

**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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

**Meeting held at The Community Centre, Simpson Drive, Baldock  
on Monday 14 August 2006 at 7.30 p.m.**

**PRESENT:** *Councillors S.K. Jarvis, Marilyn Kirkland, I.J. Knighton and M.R.M. Muir.*

**IN ATTENDANCE:** *Barrie Jones (Head of Financial Services), Richard Tiffin (Area Planning Officer), Stuart Izzard (Senior Community Development Officer (Youth)) and Donna Levett (Committee & Member Services Officer).*

**ALSO PRESENT:** *Roger Harrison (Public Relations Manager) and 29 members of the public.*

**28. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M.E. Weeks and A.D. Young.

In the absence of both the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman, Councillor Knighton **PROPOSED**, Councillor Kirkland **SECONDED** and, following a vote by the Committee, it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Muir be elected as Chairman for the duration of the meeting.

**29. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2006 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and signed by the Chairman.

**30. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business was submitted for consideration by the Committee.

**31. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Councillor M.R.M. Muir declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 7 – Land off Yeomanry Drive, Clothall Common, Baldock - as he was a member of Hertfordshire County Council's Development Control Committee, who would determine the Village Green application for the land. Councillor Muir remained in the chair for this item but did not speak or vote on this matter.

**32. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

**a) Land off Yeomanry Drive, Clothall Common, Baldock**

Mrs Alison Gentle had given due notice that she wished to speak at the meeting regarding Agenda Item 7 – Land off Yeomanry Drive, Clothall Common, Baldock. Mrs Gentle was speaking on behalf of the organisation Save Our Green Spaces (S.O.G.S.) who were campaigning for the retention of the land as open space for community use, and had presented the petition to the meeting of the Committee on 10 April 2006 (Minute 119 refers) that had prompted this report.

Mrs Gentle provided a written response from S.O.G.S. to the Head of Financial Services which gave additional information and raised questions about the information contained in the report. Key points included in this response included:

- The District Local Plan specified that the land at Clothall Common would be developed in two five-year periods ending in 1991, which was done. Residents also received written communications from NHDC stating that the last land to be developed on the NHDC area of the Clothall Common estate would be the land

directly in front of the roundabout at the vehicular entrance of the estate from Yeomanry drive, where the general store would be located.

- Solicitors acting on behalf of residents purchasing property on Clothall Common informed their clients that the land at the rear of Hartsfield School would not be developed, up to 2002.
- The advertisement for the intention to sell open land, which the law requires to be advertised in a local newspaper for two consecutive weeks to allow local people to object, was placed in the small adverts in the property supplement, not in the public notices section.
- Any income from the sale of this site will not be reinvested in Baldock but in other areas of the District, and there has already been significant lack of investment in the town for decades whilst “waiting for the bypass”. S.O.G.S. therefore feel that “after years of neglect...the anticipated £2m lost if the land is left as open space is [...] out of proportion when related to the many years Baldock has suffered neglect and lack of investment from NHDC”.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Gentle for her presentation and informed her that the points raised in the written response would be considered by the Committee together with the report of the Head of Financial Services.

**b) Planning Application Ref. 06/01006/1 – The Knoll, Bygrave Road, Ashwell**

Mr John Crockart had given due notice that he wished to speak at the meeting regarding planning application reference 06/01006/1 – The Knoll, Bygrave Road, Ashwell. Mr Crockart was the architect for the development, and spoke as the applicant’s representative.

In response to the comments that had been made by the Parish Council about this planning application, Mr Crockart highlighted to the Committee on the plans the minimal difference between the footprint of the existing buildings and the footprint of the proposed new development. He also demonstrated the scale and visibility of the proposed buildings using the artist’s impressions and photographs and stressed that the new development was likely to be less intrusive than the existing dwelling.

The Chairman thanked Mr Crockart for addressing the Committee and informed him that the points he had raised would be considered when determining the application.

**33. NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHWAYS PARTNERSHIP - JOINT MEMBER PANEL DISCRETIONARY BUDGET FOR 2006/2007 AND 2007/2008**

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Engineer which provided details of the cost and feasibility of projects suggested by the Committee for funding from the Joint Member Panel's Discretionary Budget. This report had been produced in response to the Committee’s request for a cost analysis for the provision of a pedestrian crossing phase in the traffic lights at the junction of the A505 (now B656) and A507, Baldock.

The Committee expressed their dissatisfaction that the implementation of this project would be delayed until the town centre enhancement works began, especially as it was likely that this would mean implementation would not take place until 2008. However, they acknowledged the need to ensure that any changes resulting from the enhancement works did not result in changes at this location that meant alterations needed to be made or the crossing became redundant. They therefore stressed the need to ensure that the timetable for the programme of enhancement works did not slip to a later date, particularly with regard to this scheme.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the report of the Chief Engineer be noted;
- (2) That the need for the implementation of a pedestrian crossing phase in the traffic lights at the junction of the B656 and A507, Baldock as part of the Baldock Town Centre Enhancement Programme be noted;

- (3) That the importance of the implementation of the Baldock Town Centre Enhancement Programme in accordance with the approved timetable be emphasised, with particular reference to the implementation of the above-mentioned crossing.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** To provide financial support for the implementation of traffic management and road safety in the Baldock & District area.

**34. LAND OFF YEOMANRY DRIVE, CLOTHALL COMMON, BALDOCK**

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Financial Services which sought the Committee's views on the future of the land to the rear of Hartsfield School, off Yeomanry Drive, Baldock. These views would be referred to Cabinet for consideration at its meeting on 12 September 2006.

In response to issues raised during the public participation presentation and questions raised by the Committee, the Head of Financial Services made the following key points:

- The meeting of Hertfordshire County Council's Development Control Committee that would determine the Village Green application for this land was unlikely to be held before January 2007. The land was an important asset for sale for the Council, as one of only three significant remaining parcels for sale, and so the Council would continue to fight against village green status at the enquiry.
- Should the £2 million income from the land be lost the Council's Capital Programme would have to be significantly curtailed and other funding options found.
- The only other possible sources of income would be borrowing (which would result in approximately £100,000 per annum interest) or from revenue contributions. Both of these options would result in significant Council Tax contribution increases.

The Area Planning Officer also stated that the maximum units for development on the site was likely to be 20-24 including the affordable housing units, not 40 as previously stated.

The Committee acknowledged the history of the site and its allocation for housing development for a long period. However, concern was expressed by some Councillors about the loss of open space, of which there was a recognised deficit in Baldock as a whole, and the impact that the development of the site could have on the residents of the estate.

Following discussion by the Committee:

Councillor Marilyn Kirkland **PROPOSED** and Councillor S.K. Jarvis **SECONDED** that the following recommendation be referred to Cabinet for consideration when determining the future of the land to the rear of Hartsfield School, off Yeomanry Drive, Baldock:

*The Baldock & District Committee recognises that the land has been allocated for housing development since 1977 and the significant impact that the sale of this site has on the Council's Capital Programme but asks Cabinet to retain the land for use by the community as open space in light of increased community usage.*

Councillor I.J. Knighton then **PROPOSED** and Councillor S.K. Jarvis **SECONDED** the following amendment to the substantive motion:

*That the Committee asks Cabinet to consider the Council's stance with regard to the land in light of the views of the residents living in the immediate vicinity of the site.*

Councillor Knighton voted in favour of the amendment but Councillors Kirkland and Jarvis voted against and so the motion was lost.

On returning to the substantive motion, Councillors Kirkland and Jarvis voted in favour, Councillor Knighton voted against and it was therefore

**RESOLVED:** That the report of the Head of Financial Services be noted.

**REFERRED TO CABINET:** That the Baldock & District Committee recognises that the land has been allocated for housing development since 1977 and the significant impact that the sale of this site has on the Council's Capital Programme but asks Cabinet to retain the land for use by the community as open space in light of increased community usage.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** To enable Cabinet to be aware of local views when considering its original decision on the disposal of land to the rear of Hartsfield School, off Yeomanry Drive, Baldock.

### 35. CHAMPION NEWS

The Senior Community Development Officer (Youth) presented a report of the Head of Community Development & Cultural Services to the Committee, which advised them of the activities undertaken by the Senior Community Development Officer (Youth) since the meeting of the Committee held on 3 July 2006, and brought to their attention some important community based activities that would be taking place during the next few months.

The Senior Community Development Officer (Youth) informed the Committee that Hertfordshire Highways had responded to Cllr S. K. Jarvis's enquiry regarding the removal of signage to Weston by stating that the village was signposted from the B197 which was in line with Herts Highways area office directive and that no additional signage was planned. The Committee expressed their disappointment in this decision, particularly in light of the problems that people from outside the area had experienced in getting to the village since the removal of the signs.

The Committee also expressed their disappointment at the news that the Baldock Bypass tunnel would be closed for overnight maintenance again on 26 and 27 September 2006. The Committee had previously suggested that only one side of the tunnel at a time should be closed, with the traffic directed through the other side (Minute 24 refers), and they felt that this suggestion had been ignored, to the detriment of the town.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the report of the Head of Community Development & Cultural Services be noted;
- (2) That the actions taken by the Senior Community Development Officer (Youth) to promote greater community capacity and well-being for communities in the Baldock & District area be endorsed;
- (3) That the Head of Community Development & Cultural Services be requested to write to the Director of Environment at Hertfordshire County Council to establish the reason for the complete closure and redirection of traffic from the Bypass every 3 months when testing the tunnel and expressing the Committee's strong desire to avoid this situation through partial closures instead;
- (4) That the Head of Community Development & Cultural Services be requested to write to the Chairman of the North Hertfordshire Highways Partnership Joint Member Panel and the North Hertfordshire District Manager (Hertfordshire Highways) requesting the reinstatement of signage to Weston along the A505 approach to Baldock from Letchworth Gate.

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

**36. BALDOCK & DISTRICT AREA COMMITTEE DEVELOPMENT & AREA VISIONING BUDGETS 2006/2007**

The Senior Community Development Officer (Youth) presented a report of the Head of Community Development & Cultural Services to the Committee, which set out the budgetary situation for the Committee, together with 2 additional grant applications that had been received.

The Senior Community Development Officer (Youth) informed the Committee that there were also significant funds to be allocated remaining in the Committee's budgets. He therefore suggested hosting information evenings to raise awareness with local organisations of the funding that was available.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the current expenditure and balance of the Development Budget be noted;
- (2) That the Head of Community Development & Cultural Services be requested to investigate methods whereby local organisations could be made aware of funds that were available.

**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.

**37. GRANT APPLICATION – BALDOCK TOWN YOUTH FOOTBALL CLUB**

**RESOLVED:** That the sum of £1,500 be awarded to Baldock Town Youth Football Club as a financial contribution toward the cost of the Club's development and costs associated with coaches training courses and training equipment, such monies to be allocated as follows:

£360 from Baldock East Ward Discretionary Budget  
£1,140 from Baldock Town Ward Discretionary 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.

**38. GRANT APPLICATION – WESTON PARISH COUNCIL**

**RESOLVED:** That the sum of £1,500 be awarded to the Weston Parish Council from the Weston & Sandon Ward Discretionary Budget as a financial contribution toward the improvement works to the Snipe Play Area in Weston.

**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.

**39. GRANT APPLICATION – CHURCHES TOGETHER IN BALDOCK**

**RESOLVED:** That the sum of £200 be awarded to Churches Together in Baldock as a financial contribution toward the annual Children's Holiday Activities Scheme in Baldock, such monies to be allocated as follows:

£50 from Baldock East Ward Discretionary Budget

£150 from Baldock Town Ward Discretionary 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.

**40. PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

The Committee heard an oral representation from Mr John Crockart, the applicant's representative, in relation to planning application reference 06/01006/1 – The Knoll, Bygrave Road, Ashwell.

Details of this representation can be found at Minute 32 above.

**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**

<b>Reference Number</b>	<b>Description of Development and location</b>	<b>Decision</b>
<b>06/01006/1</b>	<b>The Knoll, Bygrave Road, Ashwell</b> Erection of detached dwelling with detached garage and annexe following demolition of existing house. Erection of outbuildings for tackroom and loose boxes.	<b>GRANTED</b> (See (a) below)
<b>06/00866/1HH</b>	<b>Newlands, Gannock Green, Sandon</b> 2 storey side extension (as amended by plans NGG/PA/S03.A; P01.A; P02.A; P03.A; P04.A; received 04/07/2006)	<b>GRANTED</b> (as per report)

- (a) **RESOLVED:** That, with regard to planning application reference 06/01006/1, planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the conditions as set out in the report of the Head of Planning and Building Control and, additionally, the applicant first completing a comprehensive landscaping scheme to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority.

**41. PLANNING APPEALS**

The Area Planning Officer informed the Committee that the following planning appeals had been lodged since the meeting of the Committee held on 3 July 2006:

Appellant	Mr N M Phillips
Reference number	05/01468/1
Address	81 Larkins Close
Proposal	Removal of condition 3 of permission 00/00282/1HH
Method	Written Reps.

The Area Planning Officer informed the Committee that no appeals had been determined since the meeting of the Committee held on 3 July 2006.

The meeting closed at 9.03 p.m.

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Chairman

