



## LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY COUNCIL

### Annual Parish Meeting

Report of the Annual Parish Meeting held in The Settlement, Nevells Road, Letchworth on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2011 at 8:00 pm.

Present: 13 Councillors, 7 other Electors, 1 Visitor.

Cllr V Mantle welcomed all present.

Cllr B Carr gave the following oral presentation on the activity of the Council since the previous Annual Meeting:

*The last town meeting took place on 28 April 2010 and this report covers the period since then.*

*We have ceased all Council activity apart from meeting statutory requirements.*

*This has allowed us to once again set a zero precept for 2011/2012. (That is no cost to council tax payers)*

#### **1 Staff matters.**

*The former staff have continued to pursue their claim for an additional 9 months notice to be paid.*

*A tribunal set for 17 Sep 2010 was changed to a case management discussion as there was concern that the claimants statements contained a number of irrelevancies which if they were allowed to go forward would extend the hearing duration. New witness statements were requested and a new hearing date set.*

*A reconvened tribunal took place on 17 Jan 2011. The claimants put forward a argument which the judge considered a 'nonsense ' but due to the length of time in sorting this out and the fact that two of the claimants were not present and two were unprepared for the hearing a new date for the hearing was set. Parties were instructed to exchange skeleton arguments. .*

*A new tribunal date of 11,12 13 of May has been set.*

*Our counsel has reserved the right to seek costs and /or wasted cost orders from the claimants.*

#### **2 Lease**

*Due to what our legal counsel considered inadequacies by the solicitors dealing with the break clause in the office lease we were required to settle with Martins at a figure far in excess of what would have been necessary had the lease been managed appropriately.*

*We have lodged a claim against the solicitors insurance.*

*We have had a response from the insurance company and this is being reviewed by counsel to establish the strength of our claim before deciding on the next step.*

### **3      *Assets***

*We currently have office equipment held in a secure store.*

*The property will be disposed of prior to the end of 2011, as the storage costs exceed the value of the property being stored.*

*Local Voluntary Organisations are being circulated to see whether any wish to take any of the property on indefinite loan.*

### **4      *Future Intentions***

*We will continue to undertake only those activities required by statute with the intention of keeping the precept at zero whilst seeking to abolish the council.*

Questions and comments were then invited from those present.

- 1      Cllr Johnson asked whether the previous staff had been consulted in respect of the termination of the lease. The Clerk confirmed that the previous Clerk had attempted to resolve the issue, but after her departure, it became clear that this attempt had been unsuccessful.
- 2      Miss Worland made a statement that she was in total disagreement with the policy being pursued by the Council.
- 3      Cllr Patterson (of the North Herts District Council) asked what progress had been made on dissolving the Council. Cllr B Carr explained the current legal position, and confirmed that the Town Council continued to be in touch with Parish Councils which had been or were being abolished, and was seeking to expedite the process. It was confirmed that abolition could only be by the decision of the North Herts District Council following a Governance Review.
- 4      In response to a question from Mr J Barry, it was confirmed that re-warding of the District can only be done by the Boundaries Commission, and the Parish Ward boundaries in practice have to follow the District Ward boundaries, as District Wards have to include whole Parish Wards.

The meeting closed at 8:13 pm.