had achieved. A concern was raised as to how the scheme would evolve once the contract with Groundwork had ended in March, particularly

given that the local people taking part were novice gardeners. It was confirmed that there would be a hand over meeting between Groundwork and the Council before the end of the contract, in order for these concerns to be addressed.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The action sheet be noted.

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

None.

353. ALLOTMENTS – STATISTICS AND MAINTENANCE

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

It was noted that there continued to be a few vacancies on some sites, including North Road and that the waiting lists were diminishing. Concern was expressed that the popularity of allotment gardening could be on the wane. The intention to place a press release when the weather improved remained, and it was hoped that both the Big Dig and the Council's own showcasing and mentoring proposals could improve the take up of plots.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The allotment statistics and maintenance details be received and noted.

354. ALLOTMENTS – MUDLARKS COMMUNITY GARDEN PROJECT

The Committee received a report from Mudlarks regarding the recent activities of the project, including an update of the progress of the maintenance work to Holy Trinity Churchyard, St Leonard's Garden and the Sensory Garden at the Castle. The Chairman also reminded the Committee that the new garden design at the Castle had been planted by Mudlarks

The Committee noted from the report that some of the service users of Mudlarks had lost Government funding to attend the group and had been placed on employment schemes. The Committee wondered if there was any help the Council could offer, in terms of identifying funding streams, which could help those service users. It was requested that Vic Hobson be invited to speak at the next meeting of the Committee to ascertain some of the issues Mudlarks was currently facing, with a view to identifying any areas where the Council may be in a position to offer or recommend assistance.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee notes the report.

356. 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.

357. ALLOTMENT SERVICE SURVEY

The Committee received a report with information and feedback from the recent allotment service satisfaction survey.

The Committee was pleased to note that of those that responded, 79% had rated 'Assistance and Service' given by staff as either excellent or good. Furthermore, the Committee was pleased to see that a reasonable amount of respondents had also offered to both showcase their allotments and act as mentors to new tenants. The Committee hoped that the skills of the mentors could be utilised not only at their own sites, but other areas, for example Sele Road, if required.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee notes the report.

358. 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 as was the fact that the burials of cremated remains were similar to last year. It was hoped that with the opening of the new ashes site on Block J the numbers of ashes interments would increase.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee notes the report.

359. REVIEW OF BURIAL FEES

The Committee received a report proposing an increase in burial fees in line with RPI of 3% with effect from 1 April 2013.

The Clerk raised the possibility of providing an additional paid service to tend and tidy graves for those who for whatever reason were no longer able to look after the graves. The Clerk agreed to bring this matter to the next meeting of the Committee for consideration.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee approves the revised scale of charges with effect from 1 April 2013.

360. SEASONAL INSPECTION NOTES

The Committee received a brief report outlining the findings of the recent seasonal inspection of Holy Trinity Churchyard, St Leonard's Garden and Bengoe allotments. The Committee was pleased that very little work was identified in the inspection, which was a testament to the investment the Council had made in the maintenance of the sites over recent years.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee notes the findings of the Seasonal Inspection.

361. SUB COMMITTEES AND ADVISORY SUB COMMITTEES

Hertford Youth Town Council

The Committee had received a copy of the minutes of the Youth Town Council held on 29 November 2012. It was noted that the next meeting would be held on Thursday 28 February 2013, and that Youth Councillors would be visiting the Mudlarks Garden on Tuesday 19th February at 10.30am.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee notes the minutes of the Youth Town Council held on 29 November 2012.

362. FINANCE - 3rd QUARTER INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2012/13

The Committee received a report detailing the third quarter income and expenditure for the Community Services Committee 2012/13.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

The Committee notes the third quarter income and expenditure to 31 December 2012.

Prior to closing the meeting the Chairman announced that he would not be standing for re-election as Chairman of the Community Services Committee in the next Civic Year. He expressed his thanks to the Committee, Staff and the Vice Chairman for their work and support over the previous two years, during which much had been achieved.

The meeting closed at 8.40 pm.