

PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT	AGENDA ITEM No
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TITLE OF REPORT: CHAMPION NEWS & FINANCE REPORT – BALDOCK & DISTRICT AREA COMMITTEE – MONDAY 18th JULY 2011

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

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

The Big Lunch

Since the June Area Committee, the Baldock Town & District Partnership (BTADP) has held one event which was The Big Lunch.

The Big Lunch is a nationwide campaign, launched by the Eden Project, that invites communities to come together for a single day each year and lunch together.

2010 was the pilot project for The Big Lunch and Baldock was the only town in North Herts to run an event, which proved extremely popular with around 300 sitting down for lunch.

The BTADP again organised the event for 2011, with the Big Lunch held on Sunday 5th June. Unlike 2010, this year participants were able to choose their lunch from a menu choice of either Indian, Greek or traditional BBQ . As well as the food, there was live music and an inflatable fun and face painting for the children.

Again Baldock was the only town in North Herts to hold a Big Lunch event with approximately 400 participating. This event was co-ordinated by Murray Fastier, the Town Centre Manager (TCM) with support in terms of publicity, event set up and clear up via the Baldock Community Development Officer (CDO), who was in attendance for the duration of the day to ensure it ran effectively and without problems.

Markets

As noted in the June Area Committee Report, whilst the monthly Farmers Market continues to flourish, the weekly Wednesday market is struggling.

When the BTADP took over the running of the weekly market from Wendy Fairs in November 2010, they quickly increased the number of stalls from 4 to 10. However since the turn of the year, the number of stalls trading has dropped back to 4. This drop is partially down to the seasonal trends with the Winter months notoriously slow for trading but also due to lack of footfall in Baldock High Street.

Since the June Area Committee Report, the Baldock TCM has been actively seeking new stalls for the market. Through this work and coverage in local papers, there are now 6 stalls running on the Wednesday market with 2 more planned for joining the market in July. The 2 new stalls planned are a Caribbean food stall and an Indian cuisine stall.

Whilst this is positive news, the Baldock TCM is still concerned about the future of the market and will continue to look for more stalls and will continue to publicise the market in the local papers.

Membership Scheme & BNG

Since the June Area Committee Report, the BTADP has signed up a further 4 businesses to the Membership Scheme. There are now 34 businesses signed up to the scheme, securing approximately £900 a month for the BTADP.

Since June, there has also been an increase in membership to the Baldock Network Group (BNG), with membership rising from 4 members to 12 members. The membership is a mixture of non partnership and partnership members and this annual subscription will bring in an additional £1000 a year to the BTADP. The BTADP also receives a percentage of the charge per person per attendee to each breakfast meeting which will secure a further £1000 annually for the partnership.

The Baldock TCM is extremely pleased with the progress of the BNG and has sent his gratitude to the Baldock & District Members for their support of the project through attending the meetings on a regular basis.

Events

Future events planned by the BTADP include:

- Baldock Day & Farmers Market (Sat 9th July 2011)
- Farmers Market (Sat 13th August 2011)
- Balstock Family Day & Farmers Market (Sat 10th September 2011)

3.2 Baldock Youth Council

The Baldock Youth Council (BYC) continues to meet on alternate Tuesday's at the Youth Wing in Baldock. The group is run by Youth Connexions in partnership with the Baldock CDO. As reported in the June Area Committee Report, membership continues to struggle with on average only 2-3 young people attending each meeting.

The Baldock CDO and Youth Connexions will continue to seek new members and have a number of recruitment events planned to boost membership in time for the new school year in September 2011. Events include assemblies in school, stalls at BTADP events and B'Fest in July.

3.3 B'Fest – Be UR SELF 2011

There has been a great deal of activity on the B'Fest event since the June Area Committee meeting.

The Baldock CDO has secured the Premises License for the event. The consultation period for this ended on 27th June, with no objections received. At the request of Baldock members, the Baldock CDO will flyer all households in close vicinity of the venue, including Chilvers Bank and The Leas to ensure they are aware of the event.

The Baldock CDO has also been heavily involved in recruiting bands for the event. In total there will be 11 bands performing on the day all of which are local to North Herts and all 19 years and under.

The Baldock CDO has also liaised with Baldock Scouts and Guides who will be involved in the event. Both groups will be running barbeques and will be assisting with litter picking on the day. These activities will be useful fundraisers for the groups and will also enable the scout and guide members to achieve community badges and points towards their Duke of Edinburgh awards.

3.4 Reinstatement of Cellar doors

Reinstatement work at both the GoldCrest and George and Dragon Public House are now complete. Work was completed early July.

3.5 Nightingale Park – Community Safety project

The Baldock CDO has been working closely with North Herts Homes (NHH) on a community safety project at Nightingale Park in Baldock. Approximately £3k of Section 106 / Planning Contribution funds has been identified as a potential source of capital and match funding is also available from NHH.

The Section 106 money has now been released for this project and work is due to be carried out on the 2nd and 3rd of August 2011.

The scheme will include the lining out of the basketball court, the marking out of a street scene that can be used for both cycle training and pedestrian safety, a hopscotch game, a maze and a snakes & ladders game. Work will be completed shortly, so that the park can be utilised by children during the summer break.

3.6 **Signage in Ashwell**

The Baldock CDO has been working with Herts Highways, Councillor Tony Hunter and the Ashwell Retail Group to introduce new road signage for Ashwell.

The aim of the project is to raise awareness of the village and its numerous facilities and to encourage more visitors to the area by improving the signage to Ashwell.

Subject to agreement from Herts Highways, the Ashwell Retail Group would like to replace the black and white Ashwell signage on the A505 and A507 with brown signs which symbolise a place of interest or tourist attraction.

As well as the signage on the two main roads, the Ashwell Retail Group is also looking to install brown 'welcome to Ashwell Village' signs on the two approach roads to Ashwell from Odsey and from Newnham. These signs would include symbols showing the main attractions in Ashwell such as the Museum, Church, Hotel and Ashwell Springs.

A decision on whether the signage is compliant with Highways legislation will be made by mid July. If criteria compliant, the signage will be erected over the next two to three months.

3.7 **Baldock Half Marathon**

The Baldock CDO is in early discussions with Chris Coghlan from Endurorunning.com to bring a half marathon to Baldock. It is hoped that the event could be up and running for 2012, and could be tied into the celebration events for the Olympics.

The purpose of the event is two fold. First the event will entice many new visitors into Baldock and the surrounding villages. A race of this type is likely to attract up to 500 runners, all of whom will bring along family members and supporters. This will increase footfall for businesses on the day and also hopefully encourage those new visitors to revisit the area in the future.

Secondly the event, which will be co-ordinated and run by the BTADP will provide a good income stream for the partnership, which will be crucial for its success once funding from NHDC is reduced, starting in 2016.

3.8 **Highways Work Programme**

The Highways Work Programme detailing works either carried out or planned within the Baldock & District in the current financial year, are detailed in Appendix 2.

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 Small Area Grants

At the June Area Committee, a question was raised by the Chair regarding the allocation of the Small Area Grants. It was stated that in the past this grant was rotated around the Wards on an annual basis.

This issue has been investigated by the Baldock CDO and the records show that none of the wards have been allocated the small area grant from 2008/09 to 2010/11. Records show that between 2004/2005 and 2007/08 the money was given to Baldock East, Baldock Town, Arbury and Weston and Sandon respectively.

Based on this information the Ward that is due to have the Small Area Grant in this financial year is Baldock East. However as shown in Appendix 1, the Small Area Grant has £480 to allocate. Therefore this financial year Baldock East, Baldock Town and Arbury should each get £160 this year with Weston & Sandon getting the allocation in the 2012/13 financial year.

4.3 A spreadsheet showing the detailed spend to date of the Area Committee Development Budget is enclosed as Appendix 1.

4.4 Christchurch Baldock

A Fast Track Grant of £300 has been awarded from the Baldock Town and Baldock East Wards to help with the publicity costs for the Christchurch Baldock Summer holiday club and for the purchase of craft materials.

4.5 1st Baldock Scouts

A Fast Track Grant of £500 has been awarded from the Baldock Town and Baldock East Wards for the purchase of essential equipment for 1st Baldock Scouts. Equipment included lighting and tents for use on camping trips.

4.6 Baldock Youth Council

A Fast Track Grant of £500 has been awarded from Baldock Town, Baldock East, Arbury and Weston & Sandon Wards to assist with the costs for publicising the event and also for the hire of Portaloos for the day.

4.7 George Orwell Festival

A Fast Track Grant of £200 has been awarded from the Weston & Sandon Ward budget to help with the publicity costs for the Festival.

4.8 Ashwell United Reform Church

A Fast Track Grant of £312 has been awarded from the Arbury Ward budget to clear up damp in the hall.

4.9 3rd Baldock Guides

Members are asked to consider a grant award of £1000 to 3rd Baldock Guides. Funding is requested to assist with essential training costs, room hire charges and the purchase of equipment including an overhead projector.

4.10 **Current Funding Applications**

The Baldock CDO is awaiting the completed funding application paperwork for a number of projects. These were not received in time for this report but will be processed before the Baldock & District Committee meeting scheduled for July. The projects are detailed in the table below.

Ward	Project
Arbury Ward	Funding support for Ashwell Academicals to enable them to purchase new goals for the football club. Funding to come from the Arbury Ward Members preallocated Rural Community Projects pot.
Baldock Town / Baldock East	Funding support for Baldock 1 st Scouts to enable them to purchase essential equipment including tents and lights.
Baldock Town / Baldock East	Funding support for Baldock Bowling club to enable them to purchase equipment.
Weston & Sandon	Funding support for Weston Strength & Balance class to enable them to purchase equipment.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Terms of Reference in relation to Area Committees confirm that they may establish and maintain relationships with outside bodies/voluntary organisations which includes discretionary grant aid/financial support. However, this does not include grants for district wide activities.
- 5.2 Section 2 Local Government Act 2000 provides that the Council has power to do anything which it considers likely to promote or improve the economic, social or environmental well-being of its area. This would apply on the basis that financial assistance to voluntary and community organisations improves the economic, social or environmental well-being of the District or part of it.
- 5.3 Section 137 Local Government Act 1972 provides specific authority for the Council to incur expenditure on anything which is in the interests of and will bring direct benefit to its area. This includes a charity or other body operating for public service.
- 5.4 The Committee has delegated powers to administer funds from the budgets described.

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 2011/12.
- 6.2 The spreadsheet also details the pre-allocations carried forward from the previous financial year 2010/11 to the current financial year 2011/12.

7. HUMAN RESOURCE AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The local MoUs are managed by the Community Development Officer as part of the regular work programme.
- 7.2 The great majority of the voluntary and community projects that are funded by the Council have equality and social inclusion as a key objective of their purpose. Such projects work very closely with and for the more disadvantaged and potentially socially excluded within our communities.
- 7.3 All activities undertaken by the Council, its committees, Community Development officers or agencies working on its behalf are to be conducted in accordance with the NHDC Corporate Equality Strategy and relevant Equalities legislation.

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 £300 awarded to Christchurch Baldock to help with the publicity costs for the summer holiday club and for the purchase of craft materials.
- 9.3 The Committee is asked to acknowledge the recent Fast Track Grant Award of £500 awarded to 1st Baldock Scouts for the purchase of equipment, including lighting and tents.
- 9.4 The Committee is asked to acknowledge the recent Fast Track Grant Award of £500 awarded to Baldock Youth Council to assist with the costs for publicising the event and also for the hire of portaloos on the day.
- 9.5 The Committee is asked to acknowledge the recent Fast Track Grant Award of £200 awarded to George Orwell Festival to help with the publicity costs of the festival..
- 9.6 The Committee is asked to acknowledge the recent Fast Track Grant Award of £312 awarded to Ashwell United Reform Church to tackle damp in the hall.
- 9.7 The Committee is asked to consider grant funding of £1000 to 3rd Baldock Guides to assist with essential training costs, room hire charges and the purchase of equipment including an overhead projector.

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 - Hertfordshire Highways Work Programme 2011/12
- 11.2 Appendix 3 - Area Committee Work Programme 2011/12
- 11.4 Appendix 4 – Grant Report for 3rd Baldock Guides

12. CONTACT OFFICERS

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13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 13.1 Community Governance Reviews – Full Council Meeting 25th February 2010.