

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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

**Meeting held in The Main Hall, Knights Templar School, Park Street, Baldock
on 7 August 2007 at 7.30 p.m.**

MINUTES

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

IN ATTENDANCE: *Stuart Izzard (Senior Community Development Officer (Youth))
Louise Symes (Projects Manager - Planning Policy and Projects)
Terry Nickolls (Principal Engineer - Planning Policy and Projects)
Susanne Gow (Committee and Member Services Officer).*

Roxanne Glaud (Hertfordshire Highways)

ALSO PRESENT: *Mehron Kirk (Landscape Architect Associate, Building Design
Partnerships)*

Approximately 72 members of the public for Agenda Item 6.

19. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

20. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor S.K. Jarvis.

21. MINUTES – 4 JUNE 2007

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2007 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman, subject to confirmation that at line 2 of Minute 10, Mr Mills and Mr Jenkin were officers of Baldock Town Football Club, not Baldock Town Youth Football Club.

22. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

There was no notification of other business.

23. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- Councillor A.D. Young declared a personal interest in the relevant item in Minute 26 as he is a trustee of the Baldock Bowls and Social Club and confirmed that he would remain in the room, take part in the debate and vote if it was appropriate.
- Councillor M.R.M. Muir declared a personal interest in Minute 28 as he was the founder of Friends of Baldock Greenspaces who have submitted a Grant Application for approval by the Baldock and District Committee. He confirmed that he would remain in the room, reserved the right to speak and vote.

24. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no items presented under public participation.

**25. BALDOCK TOWN CENTRE ENHANCEMENT SCHEME – DRAFT PROPOSALS
FOR AGREEMENT FOLLOWING PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

The Projects Manager introduced the item and advised that some 200 written responses had been received to the consultation on the draft proposals, and that the majority of the responses were positive. She then introduced Mehron Kirk of Building Design Partnerships (BDP), who presented to the Baldock and District Council Meeting the findings of the 6-week consultation on the Baldock Town Centre Enhancement

Scheme, and BDP's draft proposals for the actions to be taken to enhance Baldock town centre. These proposals are to be approved in stages by the Baldock and District Committee, and implemented between April 2008 and April 2009.

Mr Kirk listed Building Design Partnerships' "Proposals for Approval to Freeze the Public Realm Masterplan" under Category A as follows, and formally requested that the Baldock and District Committee approve this list so that the Consultants could proceed with preparation of the detailed design and maintain progress on the agreed project programme.

- General public realm masterplan layout;
- New public spaces and War Memorial;
- Closure of the south end of Church Street;
- Parking locations for all areas, and allocation for core areas;
- Style and character of materials and street furniture:
 - Types of material to include a mix of York stone, granite, buff coloured bound gravel on footways and asphalt on carriageways;
 - Street furniture to be a neutral, elegant and contemporary design, making use of timber material for seating, litterbins and bollards;
- Street trees, including existing trees where appropriate, and planting new semi-mature lime or similar species and green areas comprising mostly lawn;
- Church Street to become one-way to Pond Lane;
- Incorporation of a roundabout at the main junction and relocated queuing.

Mr Kirk then presented a list of additional studies to be undertaken as a direct result of consultation, a report of which will be brought to the Baldock and District Committee Meeting to be held on 19 November 2007. He listed these as:

- Slip road towards the southern end of High Street;
- Extent of parking controls, including permit parking;
- Railway station car park;
- Link to Tesco supermarket
- Land ownership issues;
- Further traffic management and parking in Baldock;
- Improved signage outside Baldock, diverting traffic away from Baldock town centre;
- Introduce pedestrian phasing at junction of Station Road/Whitehorse Street;
- HGV restrictions in Baldock town centre;
- Public toilets.

Mr Kirk advised those present that there would be another public meeting early in 2008 to inform Baldock residents of the progress of the plans, as work was programmed to begin in April 2008.

Baldock and District Committee Members then asked pertinent questions interalia, the provision of additional disabled parking, the exact position of "gating" for Baldock town centre, and the means of easing traffic flow and slowing down traffic in Baldock town centre.

Mr Kirk answered some of the questions, and assured the Members that those questions he had not answered would be taken on board, and answers provided at the Baldock and District Committee Meeting to be held on 19 November 2007.

The Chairman requested a Recorded Vote of the Baldock and District Committee Members on the recommendations (below) made by the Head of Planning and Building Control, and this was proposed by Councillor Weeks and seconded by Councillor Knighton. The Recorded Vote was taken as follows:

Councillor Jarvis	Absent
Councillor Kirkland	For the motion
Councillor Knighton	For the motion
Councillor Muir	For the motion

Councillor Weeks For the motion
Councillor Young For the motion

The motion was therefore passed unanimously.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That Baldock and District Committee agreed the amended proposals for the Baldock Town Centre Enhancement Scheme in accordance with:
 - the list of proposals in Category A;
 - the revised Public Realm Masterplan (Ref: 90 LP004 Revision C);
 - the parking locations and core area plan (Ref: 90 LP007).
- 2) That the Baldock and District Committee consider the list of additional studies required as set out in Category B, and that officers report back on the outcome of these studies at the meeting of the Baldock and District Committee to be held on 19 November 2007.

REASON FOR DECISIONS:

To maintain the best possible rate of progress, the areas of work associated with Categories A and B have been separated. Requesting Members to consider and agree the areas of work associated with Category A would release a substantial volume of work to the Consultants, which would allow the momentum of progress to be maintained in the meantime, while the outstanding areas of work in Category B were considered. The recommendations were offered after due consideration of the information collected over the last four months, and in the full knowledge that the amended design reflected the majority and/or balanced views of the various groups consulted, survey material and expert consideration.

The Chairman thanked Building Design Partnerships and the Planning Policy and Projects officers for their hard work for the people of Baldock. He also thanked the public who had taken the time to attend this District Meeting, and opined that this is an exciting time for the people of Baldock, as it is the start of the refurbishment process for their town centre, which would shortly become a great place in which to live and work.

The Chairman then announced a short break in which those present could speak briefly to their Councillor, or be added to a list for receipt of details of the presentation.

26. CHAMPION NEWS AND COMMUNITY REPORT

Baldock Town Hall Feasibility Study

The Senior Community Development Officer (SCDO) told the Meeting that officers were continuing to offer support to the Town Hall Community Group in the development and production of a Community Use Business Case for Baldock Town Hall.

The SCDO and the Community Facilities Manager were to meet representatives of the Group soon, to enable them to submit their proposals to the Local Authority in September 2007, prior to the reporting back to the Area Committee.

Baldock Town Centre Enhancement Scheme

The outcomes from the public consultation were presented to the Baldock and District Committee, and a representative from the Consultants, Building Design Partnerships, explained the amendments made to the design scheme and the more detailed work necessary resulting from the overall process. If approved, the design scheme will progress, leading to the final design 'freeze' stage.

A Member suggested that it be borne in mind when procuring the street furniture, that replacements should also be ordered and kept in stock, in case of damage.

Development of Town Partnership for Baldock

The Group's meeting on 30 July 2007 was cancelled, but a presentation was made by the Consultants, Building Design Partnership, regarding suggestions for the Baldock Town Centre Enhancement Scheme. The Group believe that there are mutual gains to be made with structural development of the town and the development of the Partnership and Town Centre Management.

A Member revealed that one member of the Town Partnership had managed to collect £3,400 in donations and Tesco was being requested to match this sum.

Baldock Chartered Street Fair – 2-6 October 2007

Plans for this year's Chartered Street Fair were currently being negotiated, and Hertfordshire Highways have applied for a formal 16a Temporary Road Closure.

Discussion then ensued as to the additional restrictions that are likely to occur on the Fair's future operation with regards to the town centre enhancement works. It was suggested that showmen should be informed that their generators should not be positioned on grass verges during the Street Fair period, and also the new market surface and York stone pavement slabs should be kept clean and undamaged by the fairground equipment. It was also suggested that there should be water and electricity points installed in the market area during enhancement to help pre-empt this damage.

Clothall Village Hall

The project group had secured over £100,000 of external funding to go towards the associated site works and rebuilding of a new village hall. Additional applications to National Lottery, Biffa and other grant-making charitable trust funds were also submitted, and the results of these should be known by September 2007.

Baldock Bowls & Social Club

The Senior Community Development Officer (SCDO), together with the Elected Member responsible for the Leisure Portfolio and other officers of the Council would reach an agreement soon in assisting the Club in the development of a Sports Club Association.

Ashwell United Reform Church Hall

The Senior Community Development Officer was advising and assisting the Hall's co-ordinator in securing external funding to refurbish primarily the kitchen area, three large windows and other external and internal works.

Baldock Youth Club

Officers from Community Safety and Community Development were continuing to pursue ways to enhance the current youth facilities at the Youth Club in Simpson Drive. The Club required refurbished lighting and CCTV for the building, and the CDO stated that Baldock Youth Club may in the future come to the Committee with a grant application. The County Youth Service would also be requested to provide some financial support.

Various proposals were being developed to try and combat recent vandalism and anti-social activities occurring outside the Club.

Letchworth Gate

Members of the Committee requested that officers formally write on behalf of the Area Committee to Hertfordshire Highways requesting that the landscaping bunds are reinstated around the Letchworth Gate, Junction 9 of the A1M following the departure of the Highways contractors, to prevent and deter any unauthorised use of the area.

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.

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

The Senior Community Development Officer (SCDO) tabled four grant applications for determination at the Meeting.

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, 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.

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.

28. GRANT APPLICATION – FRIENDS OF BALDOCK GREENSPACES

RESOLVED: That the sum of £380 from Baldock Town & £120 from Baldock East Ward Development Discretionary Budgets be awarded to Friends of Baldock Greenspaces for equipment and planting costs, as a financial contribution towards supporting the continued work of this volunteer group.

REASON FOR DECISION

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

29. GRANT APPLICATION – ‘ANCIENT BALDOCK’ – BOOKS GIFT

RESOLVED: That the Community Development Officer be asked to make enquiries of the Local Education Authority as to the number of families with Junior School age children in Baldock, and report back to the next Committee Meeting to be held on 17 September 2007 for further discussion as to the possible cost of donating a book to each family.

REASON FOR DECISION

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.

30. GRANT APPLICATION – ASHWELL BABY AND TODDLER GROUP

RESOLVED: That the sum of £350 be awarded from the Arbury Ward Development Discretionary Budget to part-fund play supplies and the installation of a baby-changing unit for the Ashwell Baby and Toddler Group at the United Reform Church Hall in Ashwell.

REASON FOR DECISION

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.

31. ASHWELL PARISH COUNCIL

RESOLVED: That the sum of £325 be awarded from the Arbury Ward Development Discretionary Funds for financial assistance with the provision of a Green Energy Machine to be displayed at the Ashwell Show.

REASON FOR DECISION

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.

The meeting closed at 9.15 p.m.

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Chairman