

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

BALDOCK AND DISTRICT COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD IN THE BALDOCK COMMUNITY CENTRE, SIMPSON DRIVE, BALDOCK,
SG7 6DH
ON MONDAY, 20TH MARCH, 2023 AT 7.30 PM

MINUTES

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

In Attendance: *Eleanor Hopcraft (Committee, Member & Scrutiny Officer) and Claire Morgan (Community Engagement Team Leader)*

Also Present: *At the commencement of the meeting approximately 11 members of the public, including registered speakers.*

75 ELECTION OF A CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Audio recording – 0 minute 6 seconds

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer called for nominations for Chair of the Baldock and District Area Committee for the remainder of the 2022/23 Civic Year.

Councillor Tom Tyson proposed and Councillor Alistair Willoughby seconded, and following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee elected Councillor Steve Jarvis as Chair of the Baldock and District Committee for the remainder of the Civic Year 2022/23.

The Chair called for nominations for the Vice Chair of the Baldock and District Area Committee for the remainder of the 2022/23 Civic Year.

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

RESOLVED: That the Committee elected Councillor Alistair Willoughby as Vice-Chair of the Baldock and District Committee for the remainder of the Civic Year 2022/23.

76 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio recording – 2 minutes 4 seconds

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Michael Weeks.

77 MINUTES - 31 OCTOBER 2022

Audio recording – 2 minutes 13 seconds

Councillor Steve Jarvis as Chair proposed and Councillor Alistair Willoughby seconded, and following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 31 October 2022 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chair.

78 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio recording – 2 minutes 26 seconds

There was no other business notified.

79 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio recording – 2 minutes 30 seconds

- (1) The Chair reminded Members to make declarations of interest before an item, the longer reminder about this and speaking rights was set out under Chair's Announcements on the agenda.
- (2) The Chair advised that for the purposes of clarification that 4.8.23(a) of the Constitution did not apply to this meeting

80 HERTFORDSHIRE CONSTABULARY - UPDATE

Audio recording – 3 minutes 4 seconds

The Chair invited PS Lisa Perks, Hertfordshire Constabulary to present. PS Perks thanked the Chair, gave a verbal update and advised:

- All crime for Baldock totaled 575 cases this year compared to 486 previously. This was an increase of 18%.
- Residential burglaries increased to 9 compared to 6 last year.
- Business burglaries decreased to 4 cases from 10 previously, a decrease of 60%.
- Theft from motor vehicles rose to 38 reports from 18 last year, which was a 111% increase. This had been agreed as a priority for the Letchworth and Baldock area.
- Personal robbery remained the same as last year at one offence.
- Violence against persons totaled 258 cases compared to 222 previously. This was an increase of 16%.
- Criminal damage cases decreased to 68 cases from 95 last year. This was a reduction of 28%.
- There were 28 cases of shoplifting this year compared to 11 last year. This was an increase of 154%.
- Drug possession offences had increased to 16 from 9 previously. Proactive work was being carried out by local Officers, and Neighbourhood Watch was continuing to grow.
- Public order offences had increased to 46 from 34.
- Possession of offensive weapons had decreased to one compared to 4 cases last year.
- Priorities for Baldock and Letchworth included theft from motor vehicles, including catalytic converters and numberplates, speeding on Norton Road and unlawful use of e-scooters.
- After reports of loitering and asking for money near 20 High Street, the Neighbourhood Team attended the accommodation regularly and this was no longer an issue.
- There were 2 thefts and one assault. This was a single incident and involved one person. This person was evicted and arrested.
- There was a slight increase in graffiti within Baldock, with two suspects identified and due to be interviewed.

Inspector James Lant gave a verbal update and advised:

- There was an overall increase in crime in the county and North Hertfordshire, however Baldock was an outlier.
- Burglary was a priority point although numbers were low.
- Theft from motor vehicles was a national issue.
- The violence against persons figures included historic cases, and increased reporting could explain why figures had increased.
- Criminal damage and arson were down compared to other areas of North Hertfordshire and the county.
- Shoplifting was a concern.
- Possession of offensive weapons had fallen.

The following Members asked questions:

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

In response to the questions, PS Perks and Inspector Lant advised:

- Tesco in Baldock was the biggest concern for shoplifting. Smaller shops and local shopkeepers seemed to be more receptive to Police advice.
- Theft from motor vehicles occurred all over Baldock, with different areas being targeted at different times by criminals. Operation Feline was looking to target individuals feeding into the stolen car part market.
- There was correlation with increased crime and the cost of living crisis.
- Councillors had a mechanism to report crimes to the Police.
- If residents were uncomfortable with reporting to the Police, Crimestoppers could be used to send anonymous reports.

81 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio recording – 20 minutes 25 seconds

The Community and Partnerships Team Leader provided an update on the outstanding grant funds, including that:

- The 2022/23 base budget was £5,000 with £2,565 carried over from 2021/22. This made £7,565 available.
- To date, the Committee had allocated £2,000 in grants.
- The grant applications for the meeting totalled £750, which if approved would leave £4,815 to be carried over to 2023/24.

The Chair invited John Archer from Headway Hertfordshire to present. Mr Archer thanked the Chair, gave a verbal presentation and advised:

- Headway Hertfordshire looked after those affected by a brain injury across the county.
- The organisation supported survivors, carers, friends and families.
- There were between 60-70 individuals in the Baldock area that the organisation had helped. There were 40 active users of their services.
- The grant application would fund occupational therapy visits and peer support groups.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Steve Jarvis
- Councillor Michael Muir

- Councillor Alistair Willoughby
- Councillor Juan Cowell

In response to the questions, Mr Archer advised:

- There were 9 support groups across Hertfordshire. The organisation treated people locally.
- Home visits and peer support groups would be funded by the grant.
- There were different levels of support offered depending on the individuals need.
- The total amount needed for the project was £2,600. The rest of the money needed come from the community and the Cooperative Community Fund.

A discussion was held amongst Members regarding the remaining budgets of the Committee and following this Councillor Michael Muir proposed the amount be increased to £1,500. This was seconded by Councillor Alistair Willoughby and, following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee allocated £1,500 to Headway Hertfordshire towards peer support group sessions as outlined in paragraphs 8.1.1-8.1.4 of this report.

82 GRANTS & COMMUNITY UPDATE

Audio recording – 34 minutes 29 seconds

The Chair invited the Community and Partnerships Team Leader to present, who gave a verbal presentation and advised:

- The Baldock Councillors Surgery was on 25 March 2023.
- The Baldock Community Forum had coordinated asylum seekers to the hotel at Baldock Services and Hitchin Hotel.
- The 'All about us' conference organized by NHCVS, LHF and NHDC was sold out. Workshops would follow later in the year.
- The North Hertfordshire Heroes was held at the beginning of March and was available to view on the Councils YouTube channel.
- The Holocaust Memorial Day was held at the end of January and was available to view on the Council's YouTube channel.

The Chair moved to the vote and by consensus, it was:

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Committee agreed that any unspent funds from the 2022/23 financial year be allocated to the Baldock Area Committee budget for the 2023/24 period.
- (2) That the Committee endorsed the actions taken by the Community Engagement Team to promote great community capacity and well-being for Baldock.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS:

- (1) To ensure Members are kept informed of the work of the Community Engagement Team.
- (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 Grants Policy as agreed by Cabinet in July 2021.

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(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.

83 WARD MATTERS AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS - MEMBERS' REPORTS

Audio recording – 38 minutes 4 seconds

Councillor Michael Muir advised that he had allocated all of his £90k from the County Council Highways Budget for the 2023/24 financial year.

Councillor Tom Tyson advised that he attended the Revlvel Association meeting last week and noted that relationships between water companies and planners were a main point of discussion.

Councillor Alistair Willoughby encouraged Members to get involved with the Baldock Royal British Legion.

Audio Recording of Meeting

The meeting closed at 8.10 pm

Chair