

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

BALDOCK & DISTRICT COMMITTEE
(Baldock Town, Baldock East, Arbury and Weston & Sandon Wards)

Meeting held at The Community Centre, Simpson Drive, Baldock.
on 6 March 2006 at 7.30 p.m.

PRESENT: *Councillors I.J. Knighton (Chairman), M.E. Weeks (Vice-Chairman), S.K. Jarvis, Marilyn Kirkland, M.R.M. Muir and A.D. Young.*

IN ATTENDANCE: *Head of Leisure & Environmental Services, Principal Planning Officer, Community Development Officer (Baldock Area & Youth) and Democratic Services Manager.*

ALSO PRESENT: *Inspector Geoff Camp (Hertfordshire Constabulary) and three members of the public.*

Before the start of business the Chairman announced that Alan Breckon (Principal Planning Officer) was about to retire from local government service and was attending his last meeting of the Committee. All members expressed their thanks for his invaluable, consistent and professional service to the public which had covered a period to date since before local government re-organisation in 1974.

97. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

98. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2006 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and signed by the Chairman.

99. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman agreed consideration of the following additional items:

- (a) Community Policing Update. This item to be considered as Agenda Item 10.
- (b) Parish Amenity and Capital Investment Fund. This item to be considered as Agenda Item 11.
- (c) Baldock Market Rights. This item to be considered as Agenda Item 12.

100. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor M.R.M. Muir declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 7 – Baldock & District Area Committee Development & Area Visioning Budgets 2005/2006 – Grant Application: Baldock Town Clock – as he was a member of the congregation at St Mary's Parish Church. Councillor Muir reserved his right to speak and vote in this matter.

101. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mrs Kathryn Reed had given due notice that she wished to present a petition regarding parking at the junction of Park Lane and Norton Road, Baldock.

During her presentation, Mrs Reed expressed concern that parking at the junction was jeopardising the safety of road users as the junction was a "blind spot" and the verge had become seriously damaged. Mrs Reed suggested that:

- (a) the Council should investigate the situation;
- (b) double yellow lines would solve the problem;
- (c) suitably located bollards would prevent damage to the verge.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Reed for her presentation.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Petition be forwarded to the North Hertfordshire Highways Partnership Joint Member Panel with the following recommendations:
 - (a) that the County Council consider installing bollards and double yellow lines at the junction of Park Lane and Norton Road, Baldock;
 - (b) that, subject to discussions with the County Council, a contribution be made to the work from the Committee's discretionary funds.
- (b) That North Hertfordshire District Council enforcement officers should, in liaison with the County Council, establish a course of action to prevent further parking at the junction of Park Lane and Norton Road, Baldock, including issuing penalties where appropriate.

102. CHAMPION NEWS

The Community Development Officer for Baldock presented a report of the Head of Community Development and Cultural Services to the Committee, which advised them of the activities undertaken by the Community Development Officer for Baldock since the meeting of the Committee held on 23 January 2006, and brought to their attention some important community based activities that would be taking place during the next few months.

With regard to the Baldock Town Hall Feasibility Study (paragraph 4.1.1), the Community Development Officer for Baldock informed the Committee that consultants would be appointed on 20 March 2006 to carry out the Study, and the Committee would be updated on progress every six weeks.

RESOLVED:

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

REASON FOR DECISION: To keep members of the Committee apprised of the latest developments in community activities in Baldock.

103. BALDOCK & DISTRICT AREA COMMITTEE DEVELOPMENT & AREA VISIONING BUDGETS 2005/2006

The Community Development Officer for Baldock presented a report of the Head of Community Development and Cultural Services to the Committee, which set out the budgetary situation for the Committee.

RESOLVED: That the current expenditure and balance of the Development Budget be noted.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

- (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.

104. GRANT APPLICATION – TREE WORKS IN BREWERY LANE & PARK DRIVE, BALDOCK

RESOLVED: That the sum of £250 be allocated from the Baldock Town Ward Development Budget for the proposed tree works in Brewery Lane and Park Drive, Baldock.

REASON FOR DECISION: 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.

105. GRANT APPLICATION – BALDOCK TOWN CLOCK

RESOLVED: That the sum of £1,000 be awarded to St. Mary's Church as a financial contribution toward the renewal of electrical equipment associated with the chiming mechanism of the town clock, such funds to be allocated as follows:

£240 from the Baldock East Ward Development Budget
£760 from the Baldock Town Ward Development Budget.

REASON FOR DECISION: 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.

106. GRANT APPLICATION – WOLVERLEY HOUSE SHELTERED HOUSING CENTRE

RESOLVED: That the sum of £700 be awarded to North Hertfordshire Homes Limited as a financial contribution toward the development of facilities and services offered by the Wolverley House Sheltered Housing Centre, such funds to be allocated from the Arbury Ward Development Budget.

REASON FOR DECISION: 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.

107. GRANT APPLICATION – ASHWELL PARISH SURVEY

RESOLVED: That the sum of £500 be awarded to Ashwell Parish Council as a financial contribution toward the cost of the processes and tasks involved in carrying out the Parish Survey, such funds to be allocated from the Arbury Ward Development Budget.

REASON FOR DECISION: 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.

108. GRANT APPLICATION – ASHWELL MUSIC FESTIVAL PROGRAMME

RESOLVED: That the sum of £200 be awarded to the Ashwell Music Festival group as a financial contribution toward the development and delivery of the annual Music Festival's programme, such funds to be allocated from the Arbury Ward Development Budget.

REASON FOR DECISION: 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.

109. GRANT APPLICATION – HINXWORTH VILLAGE VOICE MAGAZINE

RESOLVED: That the sum of £225 be awarded to the Hinxworth Village Voice group as a financial contribution toward the purchase of a printer/scanner to be used in the production of the village's local magazine, such funds to be allocated from the Arbury Ward Development Budget.

REASON FOR DECISION: 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.

110. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

RESOLVED: To determine the application 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
05/01430/1	Bury Barns Farm, Sandon, Buntingford, SG9 0RJ Extension and conversion of existing farm buildings to form one 2-bedroom; two 4-bedroom and one 5 bedroom dwelling following selected demolition of redundant structures. Two detached garage buildings, associated car parking and ancillary works.	GRANTED (as per report)

111. PLANNING APPEALS

The Area Planning Officer informed the Committee that the following planning appeal had been determined since the meeting of the Committee held on 23 January 2005:

Appellant	Mr J Evens
Reference number	APP/X1925/A/05/1189/482
Address	Land to rear of 43 Letchworth Road, Baldock, Herts, SG7 6AA
Proposal	To construct a bungalow on a plot of land comprising the northern end of the back garden of No. 43 Letchworth Road.
Decision	Appeal DISMISSED

112. COMMUNITY POLICING UPDATE

Inspector Camp provided an update for the Committee on crime detection and prevention in the Baldock and District area. He also circulated an amended organisation chart of his Community Policing team for the Committee's information.

Inspector Camp's presentation centred on crime statistics which indicated that, in general, crime in Baldock had reduced over the past twelve months by 7.4%. The total number of incidents had dropped from 976 to 904.

Inspector Camp drew the Committee's attention to recent developments aimed at amalgamating County Constabularies. He described the various options for combining the constabularies of Suffolk, Norfolk, Essex, Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire. Currently, the favoured option of the Chief Constable of Hertfordshire was to combine Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire only.

The Chairman of the Committee thanked Inspector Camp for his presentation. Key points raised by members of the Committee included:

- (1) Although providing a valuable insight into crime in the area, the statistics provided represented the Wards of Baldock Town and Weston & Sandon, and a more representative report would need to include the Wards of Arbury and Baldock East.
- (2) Whilst applauding the efforts of the police to identify the young motorcyclists (and take action via their parents), nuisance motorcycling remained a problem at weekends in and around Baldock.
- (3) In general, the public would find the crime statistics of interest and, should they continue to decrease, they would make an important contribution to influencing the general perception that crime is high.

RESOLVED: That the Community Development Officer for Baldock be requested to investigate the possibility of crime statistics featuring in public service magazines currently delivered to each household, including North Hertfordshire District Council's "Outlook" magazine.

REASON FOR DECISION: To ensure wide publicity for crime statistics, in order to influence the general perception that crime is high, to help achieve the Council's strategic objective "*To encourage responsible citizenship and to create safer communities with less crime and less fear of crime*".

113. PARISH AMENITY AND CAPITAL INVESTMENT FUND

The Chairman agreed consideration of an additional item of business which had been submitted by Councillor S.K. Jarvis.

Councillor S. K. Jarvis informed the Committee that applications made to the Parish Amenity and Capital Investment Fund by the parishes of Weston & Sandon and Ashwell had not been successful. The key points made during his introduction included:

- (a) the applications had been judged by officers on the basis of the information supplied on the application form only;
- (b) no advice had been offered to the parishes to improve the written applications;
- (c) there was a view that success was dependent upon well written forms rather than the value to the community of the proposed project;
- (d) the applications were not submitted to Members for consideration.

With regard to next year's applications, it was noted that the Head of Community Development & Cultural Services had already arranged for both parishes to receive assistance from officers in making applications.

RECOMMENDATION TO CABINET: That the process through which future applications to the Parish Amenity and Capital Investment Fund are made should include that:

- (a) advice be given to all Parish Councils on making applications to the fund;
- (b) that all applications are considered by the Panel of Members;
- (c) that the process includes time for applications to be returned for further development of crucial aspects of an application.

REASON FOR DECISION: To ensure a "level playing field" for all applicants to the fund.

114. BALDOCK MARKET RIGHTS

The Chairman agreed consideration of a further additional item of business which had been submitted by the Head of Leisure & Environmental Services.

Key issues brought to the Committee's attention by the Head of Leisure & Environmental Services were:

- (1) The rights to Baldock Market are privately owned and have been successfully managed by public authorities since 1949, including North Hertfordshire District Council;
- (2) the recent North Hertfordshire District Council bid to continue to manage the rights to Baldock Market failed against commercial opposition;
- (3) the new management of Baldock Market will be invited to contribute to the Baldock Town Centre Strategy;
- (4) a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) will remain in place to ensure protection for the Market Traders;
- (5) the new management of Baldock Market will be invited to contribute to the cost of the TTRO;
- (6) the cleaning of the area will be the responsibility of the new management.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the report of the Head of Leisure & Environmental Services be noted;
- (2) That further updates about Baldock Market be brought to future meetings of the Committee as the new arrangement developed.

REASON FOR DECISION: To apprise the Committee of the changes to the future management of the Baldock Market.

The meeting closed at 9.05 p.m.

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Chairman