

**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 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 September Area Committee, the Baldock Town & District Partnership (BTADP) have held two Farmers / Community Markets which have been well attended by people from the Baldock area.

Both the September and October markets had twice the number of stalls than the August market, with more than 20 operating on each occasion. Both were very successful with most stalls selling out on the day.

To help with the setting up and take down of market stalls the BTADP have recruited the Letchworth Under 16 rugby team. The BTADP will make a donation to the club as payment for support provided. The BTADP will be looking to other local clubs for support with the markets in the future.

It was reported within the September Area Committee report that the BTADP was in negotiations with D'Boignville regarding the future management of the

Market Rite for the Wednesday Market in Baldock. Negotiations are still ongoing and the contract is currently with the D'Boignville lawyers.

The BTADP aim to commence the Wednesday Market again by mid November and expect 20 stalls to be operating each and every Wednesday. In addition, 10 local businesses will be offering market day special deals which will hopefully increase the footfall in the town.

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.

Funds gained from the Membership Scheme initiative will raise funds to enable the BTADP to continue to provide events in Baldock and also part fund Town Centre Manager post to move to a full time position before the turn of the year.

The Membership Scheme has now been up and running for 4 months and the BTADP have to date sold 12 gold memberships with a further 12 golds in the pipeline. Whilst the majority of memberships are from businesses in the town centre, take up has also come from the Industrial estate and one from a business in Weston.

Future events planned by the BTADP include:

- BTADP Christmas Party (3rd December 2010)
- BTADP Christmas Event (4-5<sup>th</sup> December 2010)

### 3.2 **Baldock Youth Council**

The Baldock CDO has been working closely with Youth Connexions to establish a new Baldock Youth Council. A number of events have been held to boost recruitment including the Youth Question Time event at Knights Templar School and a recruitment open night at the Baldock Youth Wing.

To date 7 young people have signed up to the Baldock Youth Council. The group is made up of a good mix of ages and a good male / female split. The group has met on 2 occasions so far and is looking to arrange a launch event before the end of December 2010.

As well as running events for young people in Baldock, the group is also keen to work with NHDC and act as a consultation group when Authority consults with young people on issues in and around Baldock.

### 3.3 **Balstock Event**

The Balstock event took place in Baldock High Street on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> September. The event was a success with over 100 people attending on the day. The crowd which consisted of both young and old as well as families, were entertained by nine bands during the six hour concert.

Young people from Baldock Scouts supported the event by running the Barbeque and also litter picking after the event, which all in all raised over £1,500 for the St Mary's Church appeal.

#### 3.4 **Youth Question Time**

The Baldock Youth Question Time event was held at Knights Templar School on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> September. This event proved extremely popular with over 100 students from mixed age ranges attending on the day. This event was supported by Councillor Michael Muir and Councillor Marilyn Kirkland who sat on the panel that faced some challenging questions from the students.

The event also attracted interest from the local media with stories on the event published in both the Comet and Advertiser newspapers.

As part of Local Democracy Week (LDW) the Baldock CDO attended the Youth Question Time summit at Fearnhill school on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> October.

#### 3.5 **Task & Finish Group – Facilities for teenagers in Baldock**

As part of the Scrutiny Task and Finish Group looking at facilities for teenagers, Councillors Judi Billing, Marilyn Kirkland and Michael Weeks joined the Baldock CDO for a tour of facilities available in Baldock.

The tour included a trip to the Knights Templar Sports Centre, Avenue Park, The Arena and the Youth Club at the Youth Wing of the Community Centre.

#### 3.6 **Baldock Issues Group**

The Baldock CDO has been working with Youth Connexions to set up a Youth Issues Group for Baldock. Youth Issues groups already operate in Hitchin, Royston and Letchworth.

The Baldock group entitled 'BIG' was launched in October and will meet on a bi-monthly basis. The group is currently made up of representatives from Youth Connexions, Extended Schools and the Police. The group is also seeking involvement from other partner organisations including the Primary Care Trust, the Fire Service and St Mary's Church.

It is hoped that 'BIG' will work to address youth issues in Baldock and will also feed into the Children's Trust Partnership.

#### 3.7 **Baldock Fair**

The annual Baldock Chartered Fair returned to Baldock on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> October. Abbotts Amusements pulled into Baldock High Street shortly after midnight on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> October and the Fair operated on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> October through to Monday 4<sup>th</sup> October. The Fair was off site by 6am on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2010.

To ensure the smooth set up of the Fair both the Baldock CDO and the Community Development were in attendance. In advance of the Fair coming, all street furniture was removed and checked by Community Development.

Community Development officers also viewed the set up of the fair both on the Friday night and early on Saturday morning. Boards were used extensively by the Fair organisers when pulling onto the grassed areas.

There were no reported incidents to the Police and the Fair ran smoothly throughout the 3 days it was operational.

Community Development officers made visits to the Fair throughout its duration and worked closely with the Abbott brothers and fair holders to ensure the event passed off safely and without incident.

At the close of the event Community Development officers reinstalled all street furniture to the High Street and White Horse Street.

In terms of issues arising, one complaint was received from a resident who was unable to gain vehicular access to his property on the evening of Monday 4<sup>th</sup> October whilst the fair was breaking up. The resident in question had received on two separate occasions a letter detailing the access restrictions during the Fair period but had read it incorrectly.

Unfortunately due to the poor weather conditions over the course of the Fair weekend, damage was caused to the grassed areas along the High Street. Both the Baldock CDO and CDM were on site during the set up and can confirm that the grassed areas were waterlogged on Friday night prior to the Fair pulling on. Boards were used when setting up on the grassed area but damage to the grass was unavoidable owing to the heavy periods of rain during the week running up to the Fair and on the evening of 1<sup>st</sup> October.

Damage to the grassed area was reported to the Abbot brothers who visited the location on 3 separate occasions following the close of the Fair to address the problem. New turf was laid and rollers were used to level out the grassed area. Further officer meetings were held and it was agreed that the damaged areas would be formally repaired with costs being sort from the Town Centre Enhancement Maintenance budget and the Fair organisers.

### **3.8 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 old Goldcrest Hotel and the former George and Dragon Public House.

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 now arranged for a company to carry out the reinstatement works and this should be achieved before the end of December.

### **3.9 Future Funding Applications**

Following the November Baldock & District Area Committee meeting, there is only one further meeting planned in February for the awarding of grants to groups and organisations in the Baldock and District area. The following funding applications are in the pipeline:

- Weston Cricket Club are looking for funding for the purchase of equipment for the club including a sight screen.
- Ashwell Parish Council are looking for funding for the production and printing of a leaflet detailing walks around the village.
- Baldock Scouts are looking for funding for essential equipment including tents.
- Funding is also required for the purchase of Neighbourhood Watch signage that is to be erected on roads throughout Baldock.

#### **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 **Royal British Legion – Baldock Branch**  
£320 has been paid from the Baldock Town and Baldock East Ward Budgets in the usual split for the purchase of a shed that will be used for the storage of poppies, boxes and supporting materials used for the poppy appeal.
- 4.4 **Ashwell Baby & Toddler Group**  
A Fast Track Grant of £500 has been paid from the Arbury Ward Budget to help cover the cost of rent for the premises used for the Ashwell Baby & Toddler Group. Funding was taken from the preallocated Community Initiatives fund and from the base budget.
- 4.5 **St Mary's Church Hall – Friends of Group**  
The Friends of Group is looking for funds for improving access to the building and toilet areas to comply with DDA obligations. Estimated costs for the adjustment works and the installation of a platform lift total £55,000. The group has secured £40,000 and is working with CD Officers on an 'Awards for All' Grant application for £10,000. If successful this will leave a further £5,000 to be found and the Friends of Group have therefore asked for the Area Committee to consider a Grant Award from its Discretionary Development Budgets.

#### **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 £320 awarded to the Royal British Legion for the purchase of a shed for the storage of poppies and other support materials for the Poppie Appeal.
- 9.3 The Committee is asked to acknowledge the recent fast track grant award of £500 awarded to Ashwell Baby and Toddler Group to help cover the cost of rent for the premises used for the Ashwell Baby & Toddler Group.
- 9.4 That the Committee considers making a Grant Award of £1,500 to the Friends of St Mary's group for the installation of a lift and works associated with improving access to the Church Hall.
- 9.5 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 Form – Friends of St Mary's – Church Hall  
(to Follow)

## **12. CONTACT OFFICERS**

- 12.1 Ashley Hawkins (Community Development Officer – Baldock & District Area)  
Telephone: 01462 474225  
Email: [ashley.hawkins@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:ashley.hawkins@north-herts.gov.uk)
- 12.2 Lois Stewart, Group Accountant.  
Telephone: 01462 474566  
Email. [lois.stewart@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:lois.stewart@north-herts.gov.uk)