

**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**LETCHWORTH COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES**

**Meeting held at Council Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth Garden City  
on Wednesday, 5 July 2006 at 7.30p.m.**

**PRESENT:** *Councillors M. Paterson (Chairman), Simon Bloxham (Vice-Chairman), Monica Bloxham, J.M. Cunningham, Melissa Davey, Gary Grindal, Lorna Kercher, David Levett, Lawrence McNamara, Elliot Needham and Mrs Lynda Needham.*

**IN ATTENDANCE:** *Barrie Jones (Head of Financial Services), Mary Caldwell (Planning Control & Conservation Manager), Simon Ellis (Principal Planning Officer), Liz Marten (Principal Conservation Officer), Steve Crowley (Project Manager), Andy Graham (Community Development Officer for Letchworth Garden City), Mick LaRoche (Senior Tree Officer) and Patricia Wilkings (Committee & Member Services Officer).*

**ALSO PRESENT:** *County Councillor Keith Emsall and 25 members of the public.*

**CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman welcomed all present to the meeting, County Councillor Keith Emsall and Mr Nigel Baker, the speaker in respect of planning application 06/00845/1.

**14. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors T.W. Hone, David Kearns and Diane Proudlove.

**15. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 May and 24 May 2006 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and signed by the Chairman.

**16. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chairman informed the Committee that Inspector Geoff Camp, of the Hertfordshire Police Force had joined the meeting at short notice and would be making a presentation regarding current crime statistics and police initiatives in the area.

**17. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

The following Members declared a personal interest in respect of agenda item 12.2, Planning Application 06/00020/1, land adjoining 21 Leys Avenue, Letchworth Garden City:

- Councillors M. Paterson and Lorna Kercher as they were members of the Letchworth Town Centre Partnership. Councillors M. Paterson and Lorna Kercher had withdrawn from a recent meeting of the Letchworth Town Centre Partnership when this item had been discussed. They reserved their right to remain in the meeting and vote;
- Councillor Melissa Davey as she was a member of the Heritage Foundation. She reserved her right to remain in the meeting and vote.

Councillor Mrs Lynda Needham was advised that she need not declare an interest in this item.

## **18. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – PRESENTATION BY HERTFORDSHIRE POLICE**

Inspector Geoff Camp thanked Members for allowing him to speak and updated the Committee regarding quarterly crime statistics from 1 April to 4 July 2006 for Letchworth Garden City:

- Overall crime figures were down from 843 to 770;
- Detection rate was up from 20.6% to 27.5%;
- Marginal increase in violent crime from 175 to 184;
- Robbery figures were down from 10 to 8;
- Burglaries in homes down from 28 to 18;
- Theft from cars down from 84 to 67.

Inspector Camp informed the Committee that two new officers had joined the Letchworth, Baldock & Royston Community Team and distributed copies of an updated organisation chart. Inspector Camp then introduced Police Constable Robert Oldaker to the Members.

Inspector Camp went on to give details about the following initiatives:

- Target Hardening Day on 21 May 2006 and Crime Reduction seminars taking place;
- Pub Watch Scheme in place with Baldock – ‘barred from one, barred from all’ approach;
- Community Team efforts proven successful in public houses with only four arrests during England World cup matches;
- Joint working with Fire Brigade with joint presentations to schools;
- Operations BRACE and SIGMA;
- Shop Watch – currently 14 members and Business Watch.

Inspector Camp expressed his thanks for the help and support that Steve Cobb, Licensing & Enforcement Officer had provided when making evening inspection visits to public houses in the area.

In reply to questions from Members, Inspector Camp advised the Committee that:

- Violent crime figures were difficult to analyse;
- He would take up the suggestion to hold talks for older, vulnerable people in Bingo Halls, Community Centres etc;
- He was unable to supply direct data regarding number of arrests made due to CCTV.

The Chairman thanked Inspector Camp for his interesting and informative presentation.

## **19. STREET TREE PLANTING IN LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY**

The Senior Tree Officer presented a report of the Strategic Director of Customer Services that updated the Committee on street tree planting in the Garden City that had been completed in previous phases and to make recommendations for a fourth phase of tree planting to be undertaken next winter.

The Senior Tree Officer advised the Committee that there was a sum of between £2,000 and £2,500 that had been under spent from last year’s budget but due to the dry weather conditions that had been experienced, the money might have to be used for extra watering and tree replacements.

The Senior Tree Officer advised the Committee that the general maintenance budgets received from the County and District Council of £10,440 and £26,180 respectively would probably be spent by the end of July. In response to a question, he agreed that a balance would have to be struck between planting new trees and maintaining existing stock.

He also advised the Committee although he had not received any firm offers of sponsorship, he was hopeful that the following organisations may be able to provide some money:

- North Herts Homes may sponsor Kimberly;
- Howard Cottage may sponsor Meadow Way – West;
- Letchworth Garden City Town Council may sponsor additional trees in Rowan Crescent.

Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation was unable to help with sponsorship.

The Senior Tree Officer agreed that he would keep the Committee updated regarding balances remaining in the budget and apprise them of any additional sponsorship obtained by publishing details in appropriate issues of the Members Information Service bulletin.

The following documents were appended to the report:

Appendix A – Details of Street Planting to date.

Appendix B – Recommendations for Street Planting Works during the 2006/2007 winter.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That £5,000 be allocated from the Letchworth Garden City Committee's Visioning Budget for new street planting in Cowslip Hill and Meadow Way east section, as recommended under list 1 in Appendix B;
- (2) That the Senior Tree Officer allocate a proportion of the allocated funds for the use of tree planting in previously planted roads in list 2 of Appendix B;
- (3) That a sum of £3,000 be allocated from the Letchworth Garden City Committee's Discretionary budget for ongoing young tree maintenance and additional watering during the summer of 2007;
- (4) That the utilisation of any additional funding, which may be forthcoming from other sources to supplement the funding at the agreed sites, be agreed.

**REASONS FOR DECISIONS**

- (1) To identify and utilise the resources currently available for new street tree planting and aftercare;
- (2) To maintain the street planting initiative of the past three years.

**20. NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL'S PUBLIC CONVENIENCES**

The Project Manager presented a report of the Head of Leisure and Environmental Services that appraised Members of the strategic decision from Cabinet for the North Hertfordshire District Council's Public Conveniences and the type of internal equipment that would be used.

The Project Manager drew the Committee's attention to paragraph 4 of the report that gave details of the proposals to close the public convenience at The Arena and refurbish the one at Howard Park.

Concern was expressed that there would be only one public convenience in Letchworth Garden City in future and no facility at all once work on the refurbishment of Howard Park got underway. It was also felt that the cost of £93,500 for the refurbishment of Howard Park was rather high.

It was pointed out that there were toilet facilities at Supermarkets, public houses and restaurants for patron's use and that the existing public conveniences were already closed at night.

A report from the consultants Inkpen Downie, entitled "A Report on a Possible Strategy for Improvements and Provision of Public Conveniences in North Hertfordshire" was attached as a separate volume to the agenda.

**RESOLVED:** That the strategic decision from Cabinet for the North Hertfordshire District Council's Public Conveniences, as stated in paragraph 3.1. be noted.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To ensure the delivery of project objectives.

**21. REFERRAL FROM NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHWAYS PARTNERSHIP JOINT MEMBER PANEL – 24 APRIL 2006 - NHHP DISCRETIONARY BUDGET PROJECTS 2007/2008**

Councillor J.M. Cunningham presented a referral from the North Hertfordshire Highways Partnership Joint Member Panel that was held on 24 April 2006 which he had attended where Area Committees had been invited to put forward suggestions for schemes to be funded from the Panel's 2007/2008 Discretionary Budget.

County Councillor Keith Emsall expressed his concern at the number of minor road accidents that occurred due to the traffic congestion along the Broadway and urged the Committee to agree to recommend that the pedestrian crossing at Broadway (adjacent to Morrisons supermarket) be converted to a pelican crossing.

A discussion took place covering the following points:

- That consideration should be given to putting some safety measures in place at the junction of Letchworth Lane and Willian Road as there had been many accidents over the years;
- That funding for schemes should be provided by Herts Highways and not come out of the Area Committee's Discretionary Budget;
- That indicative costs for schemes should be brought back to the Committee for their consideration.

**RESOLVED:** That the following schemes be forwarded to the North Hertfordshire District Council Chief Engineer and the North Hertfordshire District Manager of Hertfordshire Highways for initial cost estimates to be prepared and presented to the Letchworth Committee at its meeting to be held on 16 August 2006:

- Convert the pedestrian crossing at Broadway (adjacent to Morrisons supermarket) in Letchworth Garden City to a pelican crossing;
- Letchworth Lane and Willian Road Junction – investigate safety measures.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To allow the Letchworth Committee to make recommendations for schemes and projects to be financed from the Joint Member Panel Discretionary Budget in 2006-2007 and 2007-2008.

**22. ICKNIELD WAY, LETCHWORTH DEPOT**

The Head of Financial Services presented a report that sought the Committee's views on the possible disposal and residential redevelopment of the former Icknield Way housing depot prior to its consideration by the Cabinet on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2006. A plan of the Icknield Way depot - Appendix A - was attached to the report.

The Head of Financial Services confirmed that there would be wider consultation through the planning process and that the funds derived from the disposal of the depot would go into the capital programme.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) That the proposal to dispose of the Icknield Way depot for residential development be agreed.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** To enable Cabinet to be made aware of the Committee's views regarding disposal of this site.

## 23. CHAMPION NEWS

The Community Development Officer (CDO) for Letchworth Garden City presented a report of the Head of Community Development & Cultural Services to the Committee which advised them of the activities undertaken by the CDO since the last meeting of the Committee held on 24 May 2006. The report also brought to the Committee's attention some important community based activities that would be taking place during the next few months.

The CDO informed the Committee that the Youth Service had recruited six volunteers, Youth Trustees to the Management Committee and two Youth Workers for a six month period for the Grange Youth Wing. He added that there would be an open evening for the Young People of the Grange on 21 July 2006 and that the Letchworth Garden City Town Council had offered some funding towards the initiative.

The CDO informed the Committee that there would be a meeting of Groundwork in August 2006 to discuss the feedback from the questionnaire that had been distributed regarding changes to the Grange Estate Community Park and Gardens.

The CDO distributed a flyer to Members that advertised the Broadway Gardens Event that would be taking place on 22 and 23 July 2006. The flyer had been produced by the Heritage Foundation and the CDO added that another brochure would be produced that would include more details, in particular road closures. In response to a question, he agreed that the flyer was aimed primarily at a young age group and advised the Committee that he had contacted Rap Aid and urged them to consider a wider audience in future when producing such advertising material.

The CDO was pleased to inform the Committee that the Skateboard Events that had taken place over a four day period had been very successful and Tribe Enterprises had attended each event where they offered advice and equipment to attendees.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the report of the Head of Community Development be noted;
- (2) That the actions taken by the CDO for Letchworth Garden City to promote greater community capacity and well-being for Letchworth Garden City communities be endorsed.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** To keep members of the Committee apprised of the latest developments in community activities in Letchworth Garden City.

## 24. ANNUAL GRANTS AND DEVELOPMENT DISCRETIONARY BUDGET 2006/2007

The Community Development Officer (CDO) for Letchworth Garden City presented a report of the Head of Community Development & Cultural Services to the Committee, which set out the budgetary situation for the Committee. The CDO confirmed that no applications for grants had been received. Appendix 1 – Statement of Committee Budgets was attached to the report.

The Committee expressed their concern that the figures in the chart in Appendix 1 were at variance with those that were published in the 2005/2006 Annual Statement of Accounts report that went to Cabinet on 27 June 2006. The Chairman advised the Committee that he would speak to Finance and report back to the Committee.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the current expenditure and balance of the Development Budget be noted;
- (2) That a sum of £5,000 be allocated from the Letchworth Garden City Committee's Visioning Budget for new street planting;
- (3) That a sum of £3,000 be allocated from the Letchworth Garden City Committee's Discretionary budget for ongoing young tree maintenance and additional watering during the summer of 2007.

## **REASONS FOR DECISIONS:**

- (1) The report was intended to apprise Members of the financial resources available to this Committee. It drew attention to the current budgetary situation, assisted in the effective financial management of the Committee's budget and ensured actions were performed within the Authority's Financial Regulations and the guidance contained in the Grants procedure;
- (2) The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims and strategic priorities of the Council.

## **25. PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

The Committee heard an oral presentation from Mr Nigel Baker in respect of Planning Application 06/00845/1, 39 Pasture Road, Letchworth Garden City.

Mr Baker thanked the Committee for the opportunity to address the meeting with his and other resident's concerns about the planning application and made the following comments:

- The proposed development was alien to the surrounding character of the area;
- To demolish the existing building would be little short of an act of vandalism;
- He and other residents were unaware that the development was outside a conservation area;
- He disagreed with the Planning Officer's comment in his report that this would not set a precedent as this might encourage other residents in the area to follow suit;
- The Letchworth Garden City Town Council had raised similar objections;
- The quality of life in the area would be affected, e.g. extra traffic and disruption caused by building work.

The Chairman thanked Mr Baker for his presentation.

The Principal Planning Officer advised the Committee of changes to the following Planning Applications:

- At Planning Application 063/00845/1, 39 Pasture Road, Letchworth Garden City, the proposal should read 'Outline Planning Application';
- At Planning Application 06/00824/1HH, 251 Icknield Way, Letchworth Garden City, the proposal should read 'Erection of single storey extension; erection of single storey rear conservatory and erection of first floor rear extension. (Revision of Planning Application Ref No 04/00719/1HH granted permission on 28 June 2006.)

**RESOLVED:** To determine the applications as set out in the report of the Head of Planning & Building Control as submitted to the Committee in the following schedule:

### **SCHEDULE**

<b>Reference Number</b>	<b>Description of Development and location</b>	<b>Decision</b>
<b>06/00845/ 1</b>	<b>39 Pasture Road, Letchworth Garden City, SG6 3LR</b> Outline Planning Application: 4 detached dwellings following demolition of existing dwelling and formation of new access (design, external appearance and landscaping reserved).	<b>REFUSED</b> As per report
<b>06/00020/ 1</b>	<b>Land adjoining 21 Leys Avenue (W H Smith), Letchworth Garden City, SG6</b> Erection of 3 storey building comprising a new retail unit and associated facilities on the ground floor with 6 flats above, 6 car parking spaces in rear service	<b>GRANTED</b> (see (a) below)

yard and ancillary works, following demolition of existing single storey outbuilding; realignment of part of Leys Avenue and new hard landscaping to Leys Square.

- |                      |   |                                   |
|----------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| <b>06/00050/ 1</b>   | <b>Barn and Coach House at Punchardon Hall, Willian, Willian, SG6 2 AE</b><br>Conversion of barn into 4 bedroom independent dwelling with car port and associated landscaping; Conversion of existing Coach House into 4 bedroom dwelling with summer house and associated landscaping.   | <b>GRANTED</b><br>(see (b) below) |
| <b>06/00051/ 1LB</b> | <b>Barn and Coach House at Punchardon Hall, Willian, Willian, SG6 2 AE</b><br>Conversion of barn into 4 bedroom dwelling with car port; conversion of existing Coach House into 4 bedroom dwelling with summer house; erection of detached garage, car port and storage building for converted Coach House and existing dwelling. | <b>GRANTED</b><br>(see (b) below) |
| <b>06/00824/ 1HH</b> | <b>251 Icknield Way, Letchworth Garden City, SG6 4UE</b><br>Erection of single storey side extension; erection of single storey rear conservatory and erection of first floor rear extension. (Revision of Planning Application Ref No 04/00719/1HH granted permission on 28 June 2006.)  | <b>GRANTED</b><br>As per report   |

- (a) **RESOLVED:** That, with regard to planning application reference 06/00020/1, planning permission be **GRANTED** as per the report of the Head of Planning & Building Control subject to the following:

*“That the details required pursuant to Condition numbers 4 and 5 be referred to the Letchworth Committee for determination”.*

- (b) **RESOLVED:** That, with regard to planning applications 06/00050/1 and 06/00051/LB, planning permission be **GRANTED** as per the reports of the Head of Planning & Building Control and the following additional condition:

*7: That prior to the commencement of development, a comprehensive bat survey of the site shall be carried out by a suitably qualified person(s). The results of the survey and details of any required mitigation works shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development. Any approved mitigation works shall thereafter be carried out in complete accordance with the approved details or particulars unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.*

**REASON:** *In the interests of wildlife conservation and species protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.*

## 26. STARWOOD HOUSE, AVENUE ONE, LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY

The Principal Planning Officer presented a report of the Planning Control and conservation Manager that updated Members regarding additional landscaping at the site that were attached as conditions to planning approval.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the report be noted
- (2) That a further progress report be brought back to the meeting of the Letchworth Committee on 13 December 2006.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** To ensure that Letchworth Committee were kept advised about progress of additional landscaping at the site.

## 27. PLANNING APPEALS

The Principal Planning Officer informed the Committee that one appeal had been lodged since the meeting of this Committee held on 24 May 2006:

Appellant	Mr J Morley
Address	71 Southfields, Letchworth Garden City, SG6 4NA
Description	Outline application for erection of a two bedroom bungalow following demolition of existing garage (landscaping reserved).
Reference	05/01811/1
Procedure	Written representations.

The Principal Planning Officer informed the Committee that two decisions had been determined since the meeting of this Committee held on 24 May 2006:

Appellant	Mr and Mrs Gunn
Address	219 Icknield Way, Letchworth Garden City
Description	Two storey side extension with garage under single storey rear extension
Decision	Dismissed
Committee or delegated	Delegated.
Comments	The Inspector supported the Council's view that the proposed development would harm the character of the conservation area and dismissed the appeal.

Appellant	Mr D Cornish
Address	Land between nos. 157 and 159 Glebe Road, Letchworth Garden City
Description	Proposed new dwelling
Decision	Dismissed
Committee or delegated	Delegated.
Comments	The Inspector again supported the Council's view that the proposed development would harm the character of the conservation area and undermine Letchworth Garden City design principles and dismissed the appeal.

The meeting closed at 10.30 p.m.

.....  
Chairman