

TITLE OF REPORT: CHAMPION NEWS & FINANCE REPORT

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY, PARTNERSHIPS & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Committee on the current expenditure and balances of the Area Committee delegated budgets.
- 1.2 To bring to the Committee's attention to details of recent requests received for Area Committee Development Discretionary Grant Funding made by community groups and local organisations.
- 1.3 To advise the Committee of the activities and schemes with which the Community Development Officer has been involved.
- 1.4 To bring to the Committee's attention some important community based activities that will be taking place during the next few months.

2. FORWARD PLAN

- 2.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key decision and has not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

3. PROJECT/ACTIVITY/SCHEME DETAILS

3.1 Town Centre Partnership

Following the resignation of Nigel Cooke the post of Town Centre Manager has been given to Murray Fastier. The post will remain as two days per week for the time being. A new website is in the process of being created and Murray and James Lunnom (Chair of the Partnership) are drawing up a development plan for the Partnership.

3.2 Friends of St Mary's Church Christmas Event

The event was hailed as a great success, helped along by good weather with an excellent attendance through out the day. The event raised approximately £8000 towards the St Mary's tower fund.

A post briefing session has been held following the event and it is hoped to repeat the event next year over the first weekend in December 2010. Several points for improvement were raised at the meeting. Given that organisers will have more time next year to set up the event, it is likely that there will be more stalls selling Christmas crafts and presents.

In addition, the Town Partnership would like the event to run for two days benefiting from the ice rink and the Committee also hopes to attract a continental market on the Sunday.

3.3 **Town Centre Enhancement Issues**

The cables have now been installed to the electric bollards. Property services will shortly be installing independent meters after which time the bollards should be fully functional and commissioned for use at future town centre events.

3.4 **Baldock Youth Wing**

Following several meetings between Youth Connexions, the Community Centre Association and NHDC officers, responsibility for the Youth Wing Building has now been clarified.

In the original lease of the building the Community Centre has responsibility for the Youth Wing building. In the past the Committee were under the impression that Herts County Council's Youth Connexions had responsibility and were therefore only charging County for a percentage of the overall Centre's utilities, such as gas and electricity.

Officers are now waiting to hear how the Community Association would like to proceed. They have two options;

- keep the Youth Wing and formalise the hire to Herts County and the Great Group, so that they can take advantage of the income;
- Have a new lease drawn up that excludes the Youth Wing, in which case NHDC will advertise for expressions of interest to other parties to run the building as a centre for children and young people.

3.5 **Parking Issues at junction of South Road and Pembroke Road**

Following reports of vehicles parking on the pedestrian area at the junction of South Road and Pembroke Road, a site visit was organised with the Highways Engineer and Cllr Muir on 3rd November 09. The Highways Engineer agreed that the installation of some wooden bollards would remedy the situation and agreed to submit costings for the work to be undertaken.

4. **FUNDING DECISIONS TO BE MADE / CONSIDERED**

4.1 The Committee is asked to note the budgetary expenditure, balances and carry forwards from the Development Budgets and the Visioning Budgets

4.2 A spreadsheet showing the detailed spend to date of the Area Development budget is enclosed as **Appendix A**.

4.3 Weston Parish Council

A Fast Track Grant has been awarded from discretionary budgets by the ward member for Weston & Sandon to the Parish Council to fund the printing of a free pamphlet to provide information on the Weston Wildflower Meadow. The pamphlet will be provided to all school children in the village and also be available for visitors to pick up from the village shop, local pubs and the church.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The Committee has delegated powers to administer funds from the budgets described.

5.2 There are no other legal implications pertinent to this report.

6. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Members are asked to note the information detailed in Appendix A of the report, which relates to the Area Committee budget balances for the current financial year 2009/10.
- 6.2 The spreadsheet also details the pre-allocations carried forward from the previous financial year 2008/09 to the current financial year 2009/10.

7. HUMAN RESOURCE AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no human resource and equalities implications pertinent to this report.

8. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS

- 8.1 Consultation with Members has occurred in connection with the allocation of funds for Community Projects.
- 8.2 Consultation with the respective officers and external agencies / groups has taken place with regard to the funding proposals for Area Committee Discretionary Development Funds.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 The Committee is asked to note the budgetary expenditure, balances and carry forwards from the Development Budgets.
- 9.2 That the Committee endorses the actions taken by the Community Development Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being for the Baldock & District Area.

10. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 10.1 To ensure that the Committee are kept informed of the work of the Community Development Officer.
- 10.2 This report is intended simply to inform Members of the financial resources available to the Committee. It draws attention to the current budgetary situation, assists in the effective financial management of the Area Committee's budget and ensures actions are performed within the Authority's Financial Regulations and the guidance in the Grants procedure.
- 10.3 The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims and Strategic Objectives of the Council.
- 10.4 The allocation of funds will improve the services provided by local organisations and groups that are available and accessed by members of the community.

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Appendix A – Area Committee Financial Grant Budget Update.
- 11.2 Appendix B - Area Committee Work Programme.

12. CONTACT OFFICERS

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