

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 4 June 2007 at 8.00 p.m.**

MINUTES

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

IN ATTENDANCE: *Stuart Izzard (Senior Community Development Officer (Youth))
Liz Green (Head of Policy, Partnership and Performance)
Helen Leitch and Terry Nickolls (Planning Projects)
Nigel Schofield and Susanne Gow, Committee and Member Services
Officers.*

ALSO PRESENT: *D. Gilder and M. MacDonald (Icknield Way Residents)
Philip Mills, Chairman and Tim Blenkin, Secretary (Baldock Town
Youth Football Club)
Andrew Tyndsley and Edward Jolly (Building Design Partnerships)*

Approximately 30 members of the public.

4. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

5. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor M.R.M. Muir advised the Committee that Councillor A. D. Young had tendered his apologies and that he would be Chairman for this meeting.

6. MINUTES – 2 April 2007

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 April 2007 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

7. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

There was no notification of other business.

8. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs I. Knighton and M. Weeks both declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 6, namely the presentation by Committee Members of the Baldock Town Youth Football Club, as members of their immediate family are Club players.

9. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Chairman invited representatives of Icknield Way Residents to make a presentation on traffic management issues. The two representatives provided a detailed description of current traffic problems in Icknield Way, supported by photographs of illegally parked vehicles, together with a comprehensive analysis of the traffic in Icknield Way. The results of the questionnaires and the surveys carried out showed:

- Severe non-residential parking (on occasion continuously up to two weeks);
- Excessive speed in a residential area (especially dangerous for the number of children and elderly persons living in the area);
- Inappropriate traffic (excessively large lorries pass within inches of residential buildings and cause noise pollution and vibration damage to buildings);
- Use of Icknield Way as a "rat run" (to avoid the traffic lights in Whitehorse Street), traffic exceeds speed limits and inappropriately-sized lorries use this route;
- The residents believe that rather than improve the traffic situation, the new Baldock By-pass has worsened the volume of traffic with its associated problems.

A selection of photographs taken by the residents and given to the Committee, showed some of the traffic issues, e.g.:

- A lorry stuck in Icknield Way, holding up the traffic;
- A lorry mounting the kerb to pass – any pedestrians on the pavement could have been killed or injured;
- A flatbed lorry carrying a steam engine trying to reverse – but it is also towing a caravan, so damaged a parked car;
- Cars parked half on the pavement narrow the footpath, so that pedestrians, prams and pushchairs must go into the road to pass;
- A car illegally parked half on the pavement, over double yellow lines;
- A car parked across two driveways, impeding the entry of vehicles to private properties;
- A skip lorry parked half on the pavement, over double yellow lines, ensuring a resident and three children had to walk past in the road;
- As rail-users cars are parked along the road close to North Road, a delivery lorry blocked the whole road to unload. The length of time these cars are left in the road makes it difficult for residents to receive deliveries.

Residents suggested the following solutions:

- Limit vehicle size to 7.5 tonnes;
- Resident parking only/paid parking permits;
- Traffic calming measures, possibly speed bumps or pinch points, or a 20mph speed limit;
- Make Icknield Way One-Way (the direction to be advised);
- Create Resident and Emergency Access only for Icknield Way;
- Establish a No Through Road, possibly blocking off North Road or making Church Street one-way;
- Access from Church Street only
- No access from North Road (residents suggested that blocking off access to and from the A507 would significantly reduce the traffic flow in Icknield Way).

Following the presentation, the Committee agreed that the North Herts. District Manager at Hertfordshire Highways should be provided with the results of the survey, and that this particular traffic management problem should be referred to the next meeting of the Joint Member Panel, to be held on Monday 25 June 2007. They also agreed that part-funding should be made available, from the Baldock and District Urban Transport Plan and the Baldock Town Centre Enhancement Scheme.

On completion of the Icknield Way discussions, comment was also made to the need for traffic management controls in Yeomanry Drive, especially near the entrance to Hartsfield School.

RECOMMENDED TO THE NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHWAYS-JOINT MEMBER PANEL

- (1) That the North Herts. District Manager at Hertfordshire Highways be requested to undertake a review of the traffic management issues raised by the residents at Icknield Way, Baldock, taking into account the detailed analysis survey results;
- (2) That the North Herts. District Manager be requested to report back to the meeting of the JMP to be held on 15 October 2007 with proposals for the management and alleviation of the traffic issues in Icknield way, Baldock;
- (3) That the North Herts. District Manager at Hertfordshire Highways be requested to undertake a review of the traffic management issues in Yeomanry Drive, Baldock;
- (4) That the North Herts. District Manager be requested to report back to the meeting of the JMP to be held on 15 October 2007 with proposals for the management and alleviation of the traffic issues in Yeomanry Drive, Baldock.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS

To confirm the support of the Baldock and District Committee for sound traffic management control to be placed in Icknield Way and Yeomanry Drive, for the benefit of local residents and in the interest of highway safety.

10. PRESENTATION FROM BALDOCK TOWN YOUTH FOOTBALL CLUB ON ENHANCED FACILITIES

Mr Philip Mills (Chairman) and Mr Tim Blenkin (Secretary) gave a presentation on the facilities currently available at Baldock Town Youth Football Club, and the improvements required for the Club to progress up to Step 7 in the South Midlands and Premier Divisions. The improvements required included a large area of land for the Club's "home ground" (they stated that the Club currently run over 40 teams), including a main pitch and several training pitches, floodlights, stands, dugouts, changing rooms for home and visiting teams with facilities for the Ladies teams run by BTFC, hard standing, a car park, a clubhouse and a refreshments facility. They requested that Officers should look for appropriate land on which the facilities they require can be built, as they currently use Knights Templar School's facilities which does not work well with both the School and the Football Club each trying to fit in training sessions and home games at the same time. In addition, the School facilities were not up to the standard required by a football club rising up through the local, area and regional divisions.

Following the presentation, the NHDC Portfolio for Leisure and e-Government, Cllr I. Knighton, stated that he had previously held discussions on this subject with the Head of Leisure and Environmental Services, and would work with the relevant Officers to see if any of the Club's expectations pertaining to a home ground could be met. He suggested that this item be placed on the Agenda for the next Baldock and District Committee Meeting on Monday 17 September 2007, and that the representatives from Baldock Town Youth Football Club are invited to attend that meeting.

11. BALDOCK TOWN CENTRE ENHANCEMENT SCHEME

Following the preview presentation by Building Design Partnership (BDP) of proposals for the enhancement of Baldock Town Centre, there will be a launch on Saturday 9th June of the 6-week public consultation when Baldock residents, businesses and visitors will be able to comment on the proposals.

From 9 June to 20 July there will be an exhibition in the Community Centre, Simpson Drive, Baldock and information on the North Herts. website. There will also be a public meeting on 12 July at which representatives of BDP and Officers will be available to answer questions on the proposals.

After the consultation period, BDP will review the comments and start drafting the final design for Members' approval.

Councillors I. Knighton and M. Weeks suggested that posters should be put up in the surrounding villages to inform them of the consultation and invite them to the public meeting on 12 July.

Councillor Muir raised his concerns regarding the permanent Traffic Regulation Orders to protect the surrounding areas from migration out of the High Street.

The Committee gave the Baldock town Centre Enhancement Scheme and its attendant consultation exercise, their unanimous support.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Baldock and District Committee agreed the proposals for the Baldock Town Centre Enhancement Scheme for public consultation.
- (2) That Baldock and District Committee agreed the format for the public consultation.

- (3) That Officers progress with the necessary work to review the wider traffic and parking issues around the town and report back to Members with recommendations on how the wider parking and traffic issues could be managed and implemented.

REASON FOR DECISIONS:

To allow the stakeholders to endorse the proposals prior to implementation.

12. CONSIDERATION OF AN 'ALCOHOL-FREE ZONE' FOR BALDOCK

The Head of Policy, Partnerships and Performance (HPPP) advised the Committee that the phrase 'Alcohol-Free Zone' was a misnomer, as it was not a place in which the consumption of alcohol could be banned, but rather it should be called by its correct title a 'Designated Public Places Order (DPPO)' in which the Police had powers to stop and confiscate alcohol from persons they considered to be under the influence of alcohol in possession of an open vessel. It was noted that the issue of alcohol-related incidents, including underage children trying to obtain alcohol, was increasing. The HPPP drew Members' attention to the fact that of the incidents dealt with by Police so far, the majority related to the consumption of alcohol by minors, in which case confiscations were made, or by adult drinkers becoming unruly on leaving clubs/pubs, again dealt with by existing legislation, and that a DPPO would not necessarily be an effective additional tool.

The original decision made by Baldock and Area Committee at its meeting on 15 January 2007 (Minute 98 refers) was to await the outcome of a review in Royston on the effectiveness of an DPPO zone prior to the establishment of such a zone in other towns in North Hertfordshire. The decision on progressing with other alcohol-free zones was also considered by the Council's Cabinet in February 2006 (Minute 181 refers), when it was agreed that other towns would not be considered until a formal review of the Royston zone had been considered. Currently, there had been slow progress in the establishment of a DPPO in Royston, as a result of several protracted issues in the consultation process and legal establishment of the zone with the Secretary of State's approval.

The Committee agreed that despite the lack of progress in Royston, it would be appropriate to request officers to consider how Baldock could move forward to the establishment of its own DPPO zone, if and as required, alongside other community safety initiatives. The HPPP confirmed that she was working with the Hertfordshire Constabulary in order to put together a recommendation on how to progress the establishment of an action plan for community safety initiatives in Baldock to deal with a number of issues, not only street drinking. The Committee were in agreement that moving forward should not be constrained by 'putting up a few signs', but must be a valid step in the right direction from the public's point of view.

Some scepticism was expressed, in that the establishment of DPPO zones in Royston was a much broader issue than it seemed at first. It was suggested that Baldock should wait and see what evidence could be gathered from Royston in a few months' time, to determine whether the establishment of a DPPO in Royston was successful.

The Chairman acknowledged the points raised, but the Committee by majority support wished officers to review the potential for establishment of a DPPO zone in Baldock at the earliest opportunity. The HPPP agreed to discuss with Hertfordshire Constabulary the wider issue of anti-social behaviour, as well as alcohol consumption in the context of the establishment of a DPPO zone in Baldock.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Baldock Area Committee note the procedure required to establish a DPPO zone in which antisocial drinking can be controlled;
- (2) That Baldock Area Committee note the decision made by Cabinet in February 2006 that other towns across the district should await the outcome of a review from Royston on the effectiveness of that zone prior to commencing establishment of others;

- (3) That the HPPP be requested to:
- report to the next meeting of the Baldock and District Committee, to be held on 16 July 2007, on the way forward for the Baldock and District Committee to determine a need for the adoption of a DPPO zone;
 - to indicate what other measures could be taken to control disturbances in Baldock Town Centre; and
 - to determine the effect of an establishment of a DPPO and the licensing of open air events, e.g. the Baldock Medieval Street Fair.

REASON FOR DECISION: To allow further research into the feasibility of a Designated Public Places Order in Baldock town centre.

13. CHAMPION NEWS

Baldock Town Hall Feasibility Study

The Senior Community Development Officer (SCDO) told the Meeting that Officers were offering support to the Independent Stakeholder Group in the development and production of a business case for Baldock Town Hall.

Councillor S. Jarvis stated that market testing was not an invitation to tender. There should have been a less formal way to discover if the Town Hall could be used successfully. Councillor I. Knighton revealed that numerous different potential uses had been examined with no result, and that the Independent Stakeholder Group were aware that Baldock may be unable to support two community buildings.

By-pass and A1M Motorway – Update from Hertfordshire Highways

With reference to the northbound off-slip at Junction 9 of the A1M, during the two-week layout trial queues formed back onto the motorway, and it was opined that this may have been due in part to a problem with one of the red light trigger mechanisms.

The SCDO informed the Meeting that there will be lane closures in the first two weeks of July to allow for additional safety signs to be installed. County have also been pressed for the results of their traffic surveys, but this information is not due to be released until later in the summer.

Baldock Festival 2007 – The Medieval Street Fair

This year's main festival event was a great success with all scheduled activities going to plan. Next year the event will be in its 25th year, and is therefore an important milestone for Baldock. It is recommended that any work carried out during the Baldock Town Centre Enhancement might start elsewhere, so that it does not affect the High Street for the duration of the Medieval Street Fair.

Clothall Village Hall

The SCDO had informed the Members that the project group have secured over £100,000 of external funding to rebuild the village hall, but a planning application and building regulations application have only recently been submitted. This slow progress has put the project group in danger of losing the £100,000 funding if the process is delayed in any way.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee endorsed the action taken by the Senior Community Development Officer to promote greater community capacity and wellbeing

REASON FOR DECISION:

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

14. BALDOCK AND DISTRICT AREA COMMITTEE DEVELOPMENT AND AREA VISIONING BUDGETS 2007/2008

The Senior Community Development Officer (SCDO) advised the Committee that there were three grant applications for determination.

Members were asked to note the information in Appendix 1, which related to Area Committee Budget balances for the Financial Year 2007/08, the pre-allocations carried forward from 2006/07, and the balances allocated to Visioning Budgets available to respective wards within the Baldock and District area.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the budgetary expenditure, current balances and carry forwards from the Ward Development Budgets 2006/07, and the Small Area Grants Budget for 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.

REASON FOR DECISIONS

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.

15. GRANT APPLICATION – HINXWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

RESOLVED: That the sum of £400 be awarded to Hinxworth Village Hall as a financial contribution towards the development of basketball facilities on the recreation ground at Hinxworth, such funds to be allocated from the Arbury Ward Discretionary Development Budget.

16. GRANT APPLICATION – WALLINGTON VILLAGE HALL

RESOLVED: That the sum of £1,200 be awarded to Wallington Village Hall as a financial contribution towards part funding of renewing the Hall's heating system, such funds to be allocated from the Weston and Sandon Ward Discretionary Development Budget.

17. GRANT APPLICATION – BALDOCK BRANCH OF HERTS ACTION ON DISABILITY

RESOLVED: That the sum of £500 be awarded to the Baldock Branch of Herts. Action on Disability, as a financial contribution towards the organisation's annual programme of events and activities for its members, such funds to be allocated via £380 from the Baldock Town Ward and £120 from the Baldock East Ward Development Discretionary Budgets.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS

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.

18. COMMITTEE MEETINGS 2007/2008

The following dates were suggested and agreed:

- (i) Monday, 16 July 2007
- (ii) Monday, 17 September 2007
- (iii) Monday, 19 November 2007
- (iv) Monday, 21 January 2008
- (v) Monday, 17 March 2008

Baldock Members were requested to place these agreed dates in their diaries.

The meeting closed at 10.17p.m.

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Chairman