

TITLE OF REPORT: CHAMPION NEWS & 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 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 & District Partnership

The only events held by the Baldock Town & District Partnership (BTADP) since the September Area Committee were the September Car Boot Sale on Sunday 30th September and the French Market on Friday 5th and 6th October. An update on the September Car Boot is detailed below.

Car Boot Sales

Members will recall that the Car Boot Sale was a new initiative set up by the BTADP as an income generator back in April 2012. This event would be held on the last Sunday of each month, between 9am and 12noon at a cost of £6 per car for traders.

This initiative has struggled in its first year due to poor weather and lack of interest from both traders and the general public.

The event was cancelled in April, June and August and was poorly supported in May, July and September with only 5,7 and 3 traders respectively.

Due to lack of support for the Car Boot Sales, the BTADP have decided not to hold any more until 2013.

French Market

The French Market came to Baldock High Street on Friday 5th October and traded for 2 days. This event proved a good income generator for the BTADP with the market paying £500 to attend. Unfortunately footfall was poor for the market and it is unclear if the French Market will return in future years.

Markets

As reported in the September Report, both the weekly and monthly farmers markets have been struggling throughout 2012 due to a combination of poor weather and lack of footfall which is driving traders away. The financial impact of this has seen the BTADP lose £3,000 in the first half of the year.

When the BTADP took over the market site for the Wednesday market from Wendy Faires back in 2010, there were only 4 regular traders. During 2011, this figure rose to 10 but in 2012 the number of regular traders has dropped to 6.

Since the September report, the Baldock Town Centre Manager (TCM) has brought in a new meat trader, a new bag stall and a cheese and chocolate stall. However, at the time of writing this report, of the 3 new stalls, it is only the cheese and chocolate stall that is still running, with the other 2 moving on to other markets citing poor footfall as their reason for leaving.

The BTADP is considering moving the Wednesday market back up the High Street to its old position in the New Year to see if this helps with footfall and also attracting new traders.

The monthly Farmers Markets have also been struggling in 2012. During 2011, the Farmers Market peaked at around 20 stalls, whilst in 2012 the maximum number of stalls has been 14. The October Farmers Market was the poorest of the year with only 8 stalls in attendance.

As with the weekly market, poor footfall is the major factor for traders not supporting the Baldock Farmers Market. The performance of future Farmers Markets in Baldock is also hampered by the news that the Stevenage Old Town Farmers Market is now also being held on the 2nd Saturday of each month. The Baldock Farmers Market has already lost its fruit and veg trader to Stevenage and the BTADP is concerned that more may follow.

Membership Scheme & BNG

As reported in the September Report, there had been a dip in businesses signed up to the Membership Scheme. Income generated from the Membership scheme had dropped from £1,000 to £750.

Since the September Report, the Baldock TCM has been pursuing new businesses and now the monthly income from the Membership Scheme is up to £1,200.

The Baldock Network Group (BNG) continues to meet on alternate Tuesday mornings at Zeus Hotel and continues to thrive. The group still has 26 members which will generate approximately £4,000 income for the BTADP each year.

Events

Future events planned by the BTADP include:

- Clothall Common Community Action Morning Leaf Clearance (Saturday 10th November)
- BTADP Christmas Dinner (Friday 30th November)
- Baldock Christmas Weekend (Saturday 1st & Sunday 2nd December)
- Baldock Businesses 7-a-side football tournament (tbc)

3.2 Baldock Chartered Fair 2012

The Baldock Fair returned to Baldock again in October. The fair pulled onto Baldock at midnight on Monday 1st October. Both the Baldock Community Development Officer (CDO) and the Community Development Manager were in attendance to oversee the safe arrival of the fair.

Following a safety walk round with the Police and the Fire Service, the Fair opened to the public on Tuesday 2nd October and operated from 3pm to 10.30pm on the Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

The Fair closed at 10.30pm on Thursday and was away from Baldock by 3am on Friday

Unlike previous years there were no issues with the Fair in 2012. Despite the rain, the grass was undamaged and the car park area was left clear of any diesel spills. There were no complaints from residents, council services or Police during the Fair.

3.3 The Baldock Beast Big Brother Challenge

Since the September Report, there has been a lot of activity with regards to the planning of the newly named Ashwell Multi-terrain Half Marathon.

The event has been granted a Race Permit and race entry opened mid October. At the time of writing this report 50 people had entered the race. The closing date for postal entries is 5th November and 7th November for on-line entries. Whilst take up to the event has been slow, the race organisers are hopeful of having more than 200 entries for the event.

The Baldock CDO has submitted paperwork for the event, including a risk assessment and programme of events to the North Herts Safety Advisory Group and will ensure that any issues raised are addressed prior to the event.

During early November the Baldock CDO will distribute flyers to all households along the half marathon course advising them of the event. As well as asking for residents to cheer on the competitors, the flyer also asks for residents to avoid travelling along the course route and also to remove their vehicles from the road especially along Ashwell High Street.

As with the Baldock Beast, entry for the race will be £16 affiliated and £18 unaffiliated.

During the planning stages of the event, it was hoped to include a family fun run, but this option has now been removed due to organisational issues.

3.4 **Sale Drive**

The Baldock CDO is working closely with colleagues from Planning, Grounds Maintenance and Highways on a project to establish a footpath to the rear of Sale Drive.

A petition has been set up by residents of Clothall Common asking for improvements to the path area and also for some lighting to be installed to make the area safer..

This area is used extensively by residents of Clothall Common as a route to the town centre and train station.

The Baldock CDO is in discussions with Barratt Homes who own the land and will keep members informed with developments.

3.5 **Clothall Common Community Action Morning**

From a recent request from the Ward Member for Baldock East Cllr John Harris, the Baldock CDO has drawn plans together with the BDTP to hold a Community Action Morning on Clothall Common to try and address the large amount of leaves that fall on the open spaces of the estate at this time every year.

It is hoped that some support and volunteers will come forward to take part in the Action Morning and help move any collected leaves down to the allotment site opposite Tapps Garden Centre, with the view of plot holders using it for horticultural purposes such as leaf mould.

4. **FUNDING DECISIONS TO BE MADE / CONSIDERED**

4.1 The Committee is asked to note the budgetary expenditure, balances and carry forwards from the Development Budgets and the Visioning Budgets.

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

4.3 **Nightingale Residents Association**

A Fast Track Grant of £50 was awarded to the Nightingale Residents Association to cover the cost of St John Ambulance attending the Nightingale Park Fun Day. This funding came from the Baldock Town Members preallocated Town Projects pot.

4.4 **Ashwell United Reform Church**

A Fast Track Grant of £500 was awarded to Ashwell United Reform Church to help with the purchase of equipment including tables and chairs for the Church Hall. This funding came from the Arbury Ward Members 2012/13 Base Budget.

4.5 **Baldock Town Partnership**

A Fast Track Grant of £250 was awarded to the Baldock Town Partnership to cover the cost of St John Ambulance attending the upcoming Ashwell Multi-terrain Half Marathon on Sunday 18th November 2012.

4.6 **Friends of Baldock Green Spaces**

Members are asked to consider a Fast Track grant of £500 to the Friends of Baldock Green Spaces to help with the purchase of specialist tools to help with the maintenance of habitats at Ivel Springs and Weston Woods.

4.8 **Current Funding Applications**

The Baldock CDO is awaiting the completed funding application paperwork for the following projects. These were not received in time for this report but will be processed once the appropriate paperwork is received.. The projects are detailed in the table below.

Ward	Project
Baldock Town	Funding support for North Herts Crusaders to assist with the purchase of equipment for this newly formed Rugby League Team.
Baldock Town	Funding support for Baldock Cricket Club to assist with the purchase of equipment for the club.

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 2012/13.
- 6.2 The spreadsheet also details the pre-allocations carried forward from the previous financial year 2011/12 to the current financial year 2012/13.

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 £50 to Nightingale Residents Association to cover the cost of St John Ambulance attending the Nightingale Park Fun Day.
- 9.3 The Committee is asked to acknowledge the recent Fast Track Grant Award of £500 to Ashwell United Reform Church to assist with the purchase of equipment including tables and chairs.
- 9.4 The Committee is asked to acknowledge the recent Fast Track Grant Award of £250 to Baldock Town & District Partnership to cover the cost of St John Ambulance attending the upcoming Ashwell Multi-terrain Half Marathon.

- 9.5 The Committee considers making a Fast Track Grant Award of £500 to the Friends of Baldock Green Spaces to help with the purchase of specialist tools to help with the maintenance of habitats at Ivel Springs and Weston Woods.

10. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 10.1 To ensure that the Committee are kept informed of the work of the Community Development Officer.
- 10.2 This report is intended simply to inform Members of the financial resources available to the Committee. It draws attention to the current budgetary situation, assists in the effective financial management of the Area Committee's budget and ensures actions are performed within the Authority's Financial Regulations and the guidance in the Grants procedure.
- 10.3 The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims and Strategic Priorities of the Council.
- 10.4 The allocation of funds will improve the services provided by local organisations and groups that are available and accessed by members of the community.

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Appendix 1 - Area Committee Development Budget Spreadsheet.
- 11.2 Appendix 2 – Area Committee Work Programme 2012/13
- 11.3 Appendix 3 – Grant Report for Friends of Baldock Green Spaces.

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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