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| PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT | AGENDA ITEM No |
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TITLE OF REPORT: CHAMPION NEWS & FINANCE REPORT – BALDOCK & DISTRICT AREA COMMITTEE – MONDAY 13TH SEPTEMBER 2010

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY, PARTNERSHIPS & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

PORTFOLIO HOLDER COUNCILLOR TRICIA COWLEY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

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

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 Baldock Town Partnership

Since the July Area Committee, the Baldock Town & District Partnership (BTADP) have held three very successful events all of which have been well attended by people in Baldock.

Baldock Day on 10th July brought thousands into the town centre. The event included a Farmers Market with 18 stalls, children's entertainment and a classic car show.

As well as utilising the High Street, Baldock Day also saw stalls and events on Whitehorse Street. All market stalls sold out on the day and businesses both in the High Street and Whitehorse Street saw sizeable increases in footfall on the day, some as high as 300%.

On the 18th July, the BTADP held a Big Lunch in the High Street, which saw over 350 people from Baldock and the villages sitting down for lunch and also entertained by a local live band. Free children's entertainment was also provided including a bouncy castle and face painting.

The Big Lunch is an annual nationwide event which was first carried out in 2009. Baldock was the only town within North Hertfordshire to hold a Big Lunch and as a result of the popularity of the event, it will definitely be repeated in 2011.

The Farmers Market returned to Baldock on 21st August and whilst smaller in scale compared with the July market was still very popular. Just over half of the stalls sold out of products while the others made a profit. All market stalls have already confirmed that they will be attending the next Farmers Market in September.

The BTADP is currently in discussions with D'Boignville regarding the future management of the Market Rite for the Wednesday market in Baldock.

All events were co-ordinated by Murray Fastier, the Town Centre Manager (TCM) with support in terms of publicity and event set up provided by the Baldock Community Development Officer (CDO), who also attended to ensure that the events ran effectively and without problems.

As mentioned in the July Area Committee report, the BTADP has introduced a membership scheme which offers local businesses advertising space on the website and on publicity materials.

Businesses can sign up to a Gold, Silver or Bronze membership with the pricing being £20 per month for gold, £10 per month for silver and £20 annually for bronze.

Money gained from the Membership scheme will raise funds to enable the BTADP to continue to provide events in Baldock and will see the Town Centre Manager (TCM) post move to full time before the turn of the year.

The membership scheme has now been up and running for 2 months and the BTP have to date sold 8 gold memberships. Membership take up has doubled since the July Area Committee meeting.

As detailed in the July Area Committee report and at the request of members, the TCM has now started to approach businesses within the villages within the Baldock district boundary. To date, the TCM has spoken with businesses both in Ashwell and Weston. The response from businesses has been positive and the TCM expects to increase the membership of the BTADP further over the coming months.

Future events planned by the BTADP include:

- White Lion Bike Show (5th September 2010)
- Balstock Music Festival (10-12th September 2010)
- Baldock Farmers/Community Market (18th September)

3.2 **Baldock Youth Council**

Since the July Area Committee, the Baldock Youth Council with support from Youth Connexions and the Baldock Community Development Officer have held their annual B'Festival event.

The 2010 B'Festival entitled 'B Fest B Safe' was held at The Arena in Baldock on Saturday 10th July.

The event aimed at Baldock's 13-19 year olds attracted over 500 young people and combined a music festival and football tournament with a number of activities and workshops around the theme of being safe which included advice on smoking, alcohol, internet safety and sexual health.

The event ran smoothly with no problems or complaints being received from residents or other stakeholder groups.

The current Baldock Youth Council has now disbanded with all members now taking up placements at university. The Baldock CDO is working closely with Youth Connexions and the Citizenship Co-ordinator at Knights Templar, Nick White to establish a new Baldock Youth Council. A recruitment drive for the Baldock Youth Council will be undertaken as part of the Youth Question Time event at Knights Templar on Friday 24th September.

3.3 **Balstock Event**

The Balstock event is a music event that has been running for the last 5 years in Baldock. The event is organised and run from the Engine Public House.

The event is planned to run between 2pm and 7pm on the 11th September 2010 and will include an open air concert in the town centre that will showcase some of the local musical talent in the area. There will be a 'Battle of the Bands' competition along with numerous other events and community stalls which the organisers hope will lead to a fun day out for all the family.

Since the July Area Committee, the Balstock organisers have met with the Baldock TCM and CDO on a regular basis.

At the request of the Safety Advisory Team (SAT) an Event Management Plan has been produced which has been well received by SAT who are satisfied with the arrangements for the event in terms of policing, waste management and licensing.

Pepper Court and other households in close proximity to the concert will receive an advance notice flyer about the event and will be invited to attend the Engine Public House on the day of the event to receive a free drink or burger.

This event will be covered by the Baldock Town Centre Manager's Premises Licence.

3.4 **Local Democracy Week**

Local Democracy Week (LDW) this year takes place week beginning 11th October, 2010, with the main Youth Question Time event to be held at Fearnhill School in Letchworth on Wednesday 13th October.

In addition, following feedback from last year's event, it has been agreed to hold 'Mini' Youth Question Times in all the four towns prior to the main event in LDW.

This will give the opportunity for more young people to be involved and also endeavour to gather perhaps generic questions and issues to be raised at the main event. It is also hoped that there will be more exchange between the pupils from the various participating schools.

In Baldock the 'Mini Youth Question Time will take place at Knights Templar School on Friday 24th September between 11am and 1pm.

The event is being co-ordinated by the Baldock CDO and Nick White who is the Citizenship co-ordinator at Knights Templar School.

It is envisaged that 60-80 students from a mixed age range will attend on the day. As well as the Youth Question Time, the event will also be used to raise awareness of the Baldock Youth Council and to recruit new members. Graffiti boards will also be used on the day to capture students views on a range of themes about Baldock.

The Youth Question Time element of the day will be chaired by Father Andrew Holford from St Mary's Church, Baldock. The panel for the event will consist of Councillor Marilyn Kirkland, Councillor Michael Muir, Murray Fastier (Baldock TCM), Garry Leask (Youth Connexions) and PCSO Chris Nash (Baldock Police).

Questions being asked by students will be considered by Father Holford ahead of the event to avoid any duplication of questions.

Lunch will be provided for the panel at the close of Youth Question Time.

3.5 **Baldock Fair**

The annual Baldock Fair will be returning to Baldock in October. Abbotts Amusements will be pulling into Baldock High Street after midnight on Friday 1st October and will be operational from Saturday 2nd October through to Monday 4th October. The Fair will be off site by 6am on Tuesday 5th October 2010.

The Baldock CDO has organised the Road Closure arrangements with Herts Highways and also the Waste Management arrangements for when the Fair leaves Baldock on Tuesday 5th October.

A Public Notice detailing the proposals for the fair was posted in the Comet newspaper on Thursday 8th August and will be followed up by a further notice in The Comet newspaper on 23rd September.

The Baldock CDO and the Baldock TCM will be notifying businesses and households during September about the upcoming Baldock Fair via leaflet and letter drops.

Flyers and notices will also be displayed in the Baldock car parks and on vehicles on the weeks building up to the Fair.

The Baldock CDO will be meeting shortly with Cy and Charles Abbot from Abbots Amusements to finalise plans for the Baldock Fair.

3.6 **Hedging issue in Weston**

The Baldock CDO has been acting on behalf of Weston Parish Council to resolve a hedging issue at Marlborough Close in Weston.

Following negotiations between North Hertfordshire Homes and North Hertfordshire District Council this issue has now been resolved with the hedge being trimmed during August 2010. This additional work was paid for by North Hertfordshire Homes.

3.7 **Reinstatement of Cellar doors**

The Baldock CDO has been working closely with North Hertfordshire District Council's Planning Department to reinstate the cellar doors at the Goldcrest and George and Dragon Public Houses.

As part of the Baldock enhancement works both cellar doors were tarmaced over. This measure was carried out on health and safety grounds to avoid a trip hazard.

The Baldock CDO has identified a company to carry out the reinstatement works and the reinstatement should be in place by end of October 2010.

3.8.1 **Update on Baldock Town Centre Enhancement Review and Baldock Town-wide Parking Review.**

Reports were submitted to Baldock Committee on 8th March and 19th July 2010 outlining the Baldock Town Centre Enhancement review and on the 14th June and 19th July outlining the Baldock town-wide parking review. The list of items to be reviewed for the town centre enhancement were agreed by Members at their meeting in March. This included some of the car parking issues to be taken forward as part of the town-wide parking review. Members have considered and discussed each of these items and have agreed, following investigation and reports by officers, that no further action be taken on a number of items and that others are progressed and reported on to the Baldock & District Committee. (See minute 21 for the Baldock Town Centre Enhancement Review and minute 20 for the Baldock town-wide parking review of Baldock & District Committee meeting of 19th July).

3.8.2 Below is an update from NHDC and Hertfordshire Highways (HH) Officers on the review items that were agreed to be progressed: Items (vi) and (vii) include an update from the parking review.

Design Issues

- (i) **Ref A2 – High Street taxi parking bays** - arrangements have been made for the posts to be removed within the next month.
- (ii) **A3 – Request for relocation of bench outside Zeus Hotel** – agreed if stolen bench is recovered then an alternative location will be sought along the High Street.
- (iii) **Ref A4 – Mansfield Road and High Street Junction** – Officers are in the process of identifying costs for the possible relocation of the kerb island and the installation of an additional motorcycle stand as a means of improving the visibility at the junction.
- (iv) **Ref A7 - Hitchin Street lighting levels** – following discussions between HCC and Phillips, the option of higher illumination wattage has been agreed rather than installing more columns. This is due to take place before the end of the year. HH officers will inform Members when this will take place.
- (v) **Ref A9 – Trees** – the designers have confirmed that one of the trees in Whitehorse Street will be replaced in the autumn and have documented 3 others that are in poor health that may need to be replaced. These will be reviewed in the autumn and reported to Members accordingly.

Parking Issues including Town-wide Parking Review

- (vi) **Ref B4 and B5 – non resident parking issues in Thurnall Close, The Twitchell, and Church Street** are being investigated and taken forward as part of the town-wide parking review. Officers have completed their observation surveys of on-street parking issues within agreed Zones 1, 2 and 3 and are in the process of analysing questionnaires that have been sent to each household and business within the three zones. The three Zones are:
 - Zone 1 – the Twitchell, Simpsons Drive and Thurnall Close.
 - Zone 2 – Church Street, Orchard Road, Jackson Street, Football Close, Meeting House Lane, Pond Lane, Farriers Close, Brewery Lane, The Gardens, Icknield Way (from its junction with Old North Road to its junction with Norton Road) and Icknield Way East.
 - Zone 3 – the suggested area is Bygrave Road, Salisbury Road, Larkins Close, Grosvenor Road and Grosvenor Road West.

The purpose of the questionnaires is to gain a fuller picture of parking needs and issues faced by residents and local businesses within each of these zones. Once this detailed survey work is completed, which will be within the next few weeks, then parking management options can be prepared and discussed with Members for further consultation.

- (vii) **Ref B6 – Overnight Lorry Ban** – The Transport Policy Officer has been in discussion with the Parking Services Manager to consider mechanisms for enforcing the lorry ban. This is subject to funding and available resources. It can be reported however that evening enforcement in terms of car parking within the town centres is taking place and is constantly being reviewed.

Traffic Management Issues

- (viii) **Ref C4 – North Road/Icknield Way no right turn** – following Members request to pursue this option, HH are reviewing the design in light of the objections by residents towards the proposed alternative suggested in the last consultation. Members have been advised of the lack of support by both the District Manager and the Police. HH are trying to gain the police approval on a new proposed design. Failing this a paper will be taken to the JMP for their consideration and will be taken to the Executive Member of Transport for a decision on whether the scheme should be implemented. HH officers will keep Members informed on progress.
- (ix) **Ref C6 – Scooting System between Weston Way junction and Whitehorse Street junction** - The work on SCOOT validation and gating commenced last month as agreed but the following two problems were discovered. The traffic loop in Clothall Street was not detecting vehicles correctly and the controller configuration at Whitehorse St/Clothall Rd junction, has not been allowing for the validation system to work accurately.

Mouchel working on behalf of HH, is currently in discussions with Peek Traffic to try and rectify these two problems as soon as possible. When this has been completed, HH will be in a position to complete the validation and activate the gating system. Members will be kept informed on progress.

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 Committee Development Budget is enclosed as Appendix 1.
- 4.3 **Highways Work Programme – Proposed Crossing at Weston Way**
In the minutes from the June 2010 Baldock Area Committee, the Committee agreed to contribute £500 towards a feasibility study for the proposed crossing at Weston Way, Baldock. The amount requested from Highways for this project from the Area Committee was £1100.
- At the July JMP, the proposed crossing at Weston Way was discussed. JMP is unable to fund the additional £600 needed for carrying out the Feasibility study and therefore the project will not be taken forward.
- Funding is therefore no longer needed from Baldock Area Committee for this scheme.
- 4.4 **Bygrave Road Informal Pedestrian Crossing**
£500 has been paid from the Baldock East Ward Budget towards the design of the Bygrave Road Informal Pedestrian Crossing.

4.5 **North Road Allotments in Baldock**

A Fast Track Grant for £500 was submitted by Baldock Allotment Association for part payment towards additional fencing work to enclose wetland area of site which will allow for additional allotments. This was approved with full payment coming from the 2010/2011 Development Ward Budget from the Baldock Town Ward Members.

4.6 **Notice Boards at Hinxworth**

Members are asked to consider grant funding of £800 for two new notice boards for Hinxworth. Application was submitted by Hinxworth Parish Council.

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 1 of the report, which relates to the Area Committee budget balances for the current financial year 2010/11.

6.2 The spreadsheet also details the pre-allocations carried forward from the previous financial year 2009/10 to the current financial year 2010/11.

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 The Committee is asked to acknowledge the recent fast track grant award of

£500 awarded to Hertfordshire Highways for the informal pedestrian crossing at Bygrave Road.

- 9.3 The Committee is asked to acknowledge the recent fast track grant award of £500 awarded to Baldock Allotment Association for the additional fencing work at the North Road site in Baldock.
- 9.4 That the Committee considers the grant application for £800 from Hinxworth Parish Council for two new notice boards.
- 9.5 That Members note the progress being made on the Baldock Town Centre Enhancement Review and the Baldock Town-wide Parking Review as outlined in paragraphs 3.8.1 and 3.8.2 of this report, and the Projects Manager – Planning Services be requested to report to the next meeting of Baldock Committee with an update on the above two reviews.
- 9.6 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 Priorities 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 1 Area Committee Development Budget Spreadsheet.
- 11.2 Appendix 2 Area Committee Work Programme 2010/11
- 11.3 Appendix 3 Grant report for Hinxworth Parish Council.

12. CONTACT OFFICERS

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