

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

BALDOCK AND DISTRICT COMMITTEE

**MEETING HELD IN THE GREYSLATES COURT, WESTON WAY, BALDOCK
ON MONDAY, 14TH MARCH, 2022 AT 7.30 PM**

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors: Councillor Jim McNally (Chair), Councillor Michael Muir (Vice-Chair), Juan Cowell, Steve Jarvis, Tom Tyson and Michael Weeks*

In Attendance: *Ashley Hawkins (Community Engagement Officer) and James Lovegrove (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer)*

Also Present: *At the commencement of the meeting approximately 16 members of the public, including registered speakers.*

33 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio recording – 57 seconds

There were no apologies from Members received for this meeting.

34 MINUTES - 6 DECEMBER 2021

Audio Recording – 1 minute 04 seconds

Councillor Jim McNally, as Chair, proposed and Councillor Michael Muir seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 6 December 2021 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

35 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio recording – 1 minute 39 seconds

There was no other business notified.

36 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio recording – 1 minute 47 seconds

- (1) The Chair reminded Members to make Declarations of Interest before an item, the full reminder about this was set out under Chair's Announcements on the agenda.
- (2) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, that this meeting would be audio recorded and available to listen to on Mod.Gov.
- (3) The Chair gave advice to public participants regarding the meeting procedure and giving presentations.

37 HERTFORDSHIRE CONSTABULARY

Audio recording – 2 minutes 33 seconds

Sergeant Lisa Perks, from Herts Police Safer Neighbourhood Team, gave a verbal update to Members on the work being done in the Baldock and district area, including:

- Overall crime had reduced from 487 reported crimes last year to 467 this year.
- Reports of both residential and business burglary were down this year from last year, from 9 to 5 and 15 to 10 respectively. This is attributed to an increase in patrols in the area to make the area more hostile for criminals and crime.
- Theft from a motor vehicle had reduced from 30 to 16 and ongoing operations were in place to educate people around the importance of locking their vehicle.
- Violence against the person reports had reduced from 237 last year to 217 this year, shop lifting was down from 25 to 10 and personal robberies had remain static at 1 report.
- Due to the increase reports of graffiti in the town, the number of reports of criminal damage had risen from 38 last year to 90 this year.
- The three priorities identified for the Baldock and Letchworth areas were vehicle crime, anti-social behaviour and speeding. These were reviewed every 6 months.
- The Team were aware of an increase in reports of graffiti affecting Baldock and the local officer in Baldock, Jane Keating, had been working on dealing with this.
- There had been communication with schools from the PCSOs to try and identify the 'tag' involved. It was reported that one local school had a tagging demonstration in class and this may have encouraged people to do it for real. The police would investigate and work with the school if this was the case.
- The British Transport Police have a database of tags, but the ones identified in Baldock were not on their records.
- There had been communications made on social media and via OWL to try and encourage anyone in the community with information to come forward.
- There would be an increase of patrols in affected areas and a patrol plan was in place for the next 6 weeks, but without knowing a specific time of day, it can be difficult to target effectively.
- At this stage, no request for CCTV has been made, as it was unknown the exact time that the offence happened and it was not possible to go through all footage.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Jim McNally
- Councillor Michael Weeks
- Councillor Michael Muir

In response to questions Sgt Perks advised:

- It was important to remain realistic when it came to dealing with graffiti and vandalism. It would be the Safer Neighbourhood Team who deal with this, not the 999 response team, but it would be possible to make night patrols aware so they can keep an eye out in the town when passing through.
- If people see this happening, they should call 999 or 101 to ensure the police can respond. It is difficult to respond if the report comes through the next day or later and it is easier to deal with this at the time, than try to retrospectively.
- If people find evidence relating to vandalism, they should alert the police immediately via 101 and the police will make appropriate enquiries and act on information collected.
- It would be worthwhile asking local shopkeepers who sell aerosols if they can identify any possible individuals involved, but this may not prove fruitful as the aerosol sprays are widely available online too.
- If members of the public feel worried reporting to the police, they can call Crimestoppers anonymously but any information given would be treated the same as if reported through a call to 999/101.

- If Councillors were given information by the public, who may have identified individuals involved, they could pass this onto the police on behalf of the member of the public. The police would then look to investigate the circumstances before approaching the accused.
- If a 20MPH limit was introduced the Safer Neighbourhood Team would support and enforce this, as long as incidents were reported to the Team or if specific areas were identified, then officers can be put in relevant locations.
- Intelligence collected regarding drug dealing would be passed onto officers, who can add locations or vehicles related to this activity to be tracked. The public should call Crimestoppers or 101 with any information, or 999 if it is happening at that time.

38 AFFINITY WATER UPDATE

Audio recording – 28 minutes 10 seconds

Melissa Ahmet, Allesandro Marsili and Lina Nieto, from Affinity Water, gave a verbal update to Members, including:

- The water industry was an extremely complex system.
- Affinity Water are responsible for supply from Surrey through to North Herts and this area is expected to experience population growth which will further impact on water supplies.
- Chalk streams account for approximately 8-9% in this area.
- This area has the lowest annual rainfall compared to other parts of the UK, therefore droughts will happen and this will be increasingly unavoidable due to climate change. It is important to make the system as resilient to this as possible.
- No single action will solve the issues regarding water supply and combatting droughts and it will continue to be a problem as everyone requires water access.
- Affinity Water has worked in partnership with others to try and improve the supply, including consumer groups, river action groups and local organisations and will continue to develop these partnerships.
- Affinity Water was the first company in the UK to launch two consumer campaigns.
- The network is very complicated and the Affinity Water network is made up of 17 companies and the system was not fully connected, so these would need to be joined up through investment in the assets to assist with moving water around the system from wetter to drier locations.
- Water Resources Management Plans were detailed plans to demonstrate how supply and demand would be managed in the years to come. These demonstrates the issues and explain the mitigatory factors and these are scrutinised.
- North Herts is an extremely dry part of the supply area, but Surrey has a lot of water. There needs to be a better way of moving water around the system to mitigate with the shortages experienced in some areas.
- While there has been an increased focus on limiting leakage of water from the system, this action alone will not be enough to prevent water shortages with the planned increases in population and therefore better ability to move water around the system would support the work being done regarding leakage.
- Large schemes of intervention to improve the system will require a lot of planning and will take time to develop, but this is being explored not to deal with the expected increases in population.
- In this area there will be a slight decrease in extraction from 2025 from 1477 to 1407 megalitres per day. This will not improve the issues, but will help to prevent the situation getting worse.
- The Environment Agency has a system to flag where an area is at risk and this was flagged for Ivel Springs in 2015 and an investigation was begun by Affinity Water. This found that the extraction in Baldock had an impact on the spring.
- The proposed augmentation scheme would help mitigate against the depletion of water at Ivel Springs.

Monday, 14th March, 2022

- The 90% over-extraction rate previously quoted was a very simple measurements and was very inaccurate as it did not take into account the full picture of the site. The Affinity Water rate estimated this to be 30-45%, which was still a problem and was roughly 10% higher than target.
- Water extraction is to feed consumers, if there was less consumption by customers then Affinity Water would extract less water. In comparison to other parts of the UK, this area is around 10-15 litres per person per day higher than the national average.

Councillor Jim McNally noted that it is not being refuted that that more water is being extracted that recommended from Ivel Springs. Ivel Springs has never been dry in winter, as experienced now, and the situation will be worse in the summer and this will eventually lead to an ecological disaster. He understood the dilemma faced by water companies who had a statutory obligation to provide water for users.

In response, Lina Nieto advised:

- The water companies take the issue very seriously and the regulators ensure this area is heavily monitored.
- The Water Resources South East consultation had just closed and this will look at regional planning between water companies, as it has become obvious companies cannot deal with these issues in isolation.
- Drafting plans to deal with these issues, such as building reservoirs, but these will be long term projects and could take 15-20 years.
- In the short term the focus will be on reducing leakage from the system and reducing the consumption of water by consumers.
- It was important for local people to engage with the consultations taking place, as they can offer local insight and knowledge which otherwise water companies would not necessarily have access to.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Jim McNally
- Councillor Steve Jarvis
- Councillor Tom Tyson
- Councillor Michael Muir
- Councillor Michael Weeks

In response to questions Lina Nieto and Allesandro Marsili advised:

- Leakage is calculated over a 3 year average, currently in year 2, and it was felt that by the end of year 3 the targets set by the regulator would be met.
- The water industry has committed to reducing leakage by 50% in the next few decades.
- The target is around 150megalitres per day across the entire Affinity Water area, but exact figures could be provided at a later stage if required.
- Extraction is based on demand and recharge is based on the weather. In some periods you will have fluctuation between extraction and recharge.
- Climate change can have an impact on the recharge and chalk aquifers have very low retention of water.
- There is no evidence that the extraction is affecting the situation long term – if there was no extraction the water would return to normal levels within a year.
- There was no data specific in this area, as there was no flow measure historically. There has been monitoring since 2015 and the data available does not show a decline, but this does not show long term decline and anecdotal local evidence suggests it may seem lower.

- The reservoir proposed at Abingdon was not wanted by local residents in the past, but this was now being explored again and it was hoped that the planning inspectorates would take a different view this time.
- From 2022 onwards more substantial schemes will be processed and affordability would be explored, but this will need to be funded and will have an impact of customers' bills.
- Affinity Water had decided that shareholders would get no dividends, so all money will be invested in improving the system, until 2025 and would be further reviewed at that point.
- Further, more accurate, figures on leakage can be provided and a meeting with the Head of Leakage set up to provide explanation, if required. It was expected that Affinity Water would hit their three year targets.
- Planning authorities can support Affinity Water and reduce consumption of water by design on developments. It has been suggested that it be designed to limit 110 megalitres per person per day, with other authorities going further.
- Affinity Water was only water based, so issues experienced with sewage in the area would be the responsibility of Anglian Water.
- Supply 2040 and Supply 2050 policies were aimed at focussing on longer term connectivity of pipes and the system.
- Over years public water companies have been brought and amalgamated into on larger company and there was a lot of focus on bringing together these previously separate networks, but this will take time and money.
- Ofwat will allocate funds and this has to be stuck to and any underspend has to be handed back to Ofwat and there is not an ability to make money.

The Chair thanked Alessandro, Lina and Melissa for their attendance and presentation. He noted that it was good to hear that leakage was important to the company now and requested that the Head of Leakage provide leakage rates for 2001, 2011 and 2021 for both this area and the national averages, and this would show trends over the 30 year period.

Melissa Ahmet noted that there was further information available which would be shared with the Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer for distribution.

39 ENVIRONMENT AGENCY UPDATE

Audio recording – 69 minutes 11 seconds

Rob Bakewell and Iain Page, from the Environment Agency, gave a verbal update to Members, including:

- The Environment Agency is the regulator for England, primarily dealing with floods, but also look at waterways, air quality and other areas.
- Concerns regarding population growth are not specific to North Herts and is replicated across the area covered in the East of England.
- A primary piece of work of the Environment Agency was the Water Frame Directives, which aimed to get water bodies to good ecological status. This does not mean a constant water flow, but must meet certain environmental targets, for example with flora and fauna.
- Anyone can be granted a licence to extract water and water companies have much larger licences. This was due to the distribution of licences prior to the existence of the Environment Agency where it was assumed people would always need water and large licences were handed out freely.
- Growth is having an impact on the environment and this means targets are not being met.
- River augmentation at Ivel Springs could provide a small amount of water when needed, but would not guarantee flow. It was important for local residents to get involved in consultations as this would help the Agency to understand when the augmentation was required. This would then be monitored to ensure it is working effectively.

Monday, 14th March, 2022

- A new Water Source Management Plan was due in 2024 and the consultation will be on this shortly, with responses vital to ensure appropriate action to deal with the demands. It was expected that this new Plan would have more of an emphasis on the environment.
- The augmentation scheme will not solve all the problems and the previously discussed long term fixes, such as water transfer and leakage reduction, would probably be required to see wider improvements.
- The Environment Agency cannot have a say on actions, but do have an input in decision making and so local feedback was useful to pass onto the water companies.
- There was an aim to reduce the licences in this area and, with support from the augmentation scheme, would help to meet the environmental targets set.
- The development of new reservoirs would be explored by the Regional Planning Groups.
- In the main chalk streams are included within the Water Framework Directive and this means that the Environment Agency is obliged to put forward schemes for the water companies that are affordable and Ofwat compliant.
- The main concern today is what can be done to deal with the issues between now and the big schemes coming online.
- East Anglia is water stressed and it would be required for planning authorities to build water reduction measures into developments to assist with mitigating the issues.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Steve Jarvis
- Councillor Michael Muir
- Councillor Tom Tyson

In response to questions Rob Bakewell and Iain Page advised:

- Regional, county and water boundaries do not match the situation of water on the ground, but when water management plans are put forward, suggestions will be made as an area and discussions will take place between organisations where the boundaries are crossed.
- The regional planning process will look at transfers within and between areas. There was possibility of moving water from other parts of the country but would need to look at which option has the least regrets.
- Regional plans should be multi-sector and working with other sectors, such as farming which has a high water usage, would help to improve the situation.
- When moving water from elsewhere it is a case of who gets the water first, as lots of other areas require water resources.
- It would probably not be possible to channel off flood water into a reservoir, as the quality of water would be low and the levels of sediment would be high causing damage to reservoirs. There was also an issue regarding reliability of flood waters and the industry would not be able to meet its required amount from this method.
- It would be possible to look at capturing water at high flow, before it becomes a flood, to feed into supplies and store in reservoirs.
- Many farmers now have winter storage reservoirs, where it is collected in winter and stored until used in summer.
- Where floods have recently happened in the north of England, the regional planning groups would be thinking about capturing water at high flow.
- Water is not required to be flowing during drought conditions, as these are seen as natural events, and the Environment Agency are not required to make rivers flow.
- Sewage spills are dealt with by Environment Officer colleagues and they were unsure of the details in the instances in Baldock. This would probably be part of an ongoing enforcement action so it would not be possible to comment.
- It was up to DEFRA comms team to decide when the information would become public, but could be via court action so that would then be public information. They would request that an update be provided for Members by colleagues.

The Chair thanked Iain and Rob for their presentation.

40 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio recording – 99 minutes 36 seconds

A verbal presentation was given by Merry Smith from Ashwell Playgroup regarding their grant application, including:

- The group was now branded as Ashwell Preschool.
- The group was performing better than this time last year, with 27 children from 25 families.
- They had decided to cut from 5 days to 4, but would open from 8am to 2.45pm, offering breakfast, lunch and an afternoon session.
- Income generation had been difficult, usually autumn term is slow, spring term tended to break even and then summer would bring some financial returns. This year they were still expecting a loss, but smaller than last year.
- Last year the group had much reduced attendance, but had to remain open.
- Most years the group would raise £4-5,000 from grants and a further £4-6,000 would be made through fundraising activities.
- It has been difficult to get people along to events and, while there have been some held, these have not been as well attended as previously or as required to make money.
- There were events planned for the upcoming summer months and it was hoped attendance at these would be better.
- They are looking to explore what further funds from central and local government may be available for a preschool, as the only funding received at the moment is for the children – nothing is received to support with the venue hire, staffing or equipment.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Michael Weeks
- Councillor Tom Tyson

In response to questions Merry Smith advised:

- The funding was really important for the group, especially with reduced fundraising, and would be required as soon as possible.
- There were some attendees from Baldock in the past and there was some advertising done in the town, but mostly they were from surrounding villages. The staff at the group were from Baldock.
- Things are feeling more positive this year and it was hoped more funds would be raised from events than last year.
- The playgroup was a really important stepping stone for those attending prior to starting school.

The Chair proposed that the remaining grant funds be merged for this meeting and would be redistributed, along usual pro rata, after allocation of tonight's grants. This was seconded by Councillor Tom Tyson and carried by a vote of Members.

Following this agreement, the Community Engagement Officer advised that the overall remaining amount was £7257.

41 GRANT APPLICATION - ASHWELL PLAYGROUP

The Community Engagement Officer advised that prior to the pandemic the group had only come to the Committee in 2011 and 2015 for purchasing equipment. This grant request was solely down to the financial impacts the group had suffered due to the pandemic.

Councillor Tom Tyson proposed and Councillor Steve Jarvis seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That grant funding of £850 be awarded to Ashwell Playgroup to assist with venue hire costs for 1 academic term. (Summer) as outlined in 8.1.1.

42 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio recording – 118 minutes 29 seconds

A verbal presentation was given by Annie Taplin-Paine from Nightingale Residents Association regarding their grant application, including:

- The Association was also known as the Nightingale Community Group and was started 7 years ago in an attempt to turn part of Nightingale Park into a community area.
- The group work with local primary care network to work with people who have been referred by doctors.
- The community garden area is quite large and is surrounded by around 200 properties.
- The group had formed to deal with anti-social behaviour and crime in the area and turn it into a useful space.
- The current increase in vandalism had seen one of the benches in the park destroyed and the funding request was to repair the bench.
- A quote for the work had been received and, while it cannot be easily replaced due to the depth into the concrete it has been set, it can be repaired using the broken parts.
- Part of the issue is that the park is in quite a dilapidated state and it was hoped that if the park was brought up to a better standard the anti-social behaviour and vandalism would not be as much of an issue.
- The basketball court on site was no longer a suitable size.
- There was a volunteer group who turned up weekly to work on the garden.
- It was hoped that tonight would be the start of a bigger project to develop the site by making necessary repairs and ensure the park was a nice and tidy space for community use.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Michael Muir
- Councillor Michael Weeks
- Councillor Juan Cowell
- Councillor Jim McNally

The Community Engagement Officer advised that this was the group's first application since 2013 and some funds had been found elsewhere to help with other repairs on site.

In response to questions Annie Taplin-Paine advised:

- The group had contacted Sport England for help with replacing the basketball court, but they confirmed they were currently not taking on new projects.
- There had been an application submitted for £20k from Aviva to conduct repairs to the entire site, but this was not successful as the funds were for new schemes rather than repairs.
- Further grant schemes were being explored.
- They were unsure how much it would cost to replace the bin which had been vandalised the night before.

43 GRANT APPLICATION - NIGHTINGALE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Councillor Michael Weeks proposed that the grant request be made up to £1000, to assist with repairing damage caused by vandalism last night and Councillor Michael Muir seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That grant funding of £1000 be awarded to Nightingale Residents Association to assist with costs for repair and maintenance works at Nightingale Park as outlined in 8.1.4.

44 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio recording – 134 minutes 40 seconds

A verbal presentation was given by Melinda Fleming from Ashwell Tennis & Sports Club regarding their grant application, including:

- This was a small village club, with two hard tennis courts built in 2011 and a small dedicated parking areas.
- The funding request was for a clubhouse, which would be fenced in to ensure security.
- There were around 300 members at the club and they try to keep membership fees as low as possible to ensure affordability.
- The club had shown its importance throughout the pandemic
- Membership generally came from Ashwell, Hinxworth or Bygrave, but there were several members from Baldock.
- Coaching was offered for both adults and children, and a summer camp is run throughout the summer holidays.
- Children are not required to be members to play on the courts.
- The clubhouse will make it a more attractive club and will encourage more members to join. It would provide shelter from the weather, changing facilities and storage for the club equipment.
- It was hoped that this could develop into a Community Hub which could be used socially by the entire community.
- By March 2022, £2500 had been raised for the project, but it has been difficult to fundraise in the two years since due to the pandemic. There had been a couple of small club tournaments held, but these did not raise huge amounts of money.
- There were fundraising evening planned as we start to emerge from the pandemic restrictions.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Michael Weeks

In response to questions, Melinda Fleming advised that planning permission had been submitted and the outcome was expected very soon. There had been no objections to the application and the Parish Council recommended the plans.

45 GRANT APPLICATION - ASHWELL TENNIS & SPORTS CLUB

Councillor Michael Weeks proposed and Councillor Tom Tyson seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That grant funding of £980 be awarded to Ashwell Tennis & Sports Club to assist with costs for the purchase of a new clubhouse at the venue as outlined in 8.1.2.

46 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio recording – 140 minutes 40 seconds

A verbal presentation was given by Sarah Hammond-Ward from Knights Templar School regarding their grant application, including:

- The application had been put together between the Duke of Edinburgh Award and the Geography department.
- The funds were to support the Green Knights and the Duke of Edinburgh Award schemes at the school.
- The Green Knights were a lunchtime group, who had expanded to deal with wider projects looking at the environment. There had been a two year gap due to Covid, but it was hoped this could be restarted.
- For the Duke of Edinburgh Award in 2020 it was felt that volunteering opportunities would be limited.
- The Rotary Club enquired whether the group would assist with the planting of trees, which they supported and contributed to part of the volunteering requirements.
- It was hoped that these volunteering opportunities would develop and expand over the next few years.
- By being outside and engaging in their local area, young people are engaged in other discussions, so there is a much wider educational benefit.
- The group had found that the limited resources they had – 6 forks, 1 spade and 1 rake – was preventing them further expanding the opportunities and the ability to purchase tools would be beneficial. There was a desire to buy good quality tools that would last, rather than the cheapest available.
- Numbers were expected to go up on the Award scheme in 2022.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Jim McNally
- Councillor Michael Weeks
- Councillor Michael Muir
- Councillor Juan Cowell

In response to questions, Sarah Hammond-Ward advised:

- The garden site on Park Street would be one of those looked at this summer and was hoped that this would progress, with student maintenance in the coming years.
- The litter picking sessions were very popular with students, although again this was limited by a lack of equipment available.
- The environmental focus had come from a lack of external opportunities available for the age groups and the number of students looking for volunteering places, there were now 120 students taking part in the award.

47 GRANT APPLICATION - KNIGHTS TEMPLAR SCHOOL

Councillor Michael Muir proposed and Councillor Michael Weeks seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That grant funding of £862 be awarded to Knights Templar School for the purchase of gardening equipment and litter picking equipment that will be used by two extra-curricular groups at the school as outlined in 8.1.3.

48 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio recording – 152 minutes 10 seconds

A verbal presentation was given by Agata Kisicka and Ethel Morrell from Nova Wellness CIC regarding their grant application, including:

- This was a relatively new venture and was established a year ago in response to the pandemic.
- They run both group therapy events and individual therapy sessions (such as acupuncture, meditation and yoga).
- The aim was improve the mental health of residents, with a focus on older people, vulnerable people and the long term unemployed.
- Events were individually tailored based on the requirement of the user and it offers people the chance to experience therapies they would not normally be able to afford.
- This grant request was to fund two group therapy sessions for carers in Baldock and this would take place during Carers Week in June 2022.
- They had developed good connections with partner networks over the last year.
- People can often feel intimidated coming to a clinic, so the community events help to overcome this issue and these have the most benefit.
- People attending other session have reported that their confidence has increased, they feel less anxious and are more capable of dealing with the issues in their day to day lives.
- Most carers are unpaid and this would help to give something back to them for the work they do.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Michael Weeks
- Councillor Michael Muir
- Councillor Juan Cowell
- Councillor Steve Jarvis

In response to questions Agata Kisicka and Ethel Morrell advised:

- This was the first move into Baldock but had previously run sessions in Stevenage and Letchworth. It was felt that they needed to run events in different places, as this worked best to attract people to come.
- If there were specific groups that would benefit they would be happy to look into what support they can offer.
- Carers would need to get in touch themselves to book onto the session, but they can be referred to the group.
- All money granted would go towards funding the sessions in Baldock, which included 3 therapists and a tailored session for the day.
- This was a not for profit group.
- The grant funds would be for one core session of 1 hour and then further support time afterwards. There would also be time required for setting up and packing away. Often, as these are vulnerable people, other issues are raised and time is spent further supporting individuals. In total it can take around 3.5 hours for a 1 hour session.
- The sessions usually work well and while it is not one on one, the individuals can choose to do what they feel comfortable with. At the end of the session attendees are asked to review the process.
- These session helps people socialise where otherwise they would not have the opportunity and with people in similar situations.
- As a new company there was not a long term model of how this would develop into a continuous service. They are growing and adapting after every session and can change the offer according to the need.

- The partnership networks developed so far will help to support longer term strategies.

49 GRANT APPLICATION - NOVA WELLNESS CIC

Councillor Michael Weeks proposed and Councillor Steve Jarvis seconded and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That grant funding of £1000 be awarded to Nova Wellness CIC to assist with costs for running two, one-hour sessions for 20 carers based in Baldock as outlined in 8.1.5

50 GRANTS & COMMUNITY UPDATE

Audio recording – 166 minutes 24 seconds

The Community Engagement Officer presented the report entitled 'Grants and Community Update' and advised:

- He would be in touch with Members regarding the remaining grant funds balance and this would be pro rata to each ward as previously.
- The report detailed possible grant applications to come to the Committee in the future.
- Farmers Lights Christmas event was very successful, raising over £7500 for Garden House Hospice and there are plans in place to run the event across the towns in the district again this year.
- The Baldock Beast had taken place in February and numbers were down from last year, but this was only held in October 2021.
- Street Food Heroes would be back in Baldock town centre once a month from the 15 April through to September.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That any unspent funds from the 2021/22 financial year be allocated to Community & Environmental Initiatives for the 2022/23 period.
- (2) That the Committee endorsed the actions taken by the Community Engagement Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being for Baldock

REASONS FOR DECISIONS:

- (1) To ensure the Committee is kept informed of the work of the Community Engagement Officer.
- (2) This report is intended to inform Members of the financial resources available to the Committee. It draws attention to the current budgetary situation by assisting in the effective financial management of the Area Committee's budget. This ensures that all actions are performed in line with the Authority's Financial Regulations, the Council's Constitution, and the guidance of the existing Grants policy as agreed by Cabinet in January 2020.
- (3) The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims of the Council Plan.

51 BALDOCK COMMUNITY EVENTS

Audio recording – 170 minutes 56 seconds

The Chair advised that the Baldock Big Lunch would be taking place on the 5 June 2022.

52 WARD MATTERS AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS - MEMBERS' REPORTS

Audio recording – 171 minutes 29 seconds

The Chair requested that Members from outside Baldock report back to the Committee at the next meeting, if they experience any increase in graffiti in their wards.

The meeting closed at 10.24 pm

Chair