

TITLE OF REPORT: GRANT APPLICATIONS AND COMMUNITY UPDATE

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY & COMMUNITY SERVICES

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of the activities and schemes with which the Community 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 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. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note the budgetary expenditure, balances and carry forwards within the Area Committee Development Budget spread sheet attached as Appendix 1.
- 2.2 The Committee considers a grant award of £400 to Ashwell Music Festival Committee towards printing and marketing costs for the 2016 Ashwell Music Festival outlined in 8.2.1 Appendix 3.
- 2.3 The Committee considers a grant award of £184 to the Baldock Arts and Heritage Group towards an IT projector for use at events outlined in 8.2.2 Appendix 4
- 2.4 The Committee considers a grant award of £500 to the Sandon Strollers Cricket Club towards the replacement of the cricket net surface and run up outlined in 8.2.3 Appendix 5
- 2.5 The Committee considers a grant award of £500 to Weston Parish Council towards a projection facility for everyone to use at the village hall outlined in 8.2.4 Appendix 6
- 2.6 That the Committee endorses the actions taken by the Community Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being for the Baldock & District Area.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To ensure the Committee is kept informed of the work of the Community Officer.
- 3.2 This report is intended 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 of the Grants policy.
- 3.3 The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims and Priorities of the Council.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 There are no alternative options being proposed other than those detailed within the text of this report. However in the course of debate at committee, Members may wish to comment and offer additional views on any of the items raised within this report.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- 5.1 Consultation with Members has occurred in connection with the allocation of funds for Community Projects
- 5.2 Consultation with the respective officers and external agencies/groups has taken place with regard to funding proposals for Area Committee Funds.

6. FORWARD PLAN

- 6.1 This Report does not contain a recommendation on a key decision and has not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1 Members are asked to note the information detailed in Appendix 1 Area Committee Budget Spreadsheet, which relates to the Area Committee budget balances for the 2015/16 financial year.
- 7.2 The spreadsheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial year 2014/15 including balances and past expenditure relating to the allocated and un-allocated budgets available to the Committee.

The current level of unallocated funds within the Area Committees 2015/16 Area Grant Budget is £18,600; and for 2014/15 £8,249 a full area breakdown is given on the budget spreadsheet Appendix 1.

Members may wish to note that some funds are allocated to projects for both financial years but as yet the money has not been spent.

8. ISSUES

8.1 **This report has been produced to keep Members informed of the work of the Community Officer for Baldock & District.**

8.2 Grant funding

8.2.1 Ashwell Music Festival

The Committee is asked to consider a £400 grant award from the Budget allocated for projects and initiatives deriving from the Arbury Ward. The Ashwell Music Festival Committee is seeking support funding to assist with the printing/marketing costs relating to the 2016 Ashwell Music Festival. Such funding will go towards the brochure design, printing costs of programmes, leaflets and posters.

Last year, the total cost for promoting the festival was £1087.60, however the committee do not expect that a grant would cover all these costs, although any assistance towards this expense would be very gratefully received.

As in previous years the committee intends to undertake an extensive fundraising programme, obtaining donations and sponsorship to cover the costs of the concert and shortfall in marketing funding.

Those benefiting from the concert include Ashwell village residents and concert goers from surrounding locality and further afield. Knights Templar School, Ashwell School, St Mary's Junior Choir are all given a platform to perform at the Young Musicians Concert Church, which is free of entrance fees. Ticket prices vary and range from £12 for adults and from £8 for under 16's. Some of the profits made for the same event in 2014 will be used to fund this year's event.

Approximately 950 concert goers (based on 2015) will benefit from this concert.

See Appendix 3 - Ashwell Music Festival Grant Report

8.2.2 Baldock Arts and Heritage Group

The Committee is asked to consider a £184 grant award to the Baldock Arts and Heritage Group, to assist in the purchasing of an IT projector for use at events.

When not in use the equipment will be kept in a secure location within the Arts and Heritage Centre. Other valuable equipment is stored there and access is controlled via a combination lock.

They are not intending to use the projector for anything other than supervised Arts and Heritage events within the Centre, so it will be safeguarded at all times.

See Appendix 4 – Baldock Arts and Heritage Group Grant Report.

8.2.3 Sandon Strollers Cricket Club

The Committee is asked to consider a grant of £500 to the Sandon Strollers Cricket Club for replacement of the cricket net surface and run up. This will replace the existing facility that is not fit for purpose. The facility provides cricket and cricket coaching/practice for the youth and residents of Sandon, Wallington and Rushden, serving over 30 people. See Appendix 5 – Sandon Strollers Grant Report.

8.2.4 Projection Equipment for the Weston Parish Reading Rooms

The Committee is asked to consider a grant of £500 to Weston Parish Council to provide a projection facility for everyone to use at the village hall. The Parish Council and Flower and Veg Society will provide matched funding for the equipment. There is sufficient grant available from the Weston and Sandon ward budget.

8.3 Members are asked to note the potential funding applications currently being considered as outlined below.

St Mary's Church

Funding support for St Mary's Church to assist with new publicity materials promoting the church. These materials include a new illustrated Church History booklet and a Discovery Trail for school children.

Ashwell Parish Room

Funding avenues within the Authority are being considered re support in covering the costs of replacing the old damaged windows.

Letchworth and Baldock RFC

Following a presentation from the group to the CO manager it is likely that they will be seeking funding from the Letchworth and Baldock area committees. Funding will be to cover the costs of a storage facility, hard standing and fencing.

8.4 Community update

8.4.1 Baldock Town Partnership

At the request of the Chair of the Committee, representatives from the Baldock Town Partnership will now provide a verbal update at every Area Committee meeting. As a result such detail will no longer be covered within the Community Update report.

8.4.2 Balstock Community Event

The Balstock Community event took place on the 12th and 13th September. The Communities Team assisted with the planning and paperwork for this event.

The event organiser reported that the weekend's activities were a huge success bringing hundreds of people into the Town over the 3 days, benefitting local businesses and bringing the community together.

The event had an impressive 235 bands and acts spread over 14 venues and 2 stages. The event attracted many positive comments and only 2 minor complaints re anti social behaviour and noise on the Saturday evening. The event raised £5.5k for the St Thomas Lupus Trust. Local pubs and other businesses reported a huge increase in footfall and profits.

8.4.3 Friends of Hartfield School Firework Event

The 3rd annual Baldock Fireworks event planning, organisation and paperwork was supported by the CO, and took place on the 24th October.

All fireworks were donated and launched by Tapps garden centre. The event raised in excess of £350 and despite the poor weather was attended by 1,200 people; all profits were donated to the Baldock Rotary Club to be distributed to local charities.

8.4.4 **Baldock Fair**

The Baldock Fair took place on the 2nd – 4th October As in previous years Officers from the Communities Team liaised with all the responsible authorities to ensure that this year's fair ran as smoothly as possible with minimal disruption to the Town.

Advanced warnings were posted throughout the town with explanatory letters delivered to local residents and businesses. CO's were on site to oversee the fair arrival and departure safely. The weather was good over the whole period and the fair was well attended, with very few complaints received.

8.4.5 **Baldock Festival meeting**

The CO attended the AGM and supplied them with street names and numbers to assist with their planned mail out.

8.4.6 **Update on previous grants awarded**

Furniture Link

Feedback on previous grant awards from all the Area Committees re put replacing the delivery / collections van

The new Furniture Link van was put into service at the beginning of December. They have reported that it has been lovely to have a reliable vehicle to use especially during the winter months and it has made planning collections and donations easier for both customers and Furniture Link staff.

The new logo and clearer contact details mean that they have a regular presence on the roads in North Herts as they deliver and collect. The first six month of the year has been profitable with their weekly sales target of £1000 being met. They have saved approximately 20 tonnes from landfill from January to July 2015. The van has been used to deliver almost all of the 816 items sold during the period as well as collect the 1146 donated during the same time period. They could not have reliably and regularly done this without a new van.

£363 was provided by the Baldock area committee.

Baldock Community Association plans for old youth wing

The Community Association have now formally instructed their chosen contractors to prepare the plans, they have surveyed the old Youth Wing and are now in the preparing the drawings.

The building project is scheduled for the Easter break and is likely to have a shortfall in funding in excess of £2,000 which will come from the centre's own funds.

Home Start North Herts

Home-Start has now matched four families in Letchworth (one has been funded via Hertfordshire County Cllr Lorna Kercher's County Locality Budget. Postcodes are all SG6:

They still have funds remaining from North Hertfordshire District Council's Letchworth and Baldock Committees to match two more families in Letchworth and one in Baldock.

The Communities Officer recently attended the Home-Start North Herts Annual General Meeting, where it was reported that; in order to save more money Home-Start will be leaving their offices in Letchworth hopefully by the end of November.

Their administrator will work out of the Home-Start office in Stevenage (as they have their offices rent free). The Scheme Manager and assistant will continue to work locally homeworking and arranging access to a hot desk in Letchworth.

There will be no change in the service provision to their families and volunteers. They will still continue to be Home-Start North Herts but office space will be shared with Stevenage Home-Start as it is more cost effective. They will continue to access free room hire to hold support and supervision with their volunteers locally. Although this will be a different way of working Home-Start North Herts are confident that this move will allow them to continue to focus on supporting more families in North Herts.

With the move and focus on obtaining funding, the family fun days that they had hoped to hold in Letchworth and Baldock before Christmas may be postponed until spring 2016.

Home-Start have also been successful with the transitional funding from Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) which will be used for making the necessary changes for all 9 schemes in Hertfordshire, and changing the structure of how they work moving forward. They have also been allocated funding from HCC for North Herts to cover the cost of service provision for the existing families they have been working with under the HCC funding. This also now puts Home-Start North Herts in a much stronger financial position.

Baldock Arts and Heritage Group

The grant for lighting was very much appreciated; the group managed to purchase the first set of lights for use at Balstock on the 11/12/13 September.

They used the full set of lights for the Baldock Drama Group's production of "Postcards from Baldock-on-Sea" on the 25/26 September. They will use the lights again for the Charity Music Gala Day on the 14th November. The group reported that the lights are a really good asset for the Baldock Arts and Heritage Centre

Baldock Pavilion

The CO Manager has been in discussion with Gary Blyth and the group regarding the development of the pavilion, and they will shortly be submitting a business plan to Andy Cavanagh Head of Finance, Performance & Asset Management.

8.4.7 Other Baldock initiatives the CO has been involved with:

The CO has investigated and provided a summary of the questions and responses from the Town Talk held at the last Committee meeting

The CO has attended meetings and made contact with various groups and individuals in connection with Baldock initiatives including:-

- Tesco Community Champion;
- Baldock Fair officials;
- Friends of Hartfield School fireworks event organisers;
- Youth Connections;
- Baldock Festival Committee;
- The Community centre;
- Nightingale Community group;
- Ashwell Parish and funding for windows;
- The Baldock Town Partnership;
- Attended Weston Parish Council meeting;
- 30th November planned attending Baldock Arts group management meeting;

- 1st December planned attending the Baldock Panel Meeting

8.5 Highways Matters

This section is included within the community update report for each committee cycle to facilitate debate and enable appropriate feedback on any of the proposed or listed Highways related schemes.

Any new proposals or revised schemes will be forwarded to the respective Herts County Councillor for consideration who will in turn report back and advise the Committee accordingly.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Terms of Reference in relation to Area Committees confirm that they may establish and maintain relationships with outside bodies/voluntary organisations which include discretionary grant aid/financial support. The Committee has delegated powers, as a body, to administer funds from the budgets described. However, this does not include grants for district wide activities
- 9.2 In addition whilst individual Ward Members may comment on and support (or not) any grant application put before the Committee, the decision to award is afforded only to the Baldock and District Area Committee itself under the Council's Constitution and provided such committee is quorate at the time of such decision.
- 9.3 Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides a General Power of Competence which gives local authorities the power to do anything that individuals generally may do for the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident in its area.
- 9.4 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.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 In the past few years there has been no inflationary allowance to the main Area Committee Budget and the 2015/16 baseline budget has stayed the same as the previous year.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no relevant risk entries that have been recorded on Covalent, the Council's Performance & Risk system. Individual events should have their own risk assessments in place to mitigate any health and safety issues. There are no pertinent risk implications for the Authority associated with any items within this report.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 The Equality Act 2010 came into force on the 1st October 2010, a major piece of legislation. The Act also created a new Public Sector Equality Duty, which came into force on the 5th April 2011. There is a General duty, described in 12.2, that public bodies must meet, underpinned by more specific duties which are designed to help meet them.
- 12.2 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of its functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment,

victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

- 12.3 The projects which comprise the Community Officers' workload, and area committee funding assigned to community projects are assessed to ensure that they are as inclusive as possible to members of the local community. The only deviation to this is where a minority group may specifically receive funding or allocation of resources to address a particular area of need or 'gap' in provision.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 As the recommendations made in this report do not constitute a public service contract, the measurement of 'social value' as required by the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 need not be applied, although equalities implications and opportunities are identified in the relevant section at paragraphs 12

14. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 There are no pertinent Human Resource implications associated with any items within this report.

15. APPENDICES

- 15.1 Appendix 1 – Area Committee Development Budget Spread sheet.
- 15.2 Appendix 2 – Area Committee Work Update 2015/16.
- 15.3 Appendix 3 – Ashwell Music Festival – Grant Form
- 15.4 Appendix 4 – Baldock Arts and Heritage Group – Grant Form
- 15.5 Appendix 5 - Sandon Strollers Cricket Club – Grant Form
- 15.2 Appendix 6 - Weston Parish Council – Grant form

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17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 17.1 Review of Policies and Procedures for Financial Assistance to Voluntary and Community Organisations, November 2002.

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