

BALDOCK & DISTRICT COMMITTEE
5th December 2016

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

TITLE OF REPORT: GRANTS, AND COMMUNITY UPDATE

REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF FINANCE, POLICY & GOVERNANCE

EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND RURAL AFFAIRS:
COUNCILLOR TONY HUNTER

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 to Small Acts of Kindness to assist with the sourcing and distribution of 150 Warm in Winter Gift Bags to elderly residents of North Herts as outlined in 8.2.1 and appendix 2 of this report.
- 2.3 The Committee considers a grant award from the Arbury Ward Budget to the Ashwell Music Festival to assist with publicity costs for putting on the 2017 festival, as outlined in 8.2.2 and appendix 3 of this report.

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, budget strategy 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 expressed in the Corporate Plan.

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 the funding proposals for Area Committee Discretionary Development 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's budget for the 2016/17 financial year.
- 7.2 The spreadsheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial year 2015/16 including balances and past expenditure relating to the allocated and un-allocated budgets available to the Committee.
- 7.3 The current level of funding available within the Area Committee's 2016/17 Area Grant Budget is:-

Baldock Town £4,200

Baldock East £1,600

Arbury £942

Weston & Sandon £1,200

- 7.4 The current level of funding available within the Area Committee's 2015/16 Area Grant Budget is:-

Baldock Town £458

Baldock East £516

Arbury £0

Weston & Sandon £1,211

A full area breakdown is given within the Area Committee's Budget Spreadsheet Appendix 1.

8. ISSUES

8.1 This report has been produced to keep Members informed of the work of the Community Officers covering for Baldock & District area.

8.2 Grant funding

8.2.1 Small Acts of Kindness

Small Acts of Kindness was set up in 2014. It is a Community Interest Company and is made up of 5 Committee Members and 50 Volunteers.

Since 2014, the group have been sourcing and distributing Warm in Winter Gift Bags to elderly people. The bags contain a large fleecy blanket, thermal socks, hat and gloves and a mug together with a selection of hot drinks and soup.

Demand for this service has increased annually from 60 in 2014 to 800 in 2015. So far this winter (2016/17) the group has had requests for over 1,400 bags and this figure is likely to rise to 2,000 by Spring 2017.

The group is seeking £2,100 from North Herts to assist with the sourcing and distribution of 150 Warm In Winter Gift Bags. Bags would be distributed to elderly residents living in Baldock, Royston, Hitchin, Letchworth, Whitwell, Ashwell and Knebworth.

Requests for bags have come from North Herts CVS, North Herts Community Transport and Hertfordshire Independent Living Services.

The £2,100, if approved will be split as follows:

£300 requested from Baldock, Royston and Southern Rural Area Committees and £600 each from the Hitchin & Letchworth Area Committees.

8.2.2 Ashwell Music Festival

The Ashwell Music Festival was set up in 1953. It is made up of 8 Committee members and 50 volunteers.

The festival which is held over a fortnight in May showcases local musical talent. As well as showcasing local musicians, the festival also acts as a fundraiser for the music department of Knights Templar School, Ashwell Junior School, St Marys Junior Choir and Ashwell United Reform Church.

The group is seeking £900 to assist with publicity costs for putting on the 2017 festival. This will include funding towards the brochure design, artwork and printing costs of programmes, leaflets, tickets and posters.

8.3 Community update

8.3.1 Balstock

The 5th Balstock Community Music Festival was held on Saturday 10th and Sunday 11th September. As with previous years the event was extremely well supported and passed without incident.

The CO was in attendance for the set up and take down of the event and also provided marshal support during the day. In previous years, complaints had been received from residents of De Clare Mews with regards to anti-social behaviour taking place in the alley way / access to their properties. To combat this, the CO arranged for portable toilets to be available at the event and also liaised with the event organisers to ensure that extra security was in place to avoid a repeat of the anti-social behaviour experienced at the 2016 event.

These measures were effective and no complaints were received from residents of De Clare Mews during the 2017 event.

8.3.2 **Baldock Fair**

The Baldock Fair returned to Baldock in October, trading on the 2nd, 3rd and 4th October.

The CO and CM were in attendance to supervise the pull on of the fair and also to assist with traffic management arrangements. The fair passed without incident and was as always enjoyed by the families of Baldock.

Following the departure of the fair some spillages were noticed in White Horse Street and in the High Street car park area next to the war memorial. This matter was reported back to the Fair organisers who then came back and made good the areas in question.

8.3.3 **Baldock Weight Watchers Charity Walk**

The first ever Baldock Weight Watchers Charity Walk was held on Saturday 8th October. The event was supported by 30 walkers and helped raise £1,000 for the nominated charity, Headway. The CO assisted the group with the event paperwork as required by the North Herts Safety Advisory Group and also assisted with the route.

8.3.4 **Baldock Community Fireworks**

The fourth Baldock Community Fireworks was held at Hartsfield School on Saturday 22nd October and was enjoyed by around 1500 spectators. The CO was in attendance on the night and assisted with the traffic management and the event co-ordination.

As well as the fantastic fireworks, the event proved to be a successful fundraiser for both Hartsfield PTA, Baldock Brownies and Baldock Scouts who raised £800, £180 and £100 respectively through the sale of glow sticks, cakes and hot drinks.

At the time of writing the report, it is not yet known how much profit from the ticket sales was made overall, as some bills were still outstanding. All profit from the ticket sales will be passed to the Baldock 41 Club for distributing to good causes in Baldock.

8.3.5 **Ashwell Fun Run**

The Baldock CO assisted the Ashwell PTA with their first ever Ashwell Fun Run which was held on Sunday 18th September. The Baldock CO assisted the group with the route and also the race signage and advised on marshal allocation etc. The Baldock CO also assisted with the event paperwork as required by the North Herts Safety Advisory Group.

The event was supported by 100 runners of all ages from Ashwell and the surrounding area and helped raise £1000 for the school. As well as assisting with the organising of the event the Baldock CO also competed in the event, winning the adult 6.5km race,

8.3.2 Other Baldock initiatives the CO & CM have been involved with:

- Funding advice & support re enhancements at Weston Village Hall
- Release of Rural Capital Funding Grant to Wallington Village Hall
- s106 / Planning Contributions advice to Ashwell Parish Council re enhancements to the existing Toilet blocks serving the Recreation Ground. Plus additional advice / support re possible future improvements to the pavilion. Guidance re Baldock & Bygrave Neighbourhood Plan
- Release of s106 / UU planning contributions of just under £6.5k to Ashwell Parish Council re enhancements to the grassed car parking area adjacent to the allotments & the Academicals football pitches.
- Sale Drive re liaising on proposed works with Highways and Ringwood.

8.4 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 but excluding grants for district-wide activities. The Committee has delegated powers, as a body, to allocate discretionary budgets and devolved budgets within the terms determined by the Council and outlined in the current Grant Policy agreed by Cabinet in June 2016.
- 9.2 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. This may be for, or otherwise than for the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident in its area.
- 9.3 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.
- 9.4 The Committee **as a body** has delegated powers to administer funds from the budgets described. 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 & District Area Committee itself under the Council's Constitution and provided such committee is quorate at the time of such decision.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 In the past few years there has been no inflationary allowance to the main Area Committee Budget. From the 2016/17 financial year, a proposal was made through the council's corporate business planning process to reduce the overall amount the council awards by way of grants, both area committee and district wide, by a suggested 20%. Following member workshops, there was a request that whilst the principle of saving approximately £86k of revenue was supported, the current level of district MoUs should be retained, thus the area committee element was reduced by a greater amount.

10.2 Appendix 1 provides details of the 2016/17 budget position for the Area Committee.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no relevant risk entries that have been recorded on Covalent, the Council's performance and risk system. Individual events should have their own risk assessments in place to mitigate any health and safety issues. Whenever a request for grant funding for equipment is received, the recipient of the funding will be advised to obtain insurance for the item to avoid a repeat request for funding in the event of the equipment being stolen or damaged. 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 Spreadsheet 2016/17.

15.2 Appendix 2 – Grant Form – Small Acts of Kindness

15.3 Appendix 3 – Grant Form – Ashwell Music Festival

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17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

17.2 Grants Review June 2016 – Cabinet Papers 14th June 2016.