

**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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

**Meeting held at The Community Centre, Simpson Drive, Baldock  
on 2 April 2007 at 7.30 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

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

*Note: Cllr A.D. Young left the meeting at 8.25pm.*

**IN ATTENDANCE:** *Richard Tiffin (Area Planning Officer), Stuart Izzard (Senior Community Development Officer (Youth)), Kim Sawyer (Corporate Legal Manager) and Susanne Gow (Committee and Member Services Officer).*

*Sanjay Patel (Hertfordshire Highways)*

**ALSO PRESENT:** *Greg Macredechian (MouchelParkman).*

*Two members of the public.*

**108. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**109. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

**110. MINUTES – 19 February 2007**

**RESOLVED:** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2007 be approved as a true record of the proceedings, subject to the following two amendments:

**1) Minute No. 104 - Champion News, line 21:**

That the year '2006' be amended to '2007'.

**2) Minute No. 105 - Baldock and District Area Committee Development and Area Visioning Budget 2006-2007, lines 5 and 6:**

That Cllr M. Muir, supported by Cllrs I. Knighton and M. Weeks agreed that a bid of £1000 from the Baldock Town Ward Discretionary Budget would be allocated to part fund the proposed joint funded works project with Hertfordshire Highways regarding the waiting restriction works in the Pond Lane area of Baldock.

**111. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chairman brought to the Committee's attention a suggested item for discussion raised at the Committee Meeting of 15 January 2007, namely the implementation of an Alcohol-Free Zone (AFZ) for Baldock. He requested that this be included as an Agenda item for the next meeting of the Baldock and District Committee.

**112. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Cllrs I. Knighton and M. Muir both declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 8, Recommendation 9.10, namely the funding decision for Baldock Town Youth Football Club, as members of their immediate family were Club players.

**113. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no items presented under public participation.

**114. LETCHWORTH and BALDOCK URBAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

The Hertfordshire Highways Principal Strategy Development Manager (PSDM) updated the Committee on the progress of the Transportation Plan with the aid of Powerpoint handouts, and indicated the financial implications and the process of the consultation with external organisations and gathering of views of the general public. The PSDM answered questions posed by the Committee, assisted by his colleague from MouchelParkman.

Cllr M. Muir expressed his concerns about the lack of connection between the Plan and the Town Centre Enhancement Scheme. He commented that air quality testing had recently been carried out in Baldock.

The PSDM confirmed that the Enhancement Scheme was dealt with in Volume 1 of the Plan, and stressed that the various measures within the Transport Plan that were highlighted by the Members would be incorporated into the Town Centre Enhancement Scheme where practicable and affordable. Measures that were not included as part of the Enhancement Scheme would need to be funded through the Hertfordshire County Council Integrated Works Programme.

Cllr I. Knighton requested that the Plan should reflect the distinct characters of both Letchworth and Baldock, and was concerned that the Plan should deal with parking issues in Baldock.

Cllr M. Kirkland requested that bus routes to the station be encouraged and more cycle routes through Clothall be considered.

Cllr S.K. Jarvis asked that the Plan should address the broader picture of the district, so that cycle routes between areas were linked, to encourage journeys beyond Baldock.

The PSDM confirmed that the Plan would commence with a Members Working Panel, and asked for three nominations from the Baldock and District Committee. He advised that schemes would be identified in the first year, with bids for funding in the second year. All schemes would be reviewed after five years.

The Chairman thanked the representatives from Hertfordshire Highways and MouchelParkman for attending the meeting.

**RESOLVED:**

(1) That the Urban Transport Plan be recommended for endorsement by the North Hertfordshire Highways Joint Members Panel;

(2) That three Members from the Baldock and District Committee be nominated to attend the Member Working Party which would develop the transport schemes for funding and the names of the three Members be advised to Hertfordshire Highways.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:**

To gain endorsement of the Letchworth and Baldock Urban Transportation Plan. This would allow a number of the short-term schemes highlighted to be investigated as early as the next Financial Year, 2008/09.

**115. CHAMPION NEWS**

The Senior Community Development Officer assured Cllr M. Muir in response to his query regarding the Bowls Club, that the rate relief for the Bowls Club would be the subject of a meeting in approximately two weeks time, and that a new lease was at the drafting stage.

The Committee commented on how well the Town Centre Enhancement Scheme consultation was proceeding. Cllr A. Young advised that the surrounding parishes spent a lot of money in Baldock, and their opinions should be taken into account. It was suggested that leaflets could be prepared, together with notices for the village notice boards. However, Cllr S.K. Jarvis stated that he did not think that parishes were as involved in the consultation as Baldock inhabitants.

A further update was given by the SDCO on small projects at Clothall Village Hall, Clothall Common, Baldock Bowls and Social Club, Ashwell URC Hall, Weston Recreation Ground, Hinxworth Play Area and Baldock Youth Club.

Cllr I. Knighton requested that an update be sought from Hertfordshire Highways regarding the slip road at Letchworth Gate, and asked that the status of the lay-bys and litter bins on the Baldock bypass be clarified. The SDCO agreed to report to the next meeting on this issue.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the action taken by the Senior Community Development Officer to promote greater community capacity and wellbeing be endorsed;
- 2) That the Senior Community Development Officer be requested to report to the next meeting of the Baldock and District Committee on the progress in relation to the Bowls Club, and on the highway issues at Letchworth Gate and the lay-bys on the Baldock bypass.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:**

To allow the Committee to enforce the actions and policies involved in the tasks and projects undertaken by the Senior Community Development Officer.

**116. FINANCIAL BUDGET REPORTS**

The Senior Community Development Officer advised the Committee that there were eight grant applications for determination, and Ward Discretionary Funds for allocation to Baldock Town Centre Enhancement Works and to Community Projects for Clothall Common.

Members were asked to note the information in Appendix 1, which related to Area Committee Budget balances for the Financial Year 2006/07, the pre-allocations carried forward from 2005/06, and the balances allocated to Visioning Budgets available to respective wards within the Baldock and District area.

The Committee was informed that respective Ward Members had been consulted regarding the pre-allocation of funds for Community Initiative and Projects from the previous Financial Year 2005/06 Ward Development Discretionary Budgets, to that of the current Financial Year 2006/07. Further consultation had also taken place with regard to the commitment of any remaining unallocated 2006/07 Ward Development Discretionary Budgets before the end of the Financial Year 2006/07 on 31 March 2007. Consultation had been held with the respective officers and external agencies regarding the funding proposal for Area Committee Ward Discretionary Development Funds.

Cllr M. Muir advised that money had been given towards the tree works for the Nightingale Road area and the proposed grass maze at Avenue Park last year, but that the tree works had not been done. These works should be done immediately or the money refunded, as the trees were now in bud. The works had been done in previous years during February or March, so it was probably too late for this year. Cllr M. Muir also raised the subject of the progress of the work on the grass maze at Avenue Park Baldock, and requested that measures were put in place to ensure the creation of the maze this year. The SCDO confirmed that the contractors would be instructed not to cut the grass, to allow the maze to be re-marked.

The SCDO stated that since the last meeting there had been a number of further grant allocations, as follows:

Ashwell Playgroup - £120  
Ashwell Cottage Garden - £100  
Ashwell Parish - £200 (Parish Plan)  
Hinxworth Parish - £400 (basketball)  
Radwell Parish Meeting - £250  
Radwell Village Hall - £200 (lighting)  
Wallington Village Hall - £1200 (heating)

These allocations were to be formally ratified at a later meeting.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the budgetary expenditure, current balances and carry forwards from the Ward Development Budgets 2005/06, the Small Area Grants Budget and the allocated Area Visioning Budgets be noted;
- (2) That the pre-allocations of uncommitted Ward Development Discretionary Funds to respective projects and initiatives within each Ward Budget be noted;
- (3) That the sum of £4,407 be allocated from the Baldock Town Ward Development Discretionary Budget as a contribution to the future Town Centre Enhancement Works;
- (4) That the sum of £6,298 be allocated from the Baldock East Ward Development Discretionary Budget to develop the Community Projects proposed for Clothall Common.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

To use the allocation of funds that are available and accessed by various members of the community to improve the services provided by the local organisations and groups.

**117. GRANT APPLICATION – HINXWORTH VILLAGE HALL**

**RESOLVED:** That the sum of £400 be awarded to Hinxworth Village Hall as a financial contribution towards part funding of Indoor Bowls equipment, such funds to be allocated from the Arbury Ward Development Discretionary Budget.

**118. GRANT APPLICATION – ASHWELL BROWNIE GUIDES**

**RESOLVED:** That the sum of £150 be awarded to Ashwell Brownie Guides as a financial contribution towards part funding of Fluorescent Safety Vests, such funds to be allocated from the Arbury Ward Development Discretionary Budget.

**119. GRANT APPLICATION – WESTON TENNIS CLUB**

**RESOLVED:** That the sum of £2,300 be awarded to Weston Tennis Club on behalf of Weston Parish Council, as a financial contribution towards the Club's project for a small timber pavilion at Weston Recreation Ground, such funds to be allocated from the Weston and Sandon Ward Development Discretionary Budgets.

**120. GRANT APPLICATION – RUSHDEN VILLAGE HALL**

**RESOLVED:** That the sum of £750 be awarded to Rushden Village Hall as a financial contribution towards part funding of new stacking chairs, such funds to be allocated from the Weston and Sandon Ward Development Discretionary Budgets.

**121. GRANT APPLICATION – RUSHDEN PARISH COUNCIL**

**RESOLVED:** That the sum of £350 be awarded to Rushden Parish Council as a financial contribution towards repair and enhancement works to Rushden Village Green, such funds to be allocated from the Weston and Sandon Ward Development Discretionary Budgets.

**122. GRANT APPLICATION – SANDON PARISH COUNCIL**

**RESOLVED:** That the sum of £330 be awarded to Sandon Parish Council as a financial contribution towards refurbishment of the village's playground safety surfacing, such funds to be allocated from the Weston and Sandon Ward Development Discretionary Budgets.

**123. GRANT APPLICATION – WESTON FOOTPATH LIGHTING PROJECT**

**RESOLVED:** That the sum of £2,250 be awarded to the Weston Footpath Lighting Project as a financial contribution, such funds to be allocated from the Weston and Sandon Community Visioning Projects Budget.

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

**RESOLVED:** That the sum of £495 be awarded to Baldock Town Youth Football Club from the Baldock Town Ward Discretionary Budget and £155 from the Baldock East Ward Discretionary Budget, a financial contribution of £650 in total, towards the twinned town soccer events planned for 2007.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

**125. PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

**SCHEDULE**

<b>Reference Number</b>	<b>Description of Development and Location</b>
<b>07/00220/1</b>	<b>Roe Green Farm House, Roe Green, Sandon</b> Erection of single storey side and rear extension and detached double garage following demolition of existing garage.
<b>07/00363/1CC</b>	<b>Residential Children's Home on adjacent land south of New Farm, Weston Way, Baldock</b> Erection of residential children's home following demolition of barns.

The Area Planning Officer assured the Committee that the footprint of the new building was comparable to the old and it was noted that the Conservation Officer had agreed it would be beneficial to replace the existing garage.

The Area Planning Officer informed the Area Committee that a decision to grant this application planning permission had been taken by Hertfordshire County Council on 26 March 2007, despite an invitation from that Authority for the District Council to advise on the likely Committee date at which it would be able to consider the matter. The Area Committee resolved that an expression of dissatisfaction be conveyed in relation to the way this matter has been handled by the determining authority. The Committee strongly suggested that invitations for District Councils to advise on their available Committee dates should be followed up if, as in this case, it became clear that a response within the prescribed timeframe would be problematic.

Cllr M. Muir advised that he had been on the Committee at Hertfordshire County Council when the application was decided. The decision was split 5:5 and he had requested that the Chairman use his vote to refuse the application and look at an alternative site. This request was not accepted.

Cllr I. Knighton expressed his concerns about the way the matter had been handled, and the way in which the facilities were to be run. He requested that the members of the Committee express their views in strong terms in a letter to Hertfordshire County Council. Cllr M. Weeks proposed that the Area Planning Officer should draft the letter in consultation with the Chairman of the Baldock and District Area Committee.

The Committee support for this action was unanimous.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That application 07/00220/1 be GRANTED planning permission, subject to the conditions as set out in the report of the Head of Planning and Building Control;
  
- (2) That, in relation to application 07/00363/1CC, the Area Planning Officer, in consultation with the Chairman, prepares a letter of response to Hertfordshire County Council, expressing concern about the materials and design for the children's home, and also that the local Planning Authority had not been given an opportunity to respond to the planning application prior to the determination of the application. In the letter, the Baldock and District Area Committee should convey its dissatisfaction in relation to the way this matter has been handled by the determining authority, as well as suggesting that invitations for District Councils to advise on their available committee dates should be followed up if, as in this case, it becomes clear that a response within the prescribed timeframe is problematic.

**126. PLANNING APPEALS AND ENFORCEMENT**

The Area Planning Officer informed the Committee that the following planning appeal had been lodged since the meeting of the Committee on 19 February 2007.

Appellant:	Mr and Mrs S. French
Address:	Driftway Barn, Gannock Green, Sandon
Description:	Single storey side and rear extensions, Ref 1729/1LB and 06/01730/1
Decision:	Appeals (listed building and planning) were DISMISSED on 19 March 2007.
Method:	Written representations.

**127. VOTE OF THANKS**

The Chairman on behalf of the Baldock and District Committee wished to place on record their thanks for the Area Planning Officer (Richard Tiffin)'s dedication and hard work while he has been in post. As this was the Area Planning Officer's final meeting before the inception of the new Central Planning Control Committee, the Baldock and District Area Chairman and Committee wished him well for the future.

The meeting closed at 9.00 p.m.

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Chairman