



Baldock Town
Hall Group

Issue 1.1
29th February 2012
Page 1 of 40

Business Plan (DRAFT)

February 2012





Table of Contents

Foreword

Executive Summary

1	INTRODUCTION	7
1.1	AN OPPORTUNITY	7
1.2	CONTEXT	7
1.3	THE BALDOCK TOWN HALL GROUP	8
1.4	CONCEPT AND STRATEGY	8
1.5	STRUCTURE OF THIS DOCUMENT.....	9
2	ARTS	10
2.1	INTRODUCTION	10
2.2	BALDOCK ARTS FESTIVAL	10
2.3	BALDOCK TOWER MUSIC INCLUDING BALSTOCK	10
2.4	BALDOCK FESTIVAL EVENTS	10
2.5	SUNDAY NIGHT COMEDY	11
2.6	AMATEUR DRAMATIC PRODUCTIONS INCLUDING PANTOMIME	11
2.7	ARTS WORKSHOPS: SCRIPT WRITING; CREATIVE WRITING; READING CLUB....	11
2.8	FILM CLUB FOR ALL AGES.....	11
2.9	YOUTH SUMMER WORKSHOPS; AFTER SCHOOL CLUB; THEATRE CLUBS	11
3	HERITAGE	13
4	ADDITIONAL USES OF THE BUILDING	14
4.1	AN OFFICE FOR BALDOCK TOWN PARTNERSHIP.....	14
4.2	UTILISING THE BASEMENT SPACE.....	14
4.3	PUBLIC TOILETS	14
4.4	FACILITIES FOR TRAINING, MEETINGS AND OTHER CONFERENCES	14
4.5	OCCASIONAL (TEMPORARY) COMMERCIAL OFFICE USE.....	14
4.6	WEDDINGS, CHILDREN’S PARTIES, MUSIC AND BALLET EXAMINATIONS	14
5	PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS.....	15
6	OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS	16
7	GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND DIRECTORS	17
8	FINANCE.....	18
8.1	CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	18
8.2	INCOME	18
8.3	OPERATIONAL EXPENDITURE	19
9	RISK MANAGEMENT	20
10	PHASES	21



APPENDICES

APPENDIX A	HISTORY OF THE TOWN HALL	22
APPENDIX B	HERITAGE	23
APPENDIX C*	CONDITION SURVEY	27
APPENDIX D	SOURCES OF FUNDS	28
APPENDIX E	FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS	30
APPENDIX F	USE OF WEB TECHNOLOGY	34
APPENDIX G	SUPPORTING ORGANISATIONS	35
APPENDIX H	PEOPLE PROFILES	36
APPENDIX I*	RESULTS OF 2005 PUBLIC SURVEY	38
APPENDIX J	VERSION CONTROL	39
APPENDIX K	DISTRIBUTION LIST	40

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the production of this Plan, but there have been so many that to single out individuals would be inappropriate. It has been an inspiring team effort, and hopefully indicative of our future prospects.

*Separate Documents - Attached



Baldock Town Hall Group

Issue 1.1
29th February 2012
Page 4 of 40

FOREWORD

This document is Version 1.1 of a Business Plan for the future of Baldock Town Hall.

It has been prepared by the Baldock Town Hall Group (BTHG) formed by representatives made up from various established associations in the Town.

BTHG are working towards our ultimate goal – seeing Baldock Town Hall once again used as a community asset in the town, fundamentally with an arts and heritage focus, but with many more projected uses; something for every member of the community.

It has been produced as a working document and further versions of the document may be prepared to support funding applications.

Version Control procedures are described more fully in Appendix J.

29th February 2012

Baldock Town Hall Limited

A company limited by guarantee

Registered in England and Wales number. 7649300

Registered Address 11 High Street, Baldock SG7 6AZ



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Baldock Town Hall is an under-utilised asset, currently closed to the public.,. A number of attempts have been made in the recent past to bring it back into productive use, which for a variety of reasons did not succeed., A public survey of Baldock residents in 2005 showed overwhelming support for the building being retained for community purposes. Nevertheless, in 2010, NHDC decided that since the building was surplus to their operational requirements, it should be put onto the list of buildings for disposal.

In response to this, the Baldock Town Hall Independent Stakeholders Group (BTHISG) was re-formed into the Baldock Town Hall Group (BTHG), to develop a robust Business Plan for returning the building to Community use. At the District Cabinet Meeting on 22 March 2011, the decision to sell the building was suspended for twelve months until March 2012 in order to allow BTHG to develop this Plan.

The key proposals made within this document are;

- That the Baldock Town Hall be returned to community use as an 'Arts and Heritage Centre', run by the group known as Baldock Town Hall Group
- That the building be developed in three key stages, ensuring the feasibility of each phase before embarking on it,;
 - PHASE 1. To refurbish the ground and first floor to return them to a usable condition.
 - PHASE 2. To restore the whole building, which includes the basement and old fire station, to usable condition and incorporating the museum.
 - PHASE 3 To equip the building with access for all and refurbish all facilities to an excellent standard.
- That the Baldock Museum, a facility run by volunteers, be provided with a larger area in which to exhibit displays depicting Baldock's unique heritage
- That the redevelopment of the Baldock Town Hall will not compete with, but will complement, the existing Community Centre also in the town centre
- Outline plans to obtain Funding from donations, grants and fund-raising activities for capital expenditure, while also operating a commercially viable model for day-to-day income and expenditure.

More detail of each of these proposals is contained in greater detail later in the document.



About the Baldock Town Hall Group

BTHG was initially made up of representatives from some of the main community groups in the town and has since broadened to include other local residents. The group contains a number of professionals, all working in a voluntary capacity, including:

- A Project Manager (Prince2 qualified)
- Chartered Surveyors
- Chartered Architects
- Chartered Engineers
- Chartered Tax Accountants

These people have extensive knowledge of construction projects in Heritage Buildings and fundraising, This knowledge will be key to securing appropriate levels and sources of funding to take the project forward for the local community.

180 "Friends of Baldock Town Hall" are now also allied to the Group.

We have conferred with similar Groups in other parts of the country, including Hebden Bridge and Bakewell, to learn more from their own projects to take on the management of community buildings. We have consulted with various bodies associated with the Big Society and the Localism Act; we understand that the proposals within this document are broadly in alignment with the aspirations of that Act, for community groups to take on the running and management of community assets.

We believe that Baldock Town Hall presents an opportunity, not a problem. Baldock has a vibrant and active community, with diverse interests. This document is a proposal for bringing the building back into the centre of the life of the town as a venue for community based arts activities for all ages and to celebrate the heritage of the town and surrounding area.

It is recognised that the immediate context of this Plan is a lament echoed around the country: "Save our Town Hall". There is an element of sentiment in this, but this document has resulted from hard and imaginative thought about Baldock's future in the 21st Century. Baldock Town Hall, situated in the centre of a town rich in history, presents an opportunity to re-build Baldock in line with the community's wishes and NHDC's strategy for the town.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 AN OPPORTUNITY

Baldock is the smallest of four towns governed by North Hertfordshire District Council. The others being Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City and Royston. Each has its own town hall and local history.

Baldock Town Hall was opened in 1897, on land donated to the people of the town. A brief history of the building is presented in Appendix A.

In recent years the fabric of the building deteriorated due to lack of sufficient investment and it now stands empty and neglected.¹ This Business Plan, written by the members of the Baldock Town Hall Group (BTHG) describes how we propose to put the building back into use as a resource for the whole community. The Town Hall has a broad base of support in the town and this is reflected in the membership of the group.

Baldock has an active community, with diverse interests. We propose to bring the Town Hall back into the centre of the life of the town as a venue for community based arts activities and to celebrate the heritage of the town and surrounding area.

It is recognised that the immediate context of this Plan is a lament echoed around the country: "Save our Town Hall". There is an element of sentiment in this, but this document has resulted from hard and imaginative thought about Baldock's future in the 21st Century. Baldock Town Hall, situated in the centre of a town rich in history, presents an opportunity to re-build Baldock in line with NHDC's strategy for the town:

'To maintain, regenerate and develop an attractive, safe, accessible, vibrant and lively town centre, based on its historical context, for the local community and visitors to work, live and relax'.

(Source: http://www.north-herts.gov.uk/baldock_town_centre_strategy_1_.pdf)

The Plan is a good example of how the "Big Society" could evolve. Springing from the grass roots, it has the backing of a core team of experienced volunteers who are already committed to other organisations in the town. The task of implementing this Plan is formidable, but our team is ready for the challenge, especially if NHDC can make a prompt decision to support it.

We believe that a strong motivation for re-opening the Town Hall will be to organise a special event to mark Queen Elizabeth's 60th Jubilee in June 2012 and we have started to give some thought to the form that might take, especially given the cultural and heritage emphasis placed on this momentous year.

It is often said by optimists that "there are no problems, only opportunities". For the past decade and more, the future of Baldock Town Hall has unfortunately been regarded as a problem. We view it as an opportunity. Together with our recently regenerated town centre, we believe that the re-establishment of the Town Hall as the 'central hub' will benefit the town, its commerce and community and develop a focal point in the town for locals and visitors.

1.2 CONTEXT

Baldock Town Hall is an under utilised asset and currently remains closed to public use..

A number of attempts have been made in the recent past to bring it back into productive use and a public survey in 2005 showed overwhelming support for the building being retained for community purposes.

Nevertheless, in 2010, NHDC decided that as the building was surplus to its operational requirements, it should be put onto their list of buildings for disposal.

In response to this, the Baldock Town Hall Independent Stakeholders Group (BTHISG) was re-formed into the Baldock Town Hall Group (BTHG), to develop a robust Business Plan for returning it to community use.

¹ Except for a tiny museum, run by volunteers with very limited opening times.



At the District Cabinet Meeting on 22 March 2011, the decision to dispose of the building was suspended for twelve months until March 2012 in order to allow BTHG to develop this Plan.

(See [\(See NHDC Cabinet minutes 22 March 2011\)](#))

The Town Hall is included on NHDC's 2003 "Register of buildings of local importance in Baldock", citing the following reasons:

- Local architectural interest- Special architectural design and important local building type.
- Local historic interest- Important to the local social history of Baldock
- Acts as an important focal point and landmark within the town.
- Makes a particularly valuable contribution to the architectural, historic and visual quality of the Conservation Area.

1.3 THE BALDOCK TOWN HALL GROUP

BTHG was initially made up of representatives from some of the main community groups in the town and has since broadened to include other local residents. The group contains a number of Professionals, all working in a voluntary capacity, including:

- A Project Manager (Prince2 qualified)
- Chartered Surveyors
- Chartered Architects
- Chartered Engineers
- Chartered Tax Accountants

These people have extensive knowledge of construction projects in Heritage Buildings and fundraising, including the various Lottery fund processes.

Following a modest recruitment exercise over the past nine months, we now have 180 "Friends of Baldock Town Hall" as members.

The group has been incorporated as a company limited by guarantee. The Board of Directors and Committee are drawn from:

- The Baldock Town and District Partnership
- The Baldock Museum and Local History Society
- The Baldock Community Centre Association
- Baldock Arts (organisers of the 2008 Arts Festival)
- The Baldock Festival Committee
- The Baldock Mail
- The Baldock Society
- Balstock (annual free music festival)
- Local Residents, Event Organisers and other Professionals

1.4 CONCEPT AND STRATEGY

A concept for the future has emerged which may be summarized as:

The Baldock Arts and Heritage Centre



The prime emphasis is on providing a centre for the Arts. The potential demand for this has been demonstrated by the successful Arts Festival in 2008, when a number of sold out events were held.

But we believe that the building should also emphasise the rich cultural heritage of Baldock, with its history going back to the Romans, the connection with the Knights Templar and the Crusades in the Middle Ages and of course its more recent Georgian, Victorian and twentieth century history.

The building already houses a small museum, which is run by volunteers. Consistent with the District-wide policy on museums, we believe it could evolve with some imaginative thought into a Visitor Attraction, with special exhibitions and visitor “experiences”. This would help to bring more people into the town and continue the revitalization of its commercial life.

This will make the Town Hall quite distinct from the Baldock Community Centre (BCC). It is not in any way envisaged that BTHL will be competing with BCC, and indeed part of the detailed operational plans will be to work in close collaboration with BCC, to the benefit of both organisations (see Chapter 6).

Strategy – A Phased Approach

It is clear from recent attempts to bring the Town Hall back into use, and the current economic climate, that we have a major task on our hands to realize our vision. In particular, our preliminary condition survey of the building shows that it will require much expenditure on it.

Our Strategy is therefore to adopt a Phased approach, with minimum investment required in each Phase to ensure commercial viability. The Operational and Financial Plan for each phase will include planning for subsequent phases and make provision for a formal review of the success of each phase before fully committing to the next.

1.5 STRUCTURE OF THIS DOCUMENT

Our thoughts on the two main strands of the Plan (Arts and Heritage) are presented in Chapters 2 and 3 respectively. A more detailed proposal for what to do about the Museum, and why, is in Appendix B.

In Chapter 4, we have included some thoughts on other possible uses of the building, some or all of which may assist with the financial viability of the Plan without detracting from the main project.

Chapter 5 introduces the results so far of our investigations into physical requirements. These are presented in detail in Appendix C. Chapter 6 and 7 present our current thoughts on how the day-to-day operation of the building will be handled and our proposed arrangements for governance.

Chapter 8 introduces financial considerations. A report on our exploration of Funding Sources is given in Appendix D and a first attempt at some financial projections in Appendix E. Chapter 9 discusses our proposed approach to Risk Management. In particular it contains some thoughts on what we perceive to be the biggest risk: dependence on volunteer effort.

Chapter 10 summarises our current thinking on Phases, subject to regular evaluation of progress as required of any project of this scale.



2 ARTS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

North Hertfordshire is not well served in terms of professional theatre. Although there are several extremely well established amateur theatres and groups, many people have to travel outside the local area for theatre. Following the 2008 Baldock Arts Festival, there was considerable feedback showing a demand for more varied and frequent events.

In the past, the Town Hall has been used by various amateur dramatic and variety groups for plays and concerts. The 2005 survey showed a demand for the revival of such events. This will be reflected in the annual artistic programme.

We propose that the main hall be renamed The Thomas Pryor Theatre, after the benefactor who donated the land on which the Town Hall sits. It is a versatile space with seating that could be arranged in a variety of ways allowing “in the round” productions as well as “end on” and also enabling the users to have both raked and single level seating. This will maximize the purposes for which the hall can be used.

2.2 BALDOCK ARTS FESTIVAL

This would be an annual event bringing a selection of different professional shows to Baldock. The festival would last for 3 weeks and Baldock Arts would take over the building for that period as rent-paying users. The 2008 Arts festival both established the existence of a regular audience for this and provided feedback as to what type of show was most popular. A number of companies that came to perform are eager to return. This will also provide educational opportunities in both front and backstage management; something that will generate interest and potential employment.

2.3 BALDOCK TOWER MUSIC INCLUDING BALSTOCK

Baldock holds a great amount of musical talent, both young and old. This has become ever more apparent since Balstock music festival started 7 years ago, an event that can now boast “the biggest free music festival in Hertfordshire” with over 100 bands and acts performing in 2011.

The Town Hall would be a perfect vessel for musical youth nights, fundraisers and even host some of Balstock’s many acts. ‘Baldock Towers’ would be a representation of musical projects undertaken within the Town Hall.

With Balstock firmly putting Baldock on the musical map, there are plenty of acts willing to perform in the Town Hall and obviously a great demand from the public for live music. Also with limited choice of activities for teenagers in Baldock an under 21s band night should attract a fair few youngsters.

2.4 BALDOCK FESTIVAL EVENTS

Over the last 30 years, during the two weeks of the Baldock Festival in May, a large number of events are held. There is always pressure looking for venues to hold these events. In past years, there have been problems finding suitable venues such as the Community Centre and St Mary’s Church Hall that are not already booked by regular hirers/classes.

When it was available, the Town Hall was used for a number of events including shooting competitions, dances, shows, talks and demonstrations.

When the Town Hall is brought back into use, the Baldock Festival will certainly be able to make full use of the facility.



2.5 SUNDAY NIGHT COMEDY

Lastminutecomedy run and promote their own events in North Hertfordshire and as such do not charge as they take their fee from the door/tickets with the venue taking their revenue from other sources.

The current proposal for Baldock Town Hall is that revenue is generated from 10% of the ticket sales, and if successful this should also provide a small income in addition to the bar profits. This offer from Lastminutecomedy is exceptional as they would like to support the venue to become a success and they see a fruitful working relationship for a long time to come.

Lastminutecomedy pride themselves on always getting the very best acts available. Sundays are particularly good for getting high quality comics as they are normally on their way to or from a weekend of big shows and are happy to drop in.

2.6 AMATEUR DRAMATIC PRODUCTIONS INCLUDING PANTOMIME

There are several amateur dramatics groups who need a home and wish to revive entertainments such as:

- Victorian/Edwardian evenings of words and music
- Selection of Gilbert and Sullivan
- Music Hall Variety Shows
- Pantomimes

2.7 ARTS WORKSHOPS: SCRIPT WRITING; CREATIVE WRITING; READING CLUB

The Baldock Festival has demonstrated that there is a market for regular workshops/groups interested in writing, story telling, life-drawing and chamber music. We would hope to facilitate these activities which would be self-perpetuating and draw from as wide a demographic as possible.

2.8 FILM CLUB FOR ALL AGES

- Saturday morning children's film-club is very popular. Parents can leave their children and go shopping or stay and join in. Usually we show the film and then there is a related activity. This is aimed at primary level.
- Film club. Black and White/Comedy/Romance season. Including food and drink.

2.9 YOUTH SUMMER WORKSHOPS; AFTER SCHOOL CLUB; THEATRE CLUBS

There is a general recognition that there needs to be more provision for youth activities in Baldock.

Our plan addresses two such areas:

Firstly, there is an established market for summer workshops for children. These would typically last a week and would be all day sessions. They could take a variety of forms:

- Dance/drama leading to performance
- Devising and performing a play based on different aspects of local history
- Storytelling leading to performance
- Devising and making a short film
- Painting and drawing workshops

Secondly, in the 2005 questionnaire, most respondents mentioned a need for a venue which could provide

activities for bored and disaffected young people. Baldock Arts would run regular after school clubs including Drama, Art and Music, which are known to increase engagement with and build confidence in such youngsters.

Thirdly, through local network groups an interest in using the Town Hall for additional ad hoc training such as Health and Safety, First Aid and other business related courses has been voiced, including facilitated workshops for local businesses. Baldock contains a significant number of smaller businesses with less than 5 employees (indeed many are sole traders) and the opportunity to attend joint training courses with other local employers without increased 'down time' for travel will, we are sure, represent a valuable local asset.

Baldock Arts Presents...
Hertfordshire's newest arts festival, based in and around Baldock Town Hall

Come down to the Open Evening and find out what's going on 16th October at 8pm in Baldock Town Hall

 The Haunted Moustahe Friday 17th Oct 8pm £8 Baldock Town Hall A remarkable but true story of a rather singular family hairloom. Be taken on a journey of inner and outer discovery in this touching and hilarious one-man show.	 Caroline Bird reading Sat 25th Oct 3pm £8 Baldock Town Hall Recently shortlisted for the prestigious Dylan Thomas prize this is your chance to hear this exciting, new young poet Caroline reading from her new book <i>Trouble came to the Turnip</i> , already highly acclaimed.
 The Penny Dreadfuls Saturday 18th Oct 9pm £10 Baldock Town Hall The end is nigh! With a devilous story of betrayal and hate, <i>Arness Feaverham Forever</i> present this rip-tearing Victorian caper direct from the Edinburgh Fringe. "In the top ten of best Edinburgh fringe shows ever!" "a theatrical masterpiece"	 Phillip Womaok reading Thurs 1st Nov 2:30pm £5 Baldock Town Hall An exclusive book reading by this highly acclaimed children's writer from <i>The Other Book</i> . As twelve-year-old Edward Pollock starts to turn the pages of an ancient book, he is drawn into a place that is both terrifying and bewitching, where dark forces imperil charmed lands.
 Fred's Flying Circus Saturday 18th Oct Workshop 10am £20 Show 2:45pm £5 adult/£4 child Baldock Town Hall Circus skills workshop for 8-13yr olds ending in a performance. Then see Fred's Flying Circus performing the <i>Lines of Death</i> , uncycling, slackrop, magic, dance and illusions - for all ages	 Writers Workshop Fri 2nd Nov 2:30 pm £5 Baldock Town Hall Contemporary Novelists Lucy Cavendish and Miranda Glover present a masterclass in the business of writing novels, from the original idea to the completed publication. Leave inspired, informed and confident to go away and get writing.
 The Sun Dragon Sunday 18th Oct 4pm £8 adult/ £5 child Baldock Town Hall An intergalactic fairytale for all aged 5 to infinity. Gomito's action-packed whirlwind adventure stars puppets, live music, giant spiders, witches and wizards as we follow the adventures of Jacob, a boy who dreams of flying!	 Facebook Fables Sun 4th Nov 7:30pm £8 Baldock Town Hall See this fast-paced comic conundrum. Highly energetic and physical, we follow this trio of toady through the hazardous realms of cyber romance.
 Parnassus Duo Performance Fri 24th Oct 7:30pm £10 Violin Masterclass Sat 25th Oct 10am £25 Baldock Methodist Church This wonderful evening includes Beethoven Sonata No 8 Opus 30 no 3, Debussy Sonata and Brahms Sonata No 3 Opus 108, in the calm surroundings of the Methodist church. The masterclass is for Grade 6+	 Miss Julia Speaks Her Mind Tues 6th Nov 7:30pm £25 Ode Performance
 Dawn French Fri 24th Oct 2pm £10 Baldock Town Hall Don't miss this Q & A session with Dawn as she talks about her new autobiography, 'Dear Fatty'. Book signing after.	

For tickets contact: Joanna O'herry 07792
Clare Heyhoe 01462
clare@baldocktownhall.co.uk

Half Term Workshops at Baldock Arts

Circus skills with Fred's Flying Circus
18th October - Baldock Town Hall
 Circus skills workshop for ages 8-13, culminating in a performance for friends and family

Learn circus skills from some of the best in the business at Fred's Flying Circus. Chosen as the director of the French National Circus School in 1992, Fred has many years experience teaching and performing circus skills both in this country and in France. You'll be amazed by what the children can do after only a short time working with the Circus performers. The children learn to work together and respect each other in performing the skills they have learnt. They will cover things like juggling with scarves, balls, spinning plates, balancing and clowning.

Workshop 10am - 1:30pm, performance 1:30 pm £20

Musical Theatre with Blood Sweat and Tears
Starts monday 27th October

Three day musical theatre workshop for ages 11 upwards, culminating in a performance for friends and family

Blood Sweat and Tears Productions is a children's theatrical group. The workshop is about building a brand new musical extravaganza where everyone is a star. By the time the workshop is over, you will have made new friends, learned new songs and dance routines, helped to develop the theme of the show and presented an open rehearsal workshop to friends and family. You will also have taken part in a masterclass with a guest from the professional theatre and worked with top class professional musicians, lighting and sound technicians.

Dates: Monday 27th & Tuesday 28th 10-4, Wednesday 29th 10-6, Performance 6-7. £75 including professional musicians, lighting and a free t-shirt

Theatre workshop with Guest Directors from NYT
Starts after school wed 22nd october and continues over half term
 Guest directors from NYT will work with Baldock School students aged 13-18 to devise and perform an original production based around the history of the area.

For children who are interested in theatre, this is an opportunity to work with two great directors who work regularly with the National Youth Theatre and are certain to get the best out of their team. (max 30. book soon to get a place).

Dates and times are: Wed 22nd and Thurs 23rd October 3:30 - 6:30, Sat 26th October 10-5:30pm, Mon 27th Oct - Sat 1st 10-5:30pm, culminating in a performance in the Town Hall theatre. For children aged 13-18 £25

Violin Masterclass with Juliet Hughes-Rees
25th October

For violinists Grade 6 and above, a wonderful opportunity to work with this very highly acclaimed teacher.

This four hour workshop at the Methodist Church has very limited numbers so that each participant will get a maximum of personal attention.

10am to 2pm at the Methodist Church
 Participants £20 Spectators £5

Sign up for all these and more at
www.baldocktownhall.co.uk

Baldock Arts
 17th Oct - 6th Nov 08
www.baldocktownhall.co.uk



3 HERITAGE

“...to my shame I had not realised how important Baldock was in the history of Roman Europe.”

Professor Sue Black, Forensic Archaeologist and presenter of the recent BBC2 History Cold Case documentary about Baldock

Baldock and its surrounding area has a discovered history going back to the Neolithic period, its rich history is still being uncovered and new discoveries made. This ancient history and its more recent agricultural and industrial heritage should be an attraction for visitors to the town and encourage many more people to explore Baldock and other parts of North Hertfordshire.

"The Neolithic Landscape, of what I now want to be known as the 'Baldock Bowl' area, is turning out to be of great historical and archaeological significance. It is comparable to the later 'Stonehenge' Landscape, and Potentially Unique Anywhere"

Keith Fitzpatrick Mathews, Resident NHDC Field Archaeologist, lectured on the "Prehistoric Landscape of the Baldock Bowl"

BTHL will build on this heritage to provide space for the people of Baldock and the wider community to explore and understand the historic significance of this small market town.

Once the Town Hall is fully operational it will further enhance the beautifully refurbished town centre and will include a Visitor Centre, complementing the tourist information currently available in the Public Library, with daily access to the heritage of Baldock. The existing museum will be brought into the heart of the building and integrated throughout with the use of display cases in the ground floor foyer area and elsewhere in the building. A considerable number of artefacts (from Roman and earlier times) have been discovered in excavations, not least the site of the largest Roman cemetery in Western Europe. These can be displayed in a changing and rotating exhibition to enable residents of the town and visitors to see historical treasures relating to Baldock's past. Some of these are currently held in Letchworth or Hitchin and are not normally displayed in the town, but there is also a substantial collection in storage, not on display anywhere.

The Town Hall can act as a base for tours of Baldock and its surrounding countryside and villages and there is extensive scope in Phases 2 and 3 of the plan, to create other visitor attractions and 'experiences', such as virtual tours of Baldock through the ages.

We intend the heritage aspects of our plans for the Town Hall to become a regular place to visit for families living in or coming to the town and a valuable educational resource for local Schools.

In developing and putting these plans into action, BTHL will consult and work closely with the Baldock Museum and Local History Society (BMLHS) as well as the local and county archaeologists and museum officers.

A more detailed proposal for what to do about the Museum, and why, is presented in Appendix B.



Keith Fitzpatrick-Matthews, Gil Burleigh and Dr Sue Black discussing the remarkable skeleton excavated in Baldock



Reconstruction of our earliest Baldock Ancestor from the 'Cold Case' Series.



4 ADDITIONAL USES OF THE BUILDING

Over the months in which we have been developing this Plan, we have received many suggestions and ideas for additional ways in which the community interests of Baldock might be served by a revival of the Town Hall. Many of them would be compatible with the rest of this Plan and indeed highly complementary to it.

4.1 AN OFFICE FOR BALDOCK TOWN PARTNERSHIP

This is seen as a mutual benefit. It is discussed further in chapter 6.

4.2 UTILISING THE BASEMENT SPACE

More thought and discussion is needed, but we are currently looking into the possibility of making sufficient improvement to the Basement of the Town Hall to provide a place for young people to engage in music workshops/lessons. It also presents the opportunity to run smaller events, such as poetry readings, chamber music or jazz evenings.

4.3 PUBLIC TOILETS

We plan to provide (limited) toilet facilities in the Town Hall which will be welcoming to the public and maintained to the highest standards of hygiene and comfort. It will not be the most significant visitor attraction, but an attraction nevertheless.

4.4 FACILITIES FOR TRAINING, MEETINGS AND OTHER CONFERENCES

It is envisaged that the Main Hall will provide an attractive venue for meetings and conferences in addition to the Arts events envisaged in chapter 2 for local businesses.

4.5 OCCASIONAL (TEMPORARY) COMMERCIAL OFFICE USE

It is NOT the intention to provide facilities for commercial office use on a regular basis. However, if short term capacity is available, this is seen as a potential additional source of income. We have not budgeted for any income from this source.

4.6 WEDDINGS, CHILDREN'S PARTIES, MUSIC AND BALLET EXAMINATIONS

We will offer facilities for these activities, but only when complementary to the Community Centre's provisions. This is discussed further in chapter 6.

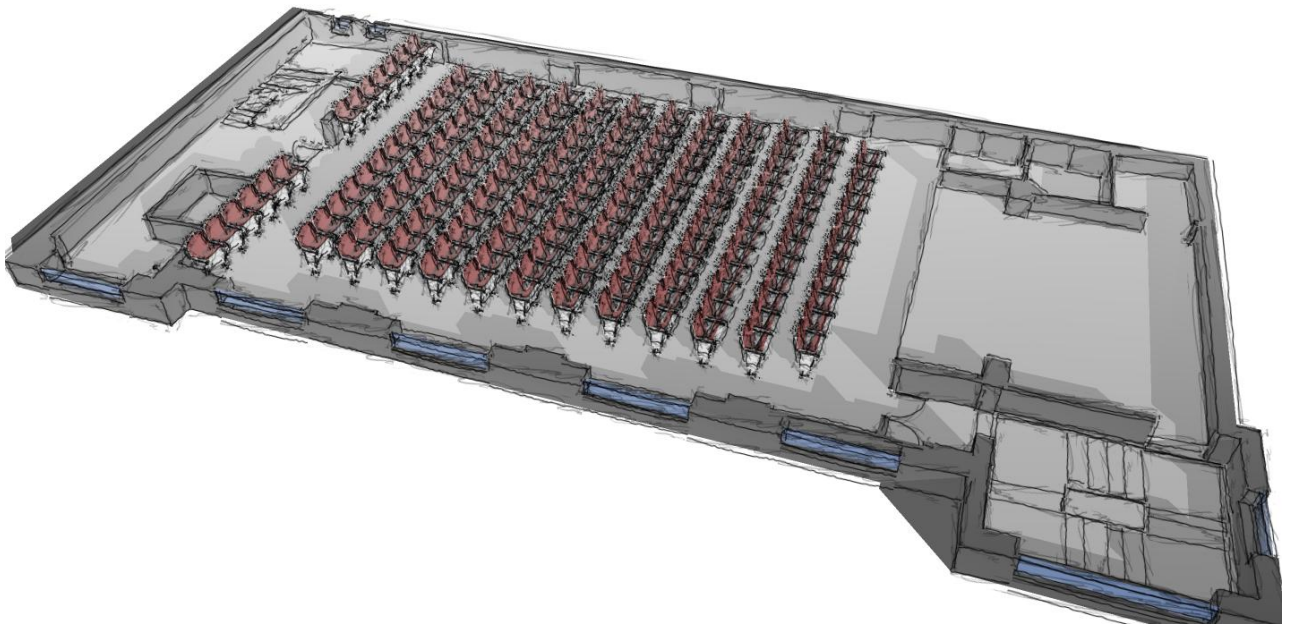
5 PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

During May 2011 Stanburys Ltd offered their services to BTHG to complete a condition survey on Baldock Town Hall and produce a report on their findings. Permission was sought from NHDC for access to the Town Hall, which was granted. Stanburys completed the survey over the course of a couple of days, completing a fully documented report of their findings. An outline copy of the report was submitted to NHDC for their records. The survey was carried out at no cost to BTHG.

The main findings of the Survey are presented in Appendix C.

A member of BTHG has also produced some initial (sketched) floor plans for the proposed Thomas Pryor Hall on the first floor and for the Ground Floor.

These are also included in Appendix C.





6 OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Our plan, for Phase 1 at least, is to have an open and operational building which will not entail any paid staff engaged directly by BTHL.

This may be achieved as follows:

The Baldock Town Partnership may establish a base in the Building to provide an office for the Town Centre Manager. In return for not paying rental for the space used, the Town Centre Manager (who is an employee of the Town Partnership) would take on first line responsibility for operational management of the building.

The Baldock Community Centre (BCC) is willing to be key holders for the Town Hall and to accept bookings (as they have done in the past).

There are many instances currently where BCC cannot fulfill demand for facilities, either because all BCC available space is committed, or because the requirement is one which cannot easily be met (e.g. for putting on performances and exhibitions).

BTHG will pay a commission to BCC on revenue earned from bookings made through BCC. This would fairly reflect the fact that BCC has wages to pay and BTHG will not have such overheads (initially, at least).

With its focus on Arts and Heritage, BTHG will be clearly differentiated from BCC: The two should be seen as complementary, not in competition.

We have developed the BTHL Website (www.bthl.org.uk) and this will not only keep Friends and interested people informed of our progress, but will also be used to promote activities in the Town Hall, eventually with an on-line booking facility. Further thoughts in this area are presented in Appendix F.



Baldock Town Hall Group



- Home
- Latest news
- About us
- History of the town hall
- Become a friend
- Contact us

Welcome to our website



The Baldock Town Hall Group comprises volunteer members from a variety of Baldock's local groups, who are working to bring Baldock's Victorian Town Hall back into community use.

To this end, Baldock Town Hall Limited, a company limited by guarantee, was incorporated in May 2011, to prepare a business plan for the future use of the Town Hall.

The group has been given until March 2012 by [North Hertfordshire District Council \(NHDC\)](#) to prepare a viable business case for the building.

As at 27 February 2012, we have 180 members signed up as "Friends of Baldock Town Hall". This website has been created to keep our members and other followers up to date with the latest developments. If you would like to join us, or would just like to know more, please [contact us](#).

Latest news

[Potential Town](#)

[Hall uses](#) We are very keen to hear from you if you would consider using the Town Hall for activities or events; for example if you run a group/ activity/ club which ...

Posted 27 Feb 2012 12:04
by Baldock Town Hall Group

Showing posts 1 - 1 of 3.
[View more »](#)



7 GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND DIRECTORS

The Plan relies on voluntary effort from a wide spectrum of people with varying expertise.

The risks associated with relying on voluntary effort are discussed in Section 9, but the reporting lines and levels of responsibility are broadly the same as they would be with any business. Indeed it is arguable that, with a dispersed group of part-time volunteers, attention to the formalities of decision-making is even more important than it would be if we were a typical commercial business with full-time employees all at the same location.

The governance procedures are laid down in the Articles of Association. These are modelled on the Companies House standard for companies limited by guarantee.

In brief, there is a Board of Directors with ultimate responsibility for all activities of the Company. The Board is elected by the Members.

The current Members of the Board are:

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| • Chris Gomm | Chairman and Chief Executive |
| • Alison Gentle | Deputy Chairman and Finance Director |
| • Jennifer Gosling | Secretary |
| • Joanna Cherry | Artistic Director |
| • Brendan King | Heritage Director |
| • Maureen Maddren | |
| • Bob Eversden | |
| • Julian Chapman | |
| • John White | |

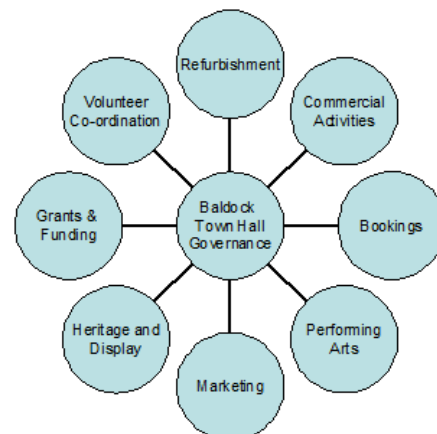
Brief profiles of all the above are included in Appendix H, together with profiles of other key volunteers.

Once the plan is under way, we envisage the establishment of an “Executive Team” (ET), which will report periodically to the Board. The members of the ET will also be volunteers, but may be expected to be more involved in detailed implementation of the Plan.

There will be a number of working groups, for example:

- Planning
- Operations
- Fundraising
- Membership
- Marketing
- Finance

Operational Groupings





8 FINANCE

In presenting this Plan, we are only too conscious of the current state of the general economic climate, national and global.

However, it is clear that there is still substantial funding available if we can show that we meet specified criteria. We consider that our Plan will qualify for funding applications under various headings and we do not plan to rely on a single source of funding.

There is a good argument for launching a long term venture such as this when the economy is at a low point. If we succeed in the current climate, then we will surely flourish when times improve.

We have also given a great deal of thought to making effective use of volunteer effort as discussed elsewhere in this Plan.

Volunteer effort is not "Free". It is a resource which must be valued and "costed" just as much as time and materials which are paid for. Effective management of Volunteers is a big subject and also very topical. We have established a strong management team in assembling this Plan and we estimate that a total of 1041 hours were "donated" between March and December 2011.

Our financial planning is on-going. Below is a summary of how we are approaching this aspect of the Plan and some initial projections are presented in Appendix E.

8.1 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

Capital Investment is needed in order to enhance the Town Hall so that the capacity can be increased, comfort and safety improved and to enhance the experiences provided by the events carried on within the hall. This expenditure will be identified in detail and negotiated with potential sources of funds.

We estimate that expenditure in the order of £50,000 is required on the building in order to bring it into use for Phase 1.

We are confident that this level of expenditure can be financed without extended application process through a number of possible public sources, donations and fund raising events.

For Phases 2 and 3, we propose to budget a total of £500,000 at this stage, subject to detailed specifications being produced of the work to be carried out. This assumes that much unskilled work can be carried out by volunteers, and even some of the professional work such as design, electrical, plumbing, etc may be donated by local certificated tradesmen. And we would also institute an ongoing programme of fundraising events.

We have explored a number of publicly available sources for funding which are listed in Appendix D. We do not expect to rely on a single source of funding.

Subject to the terms on which we procure use of the building from North Herts District Council, we also have it in mind to borrow money by the Issue of Bonds. We have spoken to a number of private sources who would be willing to lend money to us on this basis.

All the above is subject to various assumptions we have made about the state of the Building.

8.2 INCOME

We have made what we consider to be realistic assumptions about income in Phase 1 and these are presented in Appendix E. We envisage income from:

- Arts, Exhibitions and events organised directly under the auspices of BTHG
- Grants awarded and donations for specific events
- Providing space and facilities



8.3 OPERATIONAL EXPENDITURE

An estimate of our costs is also presented in Appendix E.

The operational costs of the Town Hall will fall into two categories, in the same way as any other business model: Direct Costs (also referred to as “cost of sales”) and Indirect Costs (also referred to as “overheads”).

Cost of sales are those costs incurred directly to obtain sales which would not be incurred if the Town Hall was not in use. Line items in this category include (but are not limited to):

- Amateur Dramatic/Pantomime costs
- Community Centre bookings (5% of takings)
- Advertising
- Cinema Club expenses
- Summer School Theatre expenses
- Cost of specific Speakers (e.g. Richard Noble)
- Refreshments
- Promotional Fundraising (e.g. Calendars, pens)
- Fundraising Prizes

Overheads are costs incurred to run the Town Hall irrespective of whether it is in use or not. Although some costs fluctuate depending on the use of the hall they cannot be directly attributed to individual revenue streams as this would not be practical.

Line items in this category include (but are not limited to):

- Rent
- Business Rates*
- Water Rates
- Heating and Lighting
- Software Licences
- Maintenance/Cleaning
- Centre Manager Cost
- PAYE/NI Employer
- Professional Fees
- Printing and Stationery
- Bank Interest
- Bank Charges
- Telephone/Internet
- Corporation Tax
- Building and Contents Insurance
- Performing Rights insurance

** The BTHG do not yet have, but propose to pursue, charitable status, which would offer the opportunity of discount*



9 RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk management for the Baldock Town Hall Group is currently limited to identification of all risks and opportunities as they become evident. No categorisation or quantification has been carried out at this stage. However, once the group takes over the operations within the Town Hall, they will use a 3 x 3 matrix to prioritise using probability percentage of low, medium and high with gravity of low, medium and high.

This means therefore that any risk or opportunity with high probability and high gravity will need urgent action response actions to be placed on a member of the group. This action will then be tracked by the directors to ensure that the risk is reduced or the opportunity optimised. The table below shows the current risks and opportunities as seen by the group at this time. This table will be updated as risk and opportunities come and go.

All that said, we have given thought and attention to Risk 001: Dependence on Volunteer Effort. We consider this to be one of the biggest risks to the success of the Plan. We propose to mitigate this risk as follows:

Firstly, we believe in treating all volunteer time as a highly valued resource, to be used efficiently and not in any way discounted because it is "free". Secondly, we impress on all volunteers that they should not undertake any commitments unless they are reasonably confident that they will be able to fulfil them. And thirdly we aim to ensure that every key role undertaken by a volunteer has at least one other person capable of deputizing if necessary. This has the additional benefit of spreading the work as widely as possible and thus hopefully lightening it.

When the time comes to engage paid staff, we expect to benefit from advice from both the Baldock Town Partnership and the Baldock Community Centre in achieving the optimum operational efficiency in using volunteer effort alongside them.

Good record keeping; Monitoring of volunteer time spent; Punctilious attention to the formalities of decision-making and Company Law.

Current Risks

Identifier	Description
R001	People Insufficient volunteers/Dependence on key people
R002	Money Over optimistic revenue generation in 1st to 3rd years Lack of Funds for major works in later stages
R003	Regulations Building and Fire regulations
R004	Building Works Unforeseen refurbishment costs (hidden problems)
R005	Bookings Lack of interest in use of building
R006	Protracted Negotiations Delay to lease signature impacting ability to start funding applications

Current Opportunities

Identifier	Description	Cause	Effect	Status
O 0001	Grant availability	M Muir identified £2K grant might be available	Increased funding to aid start up of project	Open



10 PHASES

Our Plan relies on a modest start and then gathering momentum over the first five years. We expect it to be 15 years before the project reaches its full fruition.

For present purposes, we have broken the project down into 3 distinct phases:

- Phase1 Getting started
- Phase2 Starting the changes
- Phase3 The long term goal

In **Phase 1**, funds will be raised by both grant and local support to:

- Put the building into use
- Refurbish stairwell
- Re-decorate and stabilise main hall floor
- Provide box office in refurbished ground floor
- Comply with fire requirements to maximise capacity
- Provide office space for the Town Centre Manager

The estimated cost for the above is £50K. No wheelchair access will be provided at this stage, but will in later phases.

Part-time volunteers will set up and co-ordinate events, liaising with the Baldock Community Centre.

When the venue is 25% utilized, we envisage appointing a part-time paid member of staff to increase business. Fundraising and grant applications will begin in earnest to obtain funding for Phase 2.

At the end of 3 years, the business should have secured £100,000 from activities and grants to carry out Phase 2, and we expect to have a part-time paid administrator on site with a part-time caretaker.

In **Phase 2**, funds will be raised by both grant and local support to:

- Make good the Basement including soundproofing
- Further enhance Ground Floor to include:
 - New entrance
 - Display cabinets
 - Coffee shop
 - Space for occasional office use
 - Smaller arts workshop facilities

The estimated cost for this is £250K.

In **Phase 3**, funds will be raised by both grant and local support to equip the building with access for all (via lift) and refurbish all facilities to an excellent standard. It will be a self-funding business.

The estimated cost for this is £500K.



APPENDICES

APPENDIX A HISTORY OF THE TOWN HALL

Baldock Town Hall was opened in November 1897 after a long campaign to provide a public building in the town. This campaign had begun in 1869 but had been beset by difficulties over cost and site. In 1892 a site presented itself with the destruction by fire of a shop on Bell Row right in the centre of the town. A committee was set up to canvas the town for subscriptions which produced promises amounting to two thirds of the sum needed, but in the course of the process it was decided instead to petition Baldock Urban District Council to borrow the money on the security of the rates. The council declined to take up the matter on the grounds that the site was too expensive.

At this point Thomas Pryor Esquire broke the impasse by purchasing the site in October 1895 and presenting it as a gift to the town under certain conditions of use. The council had little choice but to accept the gift with its conditions on behalf of the town because a recent election had returned candidates who were in favour of the public building scheme with "triumphant majorities".

According to one contemporary, Mr Pryor had

"...long desired to do something for the town, which the town desired, found this opportunity of accomplishing his purpose and of thus rendering a lasting service to Baldock and making possible a scheme which, but for his generosity, would probably have remained a dead letter."

Mr Pryor was the last of his family left in Baldock and perhaps had some sense of this being the end of an era, a grand finale after two centuries of involvement in its affairs.

At the opening ceremony the chairman of the council and other speakers made it clear that they understood that Mr Pryor's gift was made to the town and this was confirmed by a plaque on the North wall:

" The ground upon which these buildings are erected was given to the town of Baldock by Thomas Pryor, Esquire. "

The new public buildings provided space for a public hall, a fire station for Baldock Fire Brigade and council offices. The hall was frequently used by townspeople for shows, concerts, weddings and celebration of local and national occasions. The hall was closed to public use in the 1990s (apparently because of a misunderstanding over the fire regulations), but in 1996 the decision was reversed and a public appeal raised funds and volunteers to re-decorate the hall in time for its centenary which was marked by a Victorian Parlour Evening. In 1999 part of the ground floor was provided for a Baldock Museum and is still occupied for this purpose.

In 2004 reports circulated that NHDC was considering selling the Town Hall and in March 2005 the Baldock Town Hall independent stakeholder group (now BTHG) was formed by representatives of interested groups and societies. The new group canvassed opinion throughout the town and received an overwhelming response in favour of retaining the Town Hall in public use (results presented to Baldock Area Committee in 2005).

In 2008 the independent stakeholder group joined with Baldock Arts to present a business case to NHDC proposing an arts/heritage use for the building with a local theatre festival later that year. The Baldock Area Committee agreed to provide funds to bring the hall and offices to a sufficient standard for public use. The hall had been closed to public use at this time because of health and safety concerns.

The Baldock Arts Festival took place in October/November 2008 but its success could not be built upon, partly because of a lack of appropriate business skills at that time and for other personal reasons. Again, the Town Hall was closed to public use (excepting the Museum) and routine maintenance ceased.



APPENDIX B HERITAGE

The requirement for a museum/heritage centre

Baldock has an extraordinarily rich history. Recent archaeological research has revealed the ancient town to have been an important religious centre since the Iron Age, or possibly long before. The excavations of the cemeteries of the ancient town have been amongst the most extensive in the whole territory of the former Roman Empire.

The history of Baldock itself, founded by the Knights Templar c1148 on the site of the ancient town, is no less interesting. Its large parish church reflects its status in the early 14th century as the main wool town between London and the Midlands. In the 18th century it became an important centre for malting and brewing, as well as a major coaching and wagon stage on the Great North Road. In the 20th century the Full Fashioned Hosiery Company in Baldock developed into the headquarters of Kayser Bondor, an international company and the largest producer of hosiery in Europe and the Commonwealth, while the Services Electronic Research Laboratory played an important part in the development of lasers and microwaves.

This story ought to be told and there is no better available means of telling it than by illustrated mounted displays.

Awareness of the history and historical culture of the town is an important factor in creating a sense of community and concern for the historic townscape which in turn can bring a sense of responsibility and commitment to the town, its affairs and organisations. The Baldock Museum and Local History Society, the Baldock Society and the Baldock Mail have contributed in no small part to creating that awareness.

The provision of a historical narrative for the town is a factor in the choice of Baldock as a place to visit. Many tourists wish to know something about the town they are visiting. The present Museum is sometimes the principal reason for a visit to Baldock, but more often it is a welcome extra. It would be used more frequently if it were open for longer. More visitors have been coming to look around Baldock since the town centre was enhanced and the Museum has benefited from and contributed to this.

In 2005 a questionnaire sent to every household in Baldock found that 89% of respondents wanted Baldock to have a Museum.

NHDC's 'Arts Museum and Heritage Strategy' requires that North Herts. Museums Service should "... explore a sustainable future for Baldock Museum"*. The Strategy "recognises a need to find a balance between local needs and aspirations and district wide provision". This is a consequence of the decision to centralise the Council's own Museum Service into one location at Hitchin. Such a Museum cannot be expected to give adequate coverage of the histories of each town or village within the District and therefore it is necessary to encourage "partnership working, specifically with the seven non NHDC Museums and other heritage and cultural groups to achieve local representation across the district". If Baldock, as one of the most historically important towns in the District, had no Museum or other widely accessible historical narrative, it would greatly weaken the intention and effect of this Strategy.

* www.north-herts.gov.uk/arts_museums_heritage_strategy_2007.pdf



Baldock Museum Current Operation

Baldock Museum is run by the Trustees of the Baldock Museum and Local History Society (BMLHS) with assistance from members of the Society.

It is staffed and run on an entirely voluntary basis (there are 20 volunteers).

It opens for 2 hours on Sundays and 2.5 hours on Wednesdays and on certain festival days, or by special arrangement.

Average annual attendance (actual) over the last 10 years to Michaelmas 2011 is 603. In the 3 years since the town centre refurbishment this has risen to 650 per annum.

The accounts of Museum and Society are integrated. It is not possible to give a meaningful average turnover because of various one-off complications (e.g. production of Kayser Bondor books and then DVDs followed by sales in subsequent years).

In normal circumstances the turnover is roughly £1,200-£1,400 raised from subscriptions, raffles, book sales, donations and admissions. The Museum's contribution to this is in the low hundreds, which, with insurance costs, means it runs at a loss of about £200 or more. However, the Society usually makes an overall profit and currently (December 2011) has a balance of £10,097.

One room of the Museum has a semi-permanent display on the history of Baldock. The second room and stair landing has a changing display on particular aspects of the town's history.

The Museum Collection

The collection consists of 1,859 accessioned items. Most of these are documents and photographs, but there is a sizable collection of Kayser Bondor products and miscellanea, as well as items relating to the various breweries and other artifacts.

There is a similar amount of unaccessioned material, some of which has been listed or catalogued. Again, these are mostly documents and photographs, but it also includes a number of bulky farming implements and a large topographical model of Baldock c1944.

Most, but not all, accessioned items are stored (where appropriate) in acid free containers in reasonable medium term conditions, but the available space will be filled once the whole current collection is accessioned and packed. Some unaccessioned documents are held off-site at present.

A few items that cannot be kept elsewhere are currently in very unsuitable conditions in the Museum cellar.

The Museum actively continues to collect documentary and photographic items connected with Baldock. It does not encourage the deposit of larger items, unless they are of clear value and importance to the history of the town, because of the shortage of suitable storage.

The Museum and the Town Hall Proposals

BMLHS is fully committed to the Town Hall project for the following reasons:

It considers that the present condition of the Town Hall is detrimental to the general appearance of the town, but that it is an important part of the townscape and its heritage and that it should be preserved and properly maintained.

It considers that the continuance of the Town Hall is the only viable prospect for the continuance of the Museum, even if in altered form.

It considers that the people of the town, as well as the Council, have an obligation to honour the intention of the gift made to them in good faith by Thomas Pryor.

It considers that the Town Hall proposals will be of cultural and commercial benefit to Baldock.



BMLHS recognises that all suitable spaces within the Town Hall are necessary for generating revenue and that an unprofitable Museum cannot occupy such spaces. BMLHS anticipated this and proposed the alternative of a 'Heritage Centre' at the beginning of the Baldock Arts project in 2008.

Proposal for Heritage Centre

Because the Museum cannot occupy potential revenue generating space, it will have to vacate its present rooms.

The intention is that a new semi-permanent display illustrating the history of the town and its predecessors from prehistoric times to the present be mounted on the walls of part of the ground floor. This display would be of good quality, washable boards.

It is hoped that a few display cabinets might be constructed wherever there is a suitable corner that does not obstruct other usage of the floor space. In these cabinets changing displays of artefacts illustrative of the town's history could be placed.

The remaining wall space on the ground floor would be available for revenue generating art exhibitions, etc. When not in use for such purposes, it may be possible to use this area for additional Museum displays on particular aspects of the town's history.

Although there is no intention of utilising any floor space for the Museum, there is in the collection a very decorative milkman's hand cart that could form an attractive centrepiece to the foyer area.

It may be that a video film history of the town could be made available as part of the proposed display.

The Future of the Collection

It is not possible to anticipate whether any storage space will be available in the reworked Town Hall to store all, or part of, the Museum's collection. Otherwise the collection will have to be offered to Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS) or North Herts Museums. The latter have assured us that they would try to accommodate as much of the collection as they can.

Without its collection the Museum would lose its raison d'être and would cease to be a Museum, hence the change of name to 'Heritage Centre'. However, BMLHS recognises that much of its collection, especially its documents, would have been destroyed or otherwise lost to the town if the Museum had not existed. Therefore, some form of limited collections policy will continue to operate in co-operation with North Herts Museum.

For the same reason the present facility for assisting researchers will not exist, or will be much curtailed and will be directed to the reading room at the new Hitchin Museum. This will only apply to a small number of people as BMLHS will continue to provide assistance where it can.

Operation of the Heritage Centre

The Heritage Centre will be an integral part of the Baldock Arts and Heritage Centre (BAHC) and, as such, will not require dedicated or separate attendance/ staffing arrangements. Its opening times will be the opening times of the Town Hall, but to attract visitors it will be necessary to guarantee regular opening at fixed, advertised times, even if only for a few hours a week.

If the BAHC is able to operate a café then the Heritage Centre would be open when the café was open and at any other time the BAHC was open for events.

There would still need to be some curatorial management of the display cases and of any storage facilities that might be made available for any part of the collection. This would be undertaken by BMLHS.

It is hoped that some of the present BMLHS volunteers will become volunteers for BAHC.

It would seem necessary that BMLHS should be represented on any board of trustees managing or directing the operation of BAHC.



Strategy for the Heritage Centre

It is likely that, for a period during Phase 1 of the Town Hall project, the Museum will remain where it is. The necessity of providing the advertised service means that several months notice will be required before one or both rooms can be vacated. Time would be needed to find alternative homes for the collection.

BMLHS has in hand a fund of about £9,000 available for creating the new Heritage Centre. North Herts. Museums Service has offered help in finding match funding and other grants which should at least double that figure. BMLHS believes that it can make that money go further by undertaking much of the work itself and this could be extended to include preparing the area of the ground floor in which the Heritage Centre is to be located.

Although the general intention is that the Town Hall project should move forward in three phases it would not be practical for BMLHS to commit its funds to a Phase 2 development that might change later. Therefore, a final (Phase 3) plan for the ground floor would need to be drawn up and, the part of it in which the Heritage Centre is to be located, implemented as part of Phase 2. Nor would it commit its funds unless the project was progressing reasonably satisfactorily.

Once the Heritage Centre project is initiated it could be carried out in stages without greatly hindering the use of the ground floor, except where any major reworking of the layout is concerned. A temporary display could be mounted elsewhere on the ground floor while such work is in progress or, if before that, the Museum rooms have closed

Conclusion

Although the change from Museum to Heritage Centre is to an extent a retreat from their original ambitions, the Trustees of BMLHS do not regard it as a retrograde step. On the contrary they see it as an opportunity for an improvement to the public face of the Museum's operation.

The future of the old Museum has always been uncertain because of doubts over the Town Hall and because if certain key members were to leave there is no certainty that anyone would take their place. The Museum itself is cramped, cold and dingy; its exterior is obscure and unattractive. It is not open for long enough to be of real benefit to casual visitors. Its suitable storage spaces are near to being full and it cannot justify long-term storage of valuable documents.

The new Heritage Centre will provide an opportunity for a more attractive but equally comprehensive display covering Baldock's history in more spacious, brightly lit and comfortable surroundings. Because the display could be permanent it would not require the attention that the present Museum requires and would not therefore be affected by changes of personnel.

The loss of the ability to provide changing displays is not of great concern. It could be covered by the publication of booklets on particular aspects of the town's history or by smaller temporary displays (see 3.1 above).

The loss of the collection, or any part of it, is a greater concern. Some of it could be offered back to the original donors and the rest dispersed among other collections. North Herts. Museums are keen to have some of the documentary collection for their new reading room. This would have the advantage of being not too far from Baldock and being more easily available to researchers. It would also ensure the long-term preservation of the documents in appropriate storage conditions.



Baldock Town
Hall Group

Issue 1.1
29th February 2012
Page 27 of 40

APPENDIX C CONDITION SURVEY

See separate document



APPENDIX D SOURCES OF FUNDS

BTHG has recognized from the outset that by applying to take over the running of the Town Hall we would need a substantial level of funding to a) get the building ready to open b) buy essential equipment c) obtain funds for running specific events.

We realised it was important to talk to people who had already gone through this process; so we contacted those who had been successful in their bids to take over the running of village halls, former church buildings, town halls, abandoned warehouses etc. They gave us much useful information on how they had obtained funding and we are still in contact with these people who have all offered further advice.

We also attended two community funding fairs: one at Hatfield in October and the other at St Ives in November. At the first we attended workshops where advice was given on recognising the pros and cons of taking on such a venture and then looking for the right type of funding for our particular project, how to complete the application forms and who else we could turn to for advice.

We also spoke to people on the stands who offered practical advice on formulating business plans and finding funding. Some grants are particularly suitable for our project and several of the experts there advised us to apply to the Awards for All Scheme which gives grants of up to £10,000 for specific items. We also have a personal offer from one of the people there to help us complete the application form when the time is right. He has already helped many organisations to be successful in gaining this award and we are confident that he could do the same for us. This would give us an initial sum of money to do the most essential work on the Town Hall to enable us to open. This is not just a one-off scheme – we may apply to it more than once if we need further funds.

There are many funding organisations that will award comparatively small grants and we were advised to apply to these in the first instance. When we reach Phases II and III in our plans will be the time to apply to larger bodies like the Big Lottery Fund for substantial awards to carry out major works.

There are also organisations that will award funds for specific arts or community projects: some are for working with children, teenagers, the elderly or the disadvantaged and others are there to help put on arts projects for the benefit of the whole community.

Some of the grants stipulate that a need has to be proved in order to apply for specific awards. On taking on the Town Hall project we are confident that we will be filling a gap in what is currently on offer in the town. We feel privileged to live in a town that has such a good community spirit and we want to add to the good work done by the Community Centre by providing further opportunities for artistic performances, leisure activities, youth involvement etc.

We cannot, however, apply for any grant until we have a legal agreement with NHDC for taking over the running of the building or at the very least an explicit resolution demonstrating agreement, still subject to further negotiation, so the group can seek to secure commitments to grant funding.

Below is a (non-exhaustive) list of funding organisations to which we may apply

Funding for the Heritage part of our Plan is expected to come mainly from donations. We recognise that, for the foreseeable future at least, NHDC has decided to direct all its available museum funding to Hitchin. However, BMLHS currently have about £9,000 funding available (see Appendix B). With further donations, and a little help from the District Museum (e.g. with Loans of exhibits) we consider that this area of our Plan will have adequate short term funding.



LIST OF POSSIBLE FUNDING ORGANISATIONS

Awards for all

- The Awards for All programme “aims to help and improve local communities and the lives of people most in need”
- Project must not have started before grant is offered – must be applied for 3 months before start date of project
- Letter of intent from NHDC required before able to apply for this grant

Veolia Environmental Trust

- We qualify as we are within 5 miles of qualifying facility • Average award is £20k - £25k (theoretically up to max of £100k) • Matched funding required

Hertfordshire Community Foundation

- Small grants up to £5K only
- Quality of life criteria
- Development grant over 3 years to sustain development of a group or project

Support4communityprojects

- Provide a service for finding funds
- Tesco's referenced with “social responsibility” document

Sponsored Events using Localgiving.com

- This is a vehicle to allow receipt of donations using the internet
- It is a well known website used by many charities
- Easy to set up and reasonably cheap to run

Big Lottery Fund

- Awards are for building and refurbishment projects for specific items
- Good candidates would be seating, theatre lighting, sound infrastructure.....



APPENDIX E FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS

The financial projections outlined in the next two pages are based on the estimated utilisation of the venue as pictured in Table 3.

This diary of events and estimated revenue obtained from it has been compiled with those who have the knowledge and wherewithal to deliver these events. The estimates on numbers attending such events and prices have been provided by these experts and their current knowledge of the market in and around Hertfordshire.

Cost of Sales expenditure has also been estimated using the experts associated with this Business Plan and is in line with other venues locally.

Overhead costs have been based on information received from NHDC (Rent and Rates) and from other group members who currently run large and small enterprises in and around Hertfordshire.

We have provided only 1 year's estimate in this plan and from Table 3 it can be seen that the venue is not fully utilised. The white spaces clearly show the ability for the Town Hall to be put to greater use, thereby generating increased revenue for re-investment in future phases.

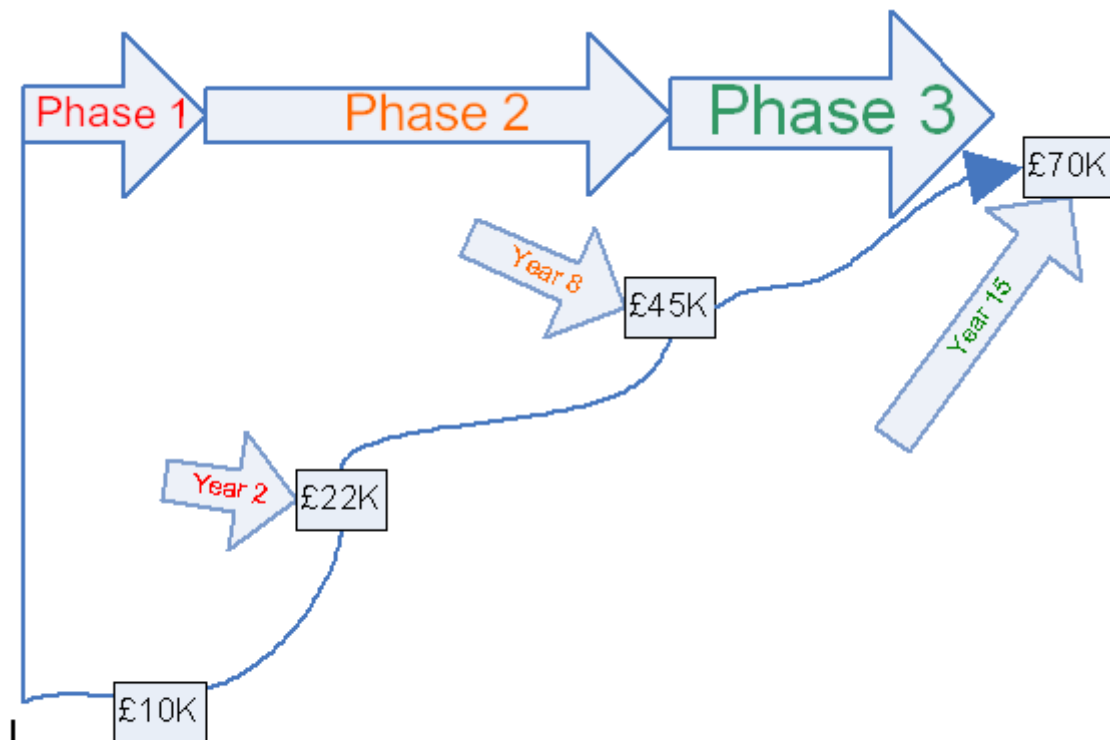


Figure Phased net profit over first 15 years



Baldock Town Hall Group

Issue 1.1
29th February 2012
Page 31 of 40

	Annual Totals	Year 1											
		Mth 1	Mth 2	Mth 3	Mth 4	Mth 5	Mth 6	Mth 7	Mth 8	Mth 9	Mth 10	Mth 11	Mth 12
O/B at bank		750	2233	3094	12798	13738	15067	17266	21306	19914	20353	21151	22070
Projected INCOME													
Friends Revenue stream	4,520	0	50	100	250	500	500	500	500	530	530	530	530
Rental income - Police/office rental	300	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	100	100
Baldock Arts events - 3 week Festival	3,000							3000					
Workshops (dance/story telling/writing/playwriting/physical theatre/mask work)	4,800	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400
Amateur Dramatics	4,800	1600		1600			1600						
Amateur Pantomimes	1,600								1600				
Summer School Theatre	8,000			8000									
Cinema Club	3,570	298	298	298	298	298	298	298	298	298	298	298	298
Concerts, gigs, etc	2,040	170	170	170	170	170	170	170	170	170	170	170	170
Gig Rehearsals	1,200	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Gig Rehearsals/Club events in basement (phase 2?)													
Sunday night Comedy Club Events	1,980	165	165	165	165	165	165	165	165	165	165	165	165
Baldock Festival Events	350					350							
Sunday morning monthly "markets"	600	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
Business Conferences	3,600	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300
Centre Manager rent	3,600	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300
Adult Education	600	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
Schools	600	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
Wedding Receptions	4,750		850	200	850	600	200	850			200	400	600
Birthday parties	600		100			100			100		100	100	100
Travelling exhibitions	400		100				100			100			100
Inspirational Talks (e.g. Richard Noble (land world speed) and others)	4,500	1125			1125			1125			1125		
Other	600	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
Total Income	56,010	5408	5265	14926	16955	17220	19399	24673	25438	22477	24341	24213	25432

Table 1 Projected Annual Income



Baldock Town Hall Group

Issue 1.1
29th February 2012
Page 32 of 40

	Annual Totals	Year 1											
		Mth 1	Mth 2	Mth 3	Mth 4	Mth 5	Mth 6	Mth 7	Mth 8	Mth 9	Mth 10	Mth 11	Mth 12
Expenditure													
Heating and lighting	6,000	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	500
Business rates/rent	3,264	272	272	272	272	272	272	272	272	272	272	272	272
Water rates	2,000	167	167	167	167	167	167	167	167	167	167	167	167
Software licences	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Maintenance	4,800	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400	400
Centre Manager cost	3,600	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300	300
PAYE/Ni employer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Accountants/professional fees	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	50
Printing and stationery	600	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
Bank Interest	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bank Charges	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Telephone	120	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Advertising	600	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
Corporation Tax	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Insurance	1,200	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Community Centre bookings (5% of takings)	903	76	73	30	119	55	35	269	25	25	91	45	60
Cost of speakers	4,000	1000			1000			1000			1000		
Performing rights insurance	0												
Amateur Pantomime costs	0												
Summer School Theatre	3,400								3400				
Cinema Club expenses	3,000	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250
Other	0												
Total Expenditure	33,537	3175	2171	2129	3217	2154	2134	3367	5524	2124	3190	2144	2209
Profit/Loss	22,474												
Cash at Bank		2233	3094	12798	13738	15067	17266	21306	19914	20353	21151	22070	23224

Table 2 Projected Annual Expenditure (Cost of Sales and Overheads)



APPENDIX F USE OF WEB TECHNOLOGY

The Baldock Town Hall will need a website which will serve the needs of event organisers, facilities managers and users/patrons of the Town Hall. The website will need to be delivered in two phases.

Phase 1: The development of an initial site to establish a presence on the Internet and to provide a handy means of public communication.

Achieving the best impact will rely on balancing a whole range of drivers including:

- The effective translation of brand into 'look and feel'
- Rich data
- Interactivity and functionality
- Social Media including video section block
- Search engine optimisation (SEO)
- Accessibility
- Content

An early version of this Web site has now been created at www.bthl.org.uk.

Phase 2:

Key tools will include:

- CRM - to process general enquiries and e-shop purchases in a professional and efficient way. Records will be automatically transferred to the marketing database for ongoing use in CRM marketing activities. From here e-newsletters, interest questions on enquiry forms, prize draws, questionnaires, feedback forms can also be managed.
- Banner Advertising & Ad Spots
- What's On Events Listing & Calendar
- Brochure Downloads
- Special Offers
- Online Blogging and Social Media
- eShop
- Conferences and Events Management



APPENDIX G SUPPORTING ORGANISATIONS

The Baldock Society is interested in the Town Hall as a building at the heart of the town, which has become a significant defining landmark for Baldock. Its design is unlike many Town Halls and complements the surrounding building stock that is mainly a mixture of Georgian and Victorian architecture. It is as a result of the gift of the land from the late Thomas Pryor to the Town, for the Town, that the Town Hall exists; there is a long history of the townsfolk not only using the building but also investing time and money into it. The Town Hall is at the centre of the Conservation Area and on the Council's list of Buildings of Historic Importance. It therefore falls within our main aims of preserving the balance of Baldock's character and heritage.

The **Baldock Museum & Local History Society (BMLHS)** runs the Baldock Museum, established seven years ago in the Town Hall after a long campaign by local residents. They believed that Baldock needed a museum to tell its own long, rich and unique history. It is open two days a week and run by volunteers who redecorated and refitted part of the Town Hall and who raise their own funding. The Museum has staged a varied programme of displays charting the town's history from prehistoric times to the last century. It also houses a collection of papers and objects relevant to Baldock that were kindly donated by residents and former-residents alike.

Baldock Museum and Local History Society believes that Baldock still needs a museum to promote interest in the history and heritage of the Town, both to residents and visitors. The Society has joined the Group to campaign for the Museum but also because the Town Hall is an historic building in its own right situated at the heart of Baldock.

The **Baldock Community Centre (BCC)** has administered the top floor of the Town Hall for community use for a number of years and therefore has a close interest in its future. The Town Hall enhances the BCC's facilities by offering the large hall for hire.



APPENDIX H PEOPLE PROFILES

Julian Chapman was born in North Herts and attended Knights Templar School and local Hertfordshire Colleges. He has held the post of Vice Chair of the Baldock Community Association for the past 3 years and previously served as a Committee member. Professionally he works as a Project / Contracts Manager with extensive experience in both Local Authority and Private Sectors. He is keen to see the Community Centre and Town Hall working hand in hand to the benefit of the local community.

Joanna Cherry started Baldock Arts which ran a three week festival in 2008 including 12 professional events. These were very well attended, showing that there is an audience for such projects in Baldock. Baldock Arts would aim to run an annual festival of this kind and also would run workshops and classes throughout the year. These include; Writers workshop; adult and children Drama Club; Cinema Club and Town Choir. Joanna is a teacher and actor and is currently script editing for The Royal Court Theatre.

Bob Eversden has lived all his life in Baldock. He retired from his job as a computer engineer a few years ago. He has served on school Parent Associations and has been involved with the Baldock Festival for the past 28 years and is currently the Chairman.

Neil Gaskell is an Architect and member of the RIBA who moved to Baldock with his family in 2009. His daughter is currently at Hartsfield school and while relatively new to the town he has already forged strong ties. Working in both Baldock and London he has significant experience with listed buildings and conservation work in addition to sustainability issues.

Alison Gentle was born in Baldock, attended the local schools (and Hertfordshire Colleges) and apart from a three year period living abroad, has lived in Baldock all of her life. Alison has three grown-up children who also attended local schools. She has been involved in numerous community schemes through her children's involvements with various clubs and groups and was a co-founder of Merry-Go-Round playgroup, which is still a going concern, (off Hartsfield School Site), in October 1987. Alison is a Director of a local Baldock business employing around 15 people, and has been associated with Baldock & District Town Centre Partnership as a committee member and subsequently Director for over 4 years. Alison's Grandfather was a Fireman during the 1939-1945 years, when Baldock Town Hall served as the Fire Station.

Chris Gomm is a local resident of Baldock by some 30 plus years, he is currently Chairman of the Baldock Society and the Baldock Neighbourhood Panel. He was a founder Director of the Baldock Town Partnership and is the current Chairman of the Baldock Town Hall Group. Professionally, he is a Chartered Engineer and has run his own Engineering Consultancy for 30 years currently employing 16 people. Past activities include PTA membership, Baldock Festival Committee member and he currently runs an Engineering Day every year at the local Secondary School.

Dr Jennifer Gosling is a university lecturer. She has lived in Hertfordshire for most of her life and in Baldock for over 7 years. She has been a member and committee member of different Baldock societies, such as the Baldock Festival Committee and the Community Centre Management Committee. In 2005, Jennifer was one of the original members of the Baldock Town Hall Stakeholders Group and helped to write and deliver the survey of the town about the Town Hall She also helped to organize the Baldock Arts Festival which took place in the Town Hall.

Brendan King was brought up in Baldock and has lived in the town for most of his life. He has worked for the Maritime Trust and the RAF Museum and, for the last 20 years or so in restoration, repair and making of boats, at first, and then furniture. He has been Chairman of the Baldock Museum and Local History Society since 1997.

Graeme LaRoche (known to many of the locals as 'G') has lived in Baldock all his life, attended Knights Templar School and frequents the local pubs. He's been playing guitar and organising bands since he was 8 years old and now has 3 bands to his name and a number of projects. His most proud project is 'Balstock Music Festival' which he started in 2006 and is now widely regarded as Hertfordshire's biggest free music festival. Graeme is always striving to get new bands, events and gigs up and running and his passion for music has earned him the attention of almost everyone involved in music and bands in North Herts.



Baldock Town Hall Group

Issue 1.1
29th February 2012
Page 37 of 40

Alastair McCallion has lived in North Hertfordshire since 1973, and in Baldock since 1980. His seven children attended local schools. Now (mostly) retired, his work background includes branch banking operations and project management across the UK, school business management (in both the maintained and the independent sectors), and facilities management consultancy. He is a local school Governor and a member of the Baldock Society.

Maureen Maddren moved to Baldock in 1971. Her three children went to school in Baldock and for many years she was on the committee of St Mary's Parent/Teacher Association. She was a freelance publishers' editor and edited two oral history books on Baldock: Baldock Voices and Baldock Scrapbook. She is a former committee member of both Baldock's Road Safety Group and Baldock Local History Society. She has been editor of the Community Newspaper 'The Baldock Mail' since its first edition in December 1977 and has also been a committee member of Baldock Festival since its formation in the early 1980s.'

Lyn Mason came to work in Stevenage for Astrium Ltd (previously Matra Marconi Space / BAE systems) in 1999 choosing to live in Baldock after scouring the locality. Lyn's career spans 36 years from running her own light manufacturing business employing 15 people through to her current role as a Prince2 qualified Project Manager in the business of building Satellites. This span of diverse enterprises allows her to bring to the team the discipline of a larger organization with the understanding of the need for flexibility in implementation. Her interest in the Arts comes from her aspirations towards writing and she has won a number of competitions.

Rebecca Sunderland moved to Hertfordshire in 1993 to work in commercial purchasing following a degree in Business Studies (with a professional qualification from the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply). She has lived in Baldock since 2006. Rebecca is currently a full time mother of three children who attend local schools.

John White is a semi-retired consultant and entrepreneur with an accountancy qualification. He came to live in Weston in 1974 having previously worked abroad for a number of years. He moved to Baldock in 1980 and his children all went to local schools. He is a Committee member of the Baldock Society.



Baldock Town
Hall Group

Issue 1.1
29th February 2012
Page 38 of 40

APPENDIX I RESULTS OF 2005 PUBLIC SURVEY

See separate document



Baldock Town
Hall Group

Issue 1.1
29th February 2012
Page 39 of 40

APPENDIX J VERSION CONTROL

Each released version of this document is identified by a number in front of a decimal point followed by a number following the decimal point. The first number indicates a major version, produced for a specific purpose. The second denotes a revision of that version. Thus for example Version 1.0 is the first release of Version 1, supplied to NHDC in January 2012.

Date	Version		Details
22 Jan 12	1.0		First draft delivery to NHDC
02 Mar 12	1.1		Second draft delivery to NHDC

