

TITLE OF REPORT: CHAMPION NEWS AND FINANCE REPORT

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of the activities and schemes with which the Community Development Officer (CDO) 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 Meeting, the Baldock Town & District Partnership (BTADP) has held two events which were the October Farmers Market (Saturday 8th October 2011) and the November Farmers Market (Saturday 12th November 2011)

October Farmers Market

Since the turn of the year, the monthly Farmers Market has proved very popular in Baldock and has attracted on average 20 stall holders each month. The October Farmers market however was disappointing with only 6 stalls turning up. The low take up was due to stall holders being on holiday or having insufficient staff cover. The October Farmers Market, whilst smaller than normal, was still popular and well supported by the residents of Baldock.

November Farmers Market

At the time of writing this report, the event had not taken place. The Baldock CDO will provide a verbal update on this at the November Area Committee Meeting.

Markets

Within the September Area Committee Report, the Baldock CDO informed Members that there had been positive progress with the weekly market and that there were now 9 regular stalls trading at the Baldock Wednesday Market.

Since the September Area Committee the number of stalls has decreased, with only 6 regular stalls now attending on a weekly basis. Since September the market has lost the fish stall, the bag stall and the Caribbean food stall. A lack of footfall has been cited as the main reason for stall holders pulling out of Baldock.

A positive feature of the Baldock Wednesday Market has been the usage of the free stall by local organisations/charities. Since the September Area Committee meeting the stall has been used by the North Herts 50+ Forum and the Baldock & Clothall Women's Institute, the latter of which have now booked the stall on a monthly basis.

The Baldock Town Centre Manager (TCM) and the Baldock CDO are working hard to attract new stalls to the market and are currently in negotiations to bring in a new fish stall to the weekly market as well as a jewellery/scarf stall and a bread/bakery stall.

To encourage more people to use the Wednesday market the BTADP will be producing a flyer promoting the market which will be distributed by the Baldock TCM and CDO to all households in Baldock, as well as some of the surrounding villages.

Membership Scheme & BNG

Since the September Area Committee Report, there has been no additions to the Membership Scheme but the BTADP has lost 2 businesses from the Membership Scheme with the closure of the Toy Emporium Shop on White Horse Street and the change of ownership at The White Hart Public House on Hitchin Street. There are still 35 businesses signed up to the scheme, securing approximately £1000 a month for the BTADP.

Since September, there has been an increase in membership to the Baldock Network Group (BNG), with a further 4 members signing on in the last month. There are now 19 full members of the BNG. Money generated from the annual memberships and the bi-weekly breakfast meetings will secure at least £2,000 of funding for the Partnership each year.

Baldock Christmas Weekend Event

Plans are well underway for this year's Christmas event which will run from Friday 2nd December to Sunday 4th December. As with last year, the fun will begin with the BTADP Christmas dinner on the Friday night. The dinner will be held this year at St Mary's Church Hall and will feature two bands and a four course dinner with wine. Tickets for this event will go on sale in November and will be priced at £40 per person. The BTADP again cordially invites Members of the Baldock and District Committee to attend.

On Saturday 3rd December there will be a Christmas market in the High Street with numerous fun fair rides and stalls and the return of the ice-rink. This year the ice-rink will only be operating for one day. The BTADP is looking to secure sponsorship for the ice-rink this year and is currently in negotiations with several businesses in Baldock.

On Sunday 4th December there will be a Continental market in the High Street, as well as the fun fair rides and live music.

Events

Future events planned by the BTADP include:

- Baldock Christmas Event (Friday 2nd to Sunday 4th December 2011)

3.2 Baldock Youth Council

The Baldock Youth Council (BYC) reconvened in September 2011 after the summer holiday break. As with other Youth Councils both in North Herts and further afield membership, is low.

To improve membership, the BYC have been working on a publicity campaign and will be approaching local groups in Baldock over the coming months to recruit new members.

This year, the BYC is looking to raise its profile and also hopes to get more involved in local issues. This is illustrated by the BYC now having members on the Friends of Avenue Park Group.

3.3 Reinstatement of Cellar Doors

In the September Area Committee Report it was stated that work on the cellar doors at The Gold Crest and The George and Dragon Public Houses were now complete. Unfortunately this is no longer the case, with both cellar doors now requiring further work to address operating problems as well as leaking. Payment to the contractor has been suspended until this further rectification work has been carried out.

3.4 Nightingale Park – Community Safety Project

This project was completed in August and is proving very popular with children and teenagers alike. The Baldock CDO has spoken with Mike Sweetlove, Chair of the Nightingale Residents Association about the project and he said that the facility is being well used and has breathed new life into the Park.

3.5 Signage in Ashwell

The Baldock CDO continues to liaise with Hertfordshire Highways and the Ashwell Retail Group regarding new signage for Ashwell.

In the September Area Committee Report it was stated that Herts Highways had declined the additional signage, stating that the village was already adequately signed.

This decision has been appealed and is currently being reconsidered by senior officers and leading County Councillors. The Baldock CDO will continue to pursue this matter with Herts Highways.

3.6 **Baldock Half Marathon**

The Baldock CDO continues to work with the Baldock TCM and Chris Coghlan from Endurorunning.com to bring a half marathon to Baldock. The date for the race is now confirmed as Sunday 25th March 2012.

In early November the Baldock CDO submitted a race permit along with a risk assessment to the Association of Running Clubs. A race permit is required in order to hold races on public roads. This permit also provides public liability cover for the race to the value of £10million.

At this time the Baldock CDO also submitted an Event Plan to the NH Safety Advisory Group (SAG).

Once the race permit is granted and any issues arising from NH SAG have been addressed, the race will be entered onto the Runners World website and people will then be able to register for the race.

The BTADP are the Race organisers for the Baldock Half Marathon and will be responsible for the registration of all runners and the running of the event on the day. The Baldock CDO, who will be running in the race will provide support to the TCM over the coming months to ensure the event is a success.

3.7 **Balstock Family Fun Day**

The Balstock Family Fun Day was held on Saturday 10th September 2011 on Baldock High Street. The event was very successful with more than 300 people attending on the day. There were no reported problems and the Balstock weekend raised over £4,500 for Help For Heroes.

3.8 **Baldock Fair 2011**

The Baldock Fair returned to Baldock in October. The Fair pulled into Baldock at midnight on Saturday 1st October and traded on Sunday 2nd, Monday 3rd and Tuesday 4th October.

The Baldock CDO and the Community Development Manager were in attendance to oversee the pull-on of the Fair and also to assist with the marshalling of traffic once the traffic management solution was in place.

The Baldock CDO also met with the Police and the Fire Service for a safety walk round the Fair prior to the Fair opening on Sunday 2nd October.

The Fair pulled out of Baldock in the early hours of Wednesday 5th October. Thankfully, due to the weather there was no damage this year to the grassed areas along the High Street, but there were substantial diesel spills along Bell Row and on the ground next to the war memorial.

The diesel spills were reported to Abbotts Amusements and the areas affected have since been cleaned. It should be noted that prior to the Fair pulling into town, the Baldock CDO photographed the grassed and car parking areas along the High Street and there were numerous diesel spills apparent within the car parking bays.

3.9 **Highways Work Programme**

The Highways Work Programme detailing works either carried out or planned within the Baldock & District in the current financial year, is 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 **Future of the Baldock Memorandums of Understanding**

At the request of Members, the Baldock CDO wrote to all 7 organisations that currently receive a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) from the Baldock and District Committee, requesting an update on how the MOU funding is spent.

At the time of drafting this report correspondence had been received from all groups except for the Baldock Retirement Sewing Club and the Baldock Rotary Club. This correspondence is detailed in Appendix 3 of this report.

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

4.4 **Weston Voluntary Nursery School**

A Fast Track Grant of £80 was awarded to Weston Voluntary Nursery School from the Weston & Sandon Ward Member's 2011/12 Base Budget for the purchase of a new sofa for the story corner.

4.5 **Hartsfield School**

A Fast Track Grant of £350 was awarded to the Hartsfield School PTA from the Baldock East Ward Member's 2011/12 Base Budget for the purchase of a tiger glockenspiel for the school's memorial garden.

4.6 **Ashwell Academics**

A Fast Track Grant of £350 was awarded to Ashwell Academics from the Arbury Ward Member's Preallocated Rural Community Projects pot for the purchase of new goal posts.

4.7 **Ashwell Play Group**

A Fast Track Grant of £250 was awarded to Ashwell Play Group from the Arbury Ward Member's Pre-allocated Rural Community Projects pot for the purchase of new fencing for the playgroup garden/children's play area.

4.8 **Baldock Crusaders Netball Club**

Members are asked to consider grant funding of £1,000 to Baldock Crusaders Netball Club for the purchase of new equipment, to enable the group to accommodate more coaches plus additional training.

4.9 **Baldock Town Twinning Association**

Members are asked to consider grant funding of £1,000 to the Baldock Town Twinning Association. This funding is required to enable the group to bring over representatives from the Baldock twin towns in Germany and France for a visit to the London 2012 Olympics.

4.10 **Baldock Town Bowls Club**

Members are asked to consider grant funding of £1000 to the Baldock Town Bowls Club. This funding is required to enable the group to purchase a greenhouse where they can produce their own plant stock from cuttings for the benefit of the park.

4.11 **Baldock Town Football Club**

Members are asked to consider grant funding of £1000 to Baldock Town Football Club. This funding is required to enable the club to have their pitch inspected and approved by the FA. This is required to enable the club to gain promotion to the higher divisions.

4.12 **Current Funding Applications**

The Baldock CDO is awaiting the completed funding application paperwork on the following project. This was not received in time for this report but will be processed once the appropriate paperwork is received. The project is detailed in the table below.

Ward	Project
Weston & Sandon	Funding support for group setting up street party in Weston as part of the Royal Jubilee Celebrations.

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 £80 to Weston Voluntary Nursery School for the purchase of a new sofa for the story corner.

- 9.3 The Committee is asked to acknowledge the recent Fast Track Grant Award of £350 to Hartsfield School PTA for the purchase of a tiger glockenspiel for the memorial garden.
- 9.4 The Committee is asked to acknowledge the recent Fast Track Grant Award of £350 to Ashwell Academicals for the purchase of new goal posts.
- 9.5 The Committee is asked to acknowledge the recent Fast Track Grant Award of £250 to Ashwell Play Group for the purchase of new fencing.
- 9.6 The Committee considers making a Grant Award of £1,000 to Baldock Crusader Netball Club for the purchase of equipment, to bring new coaches to the club and for additional training needs.
- 9.7 The Committee considers making a Grant Award of £1,000 to Baldock Town Twinning Association to enable the group to bring over representatives from the Baldock twin towns in Germany and France for a visit to the London 2012 Olympics.
- 9.8 The Committee considers making a Grant Award of £1,000 to Baldock Town Bowls Club for the purchase of a green house where they can produce their own plant stock from cuttings.
- 9.9 The Committee considers making a Grant Award of £1,000 to Baldock Town Football Club to enable the club to have their pitch inspected and approved by the FA.
- 9.10 The Committee is asked to comment on the responses provided by those organisations that currently receive a Memorandum of Understanding as detailed in point 4.2 above and Appendix 3 and to advise the Baldock CDO on the next steps in determining any future MOU allocations.

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.
- 11.3 Appendix 3 – Memorandum of Understanding Updates from organisations.
- 11.4 Appendix 4 - Area Committee Work Programme 2011/12.
- 11.5 Appendix 5 – Grant Report for Baldock Crusaders Netball Club.
- 11.6 Appendix 6 – Grant Report for Baldock Town Twinning Association.
- 11.7 Appendix 7 – Grant Report for the Baldock Town Bowls Club.
- 11.8 Appendix 8 – Grant Report for the Baldock Town Football Club.
(Report to Follow.)

12. CONTACT OFFICERS

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13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

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