

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

LETCHWORTH COMMITTEE

**Meeting held at Council Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth Garden City
on 8 March 2006 at 7.30 p.m.**

PRESENT: *Councillors M. Paterson (Chairman), J.M. Cunningham (Vice-Chairman), J.F. Barry, Gary Grindal, David Kearns, Lorna Kercher, Alison Kingman, Ian Mantle and Mrs Lynda Needham.*

IN ATTENDANCE: *Parks & Countryside Development Manager, Principal Planning Officer, Community Development Officer for Letchworth Garden City and Committee & Member Services Officer.*

ALSO PRESENT: *County Councillor Keith Emsall, Letchworth Garden City Town Councillor John Webb, three NHDC Planning Officers and six members of the public.*

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed County Councillor Keith Emsall, Town Councillor John Webb, NHDC Officers and members of the public to the meeting.

107. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Simon Bloxham, Tony Hartley, T.W. Hone and Lawrence McNamara.

Councillor Mrs Lynda Needham had informed the Committee that she would be late and joined the meeting at 7.35pm. Councillor Grindal had apologised and joined the meeting at 7.40 p.m.

108. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2006 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and signed by the Chairman.

109. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman informed the Committee that the following addendum had been circulated prior to the meeting:

- Agenda item 11 – Jackman's Library.

110. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor Gary Grindal declared a personal interest in planning application 06/00070/1HH Two storey rear extension as he was the applicant. Councillor Gary Grindal left the meeting when the application was discussed and took no part in the discussion or decision.

111. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No items were presented under public participation for consideration by the Committee.

112. BUDGET SETTING 2006-2007 – PARKING CHARGES

The Chief Engineer presented a joint report of the Strategic Directors of Finance and Regulatory Services, and Customer Services that apprised the Committee about the proposed increases in car park charges following the Council's resolution of 9 February 2006 with regard to the parking charges element of the savings and growth items in the agreed budget estimates for 2006/2007.

The Chief Engineer invited the Committee to comment on the proposals for new parking tariffs within their area, as detailed in Appendix A to the report, which would be referred to the Cabinet meeting on 28 March 2006 for consideration.

The Chief Engineer advised the committee that at Appendix A to the report, the proposed tariff for a stay of up to 2 hours in the multistorey long stay car park at Hillshott should read 70p. The Chief Engineer also advised the committee that the revised tariffs would be enforced under the current enforcement regime.

The committee expressed the view that it was unclear from the report what the finish time for overnight parking was and requested further clarification, with the recommendation that this should be defined as 10.00 p.m.

The committee requested that Cabinet be advised that there was a large amount of free evening parking in Letchworth Town Centre and that the income generated would therefore be quite low.

The committee also requested that Cabinet be advised that the committee was concerned that the process for purchasing evening tickets was unclear and requested that the process should allow inclusive tickets to be purchased to include both the evening period and the period of day time remaining when the ticket is purchased. The committee was also concerned as to how this would be applied to the long stay car parks.

The following document was appended to the report:
Appendix A - details of the proposed parking Tariffs.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the information in the report be noted;
- (2) That Cabinet be advised that the Letchworth Garden City Committee was supportive of the proposed increase in Council Car Park charges for the 2006/07 Financial Year but had expressed concerns regarding the proposals for evening and overnight parking in Letchworth, as detailed above.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:

- (1) That Cabinet defer the implementation of overnight parking for further consideration and that the finish time for overnight parking be defined as 10.00 p.m.;
- (2) That should overnight parking be implemented, a progress report be brought back to the Letchworth Garden City Committee meeting to be held in September 2006.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: To enable the Area Committee's comments on the proposed parking tariffs to be considered by Cabinet.

113. CHAMPION NEWS

The Community Development Officer for Letchworth Garden City presented a report of the Head of Community Development & Cultural Services that advised the Committee of the activities undertaken by the Community Development Officer for Letchworth Garden City since the meeting of the Committee held on 25 January 2006 and brought to their attention some important community based activities that would be taking place during the coming few months.

The committee discussed the illicit use of motorcycles in the district and agreed that members of the public should continue to contact the Police so that the calls could be logged.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the report of the Head of Community Development be noted;
- (2) That the actions taken by the Community Development Officer 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.

114. ANNUAL GRANTS AND DISCRETIONARY BUDGET 2005/2006

The Community Development Officer for Letchworth Garden City presented a report of the Head of Community Development & Cultural Services that set out the budgetary situation for the Committee.

The Community Development Officer for Letchworth Garden City advised the committee that he would ascertain who was currently responsible for funding the hanging baskets in Letchworth Garden City and would provide details of their location so that an informed decision about future funding could be made.

The Community Development Officer for Letchworth Garden City provided the committee with information about skate board days that could be run during the summer of 2006. The committee agreed that four days could be funded from the Area Visioning budget and the Community Development Officer for Letchworth Garden City agreed to look at suitable sites in the area and report back to the committee.

The following documents were appended to the report:

Appendix 1 – Summary of grant applications and officer recommendations

Appendix 2 – Spreadsheet of Committee Delegated Budgets 2005/2006.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the current expenditure, balances and carry forwards from the Development Budgets and the allocated Visioning Budgets be noted;
- (2) That consideration be given to projects that could be funded from the Capital allocation of the Area Visioning Programme;
- (3) That the following project be funded from the unallocated portion of the revenue section of the Area Visioning Programme:
 - Four skate board day events to be run during the Summer of 2006;
- (4) That the following projects be funded from the unallocated portion of the Discretionary Budget:
 - £1000 be awarded towards a speed activated sign in Willian.
 - One rubbish bin in Peartree Dell;
 - A provisional sum of 50% towards the cost of hanging baskets and pyramid planters in Letchworth Garden City.

**115. GRANT APPLICATIONS
NORTON BOWLING CLUB**

RESOLVED: That the sum of £750 be awarded to Norton Bowling Club.

LETCHWORTH BUDDHIST COMMUNITY CENTRE

RESOLVED: That the sum of £100 be awarded to the Letchworth Buddhist Community Centre.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: The allocation of funds will improve the services provided by local organisations and groups that are available and accessed by members of the community.

116. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

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

SCHEDULE

Reference Number	Description of Development and location	Decision
06/0070/1HH	122 Mullway, Letchworth Garden city, SG6 4BE Two storey rear extension	GRANTED (as per report)
05/01912/1	5 Station Parade, Letchworth Garden City, SG6 3AP Change of use from A1 (Dry Cleaners) to A5 (Fish & Chip shop)	GRANTED (as per report)

117. PLANNING APPEALS

The Principal Planning Officer informed the Committee that no planning appeals had been lodged or determined since the meeting of the Committee held on 25 January 2006.

118. JACKMAN'S LIBRARY

The Community Development Officer for Letchworth Garden City presented a report of the Head of Community and Cultural Services that advised the Committee of the current developments of the Hertfordshire County Council for the Jackman's Library and introduced County Councillor Keith Emsall to the meeting.

County Councillor Keith Emsall advised the committee that the proposals contained in the report were not about saving money but to provide a better library service across the district. He added that the present building at Ivel Court was not fit for delivering a modern library service and was not suitable for development.

The committee expressed their concern about the proposed closure of the library, which was used mainly by children and older residents of the local community and agreed with the resolution put forward by the Vice Chairman of the Letchworth Committee.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) That Letchworth Garden City Committee noted, with regret, the probable intention of Hertfordshire County Council to close the library facility at Ivel Court in Letchworth. The committee was particularly concerned with the impact that this would have on the mainly old and young users of this facility and was concerned that the proposed alternatives would not provide similar or suitable access for these users groups. In view of the imminent proposals of North Herts District Council to redevelop the Ivel Court area and particularly the community Centre, the committee requested that serious consideration be given by the County Council to defer any such closure decision. This would allow North Herts District Council to consider, with the local community and other interested parties, the provision of alternative facilities within the rebuilt Community Centre.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: To enable the Committee to respond to the proposed closure.

119. VOTE OF THANKS

At the close of the meeting, the Chairman thanked Alan Breckon, Principal Planning Officer, for all his hard work over the last thirty two years at the Council and wished him well in his retirement. The Chairman made a presentation of a card and two framed photographs. The Principal Planning Officer thanked the committee for their kind words and gift.

The meeting closed 9.35 p.m.

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Chairman