

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL



Publication Date

Our Ref Baldock and Villages Community Forum
14 September 2026

Contact. Community and Partnerships Team
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To: Members of the Area Forum: Councillors Alistair Willoughby (Chair), Emma Rowe (Vice-Chair), Rhona Cameron, Steve Jarvis, Michael Muir, Tom Tyson and Stewart Willoughby

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN OF A

**MEETING OF THE BALDOCK AND VILLAGES COMMUNITY
FORUM**

to be held in the

**THE YOUTH WING, BALDOCK COMMUNITY HUB, SIMPSON
DRIVE, BALDOCK. SG7 6DH**

On

MONDAY, 14TH SEPTEMBER, 2026 AT 7.30 PM

Yours sincerely,

Isabelle Alajooz
Director – Governance

****MEMBERS PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU DOWNLOAD ALL AGENDAS AND REPORTS VIA THE MOD.GOV APPLICATION ON YOUR TABLET BEFORE ATTENDING THE MEETING****

Agenda

Part I

Item		Page
1.	OPENING REMARKS	
2.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
3.	CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS Members are reminded that any declarations of interest in respect of any business set out in the agenda, should be declared as either a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Declarable Interest and are required to notify the Chair of the nature of any interest declared at the commencement of the relevant item on the agenda. Members declaring a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest must withdraw from the meeting for the duration of the item. Members declaring a Declarable Interest, wishing to exercise a 'Councillor Speaking Right', must declare this at the same time as the interest, move to the public area before speaking to the item and then must leave the room before the debate and vote.	
4.	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - GRANT APPLICATION To consider community grant applications for recommendation to the Executive Member for Governance.	(Pages 5 - 12)
5.	PRESENTATION - GREENSPACE Presentation by Council Officers Alan North and Kieran Cockayne on the Green Spaces Consultation, followed by Q & A.	
6.	LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION Update on Local Government Reorganisation by Councillor Laura Williams, followed by Q & A.	
7.	LOCAL PLAN Officers Rachel Rooney and Debbie Coates will be in attendance at the meeting to answer questions from the Councillors and the public about the progress with the New Local Plan.	
8.	GROWING BALDOCK, URBAN AND CIVIC The Urban and Civic Team are here to answer any question you may have about Growing Baldock.	
9.	WARD MATTERS & OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS To receive any verbal reports from Members and members of the public regarding Ward matters and Outside Organisations.	

- 10. COMMUNITY UPDATE** (Pages 13 - 14)
To provide the Forum with an update to ensure Members are kept informed of the work of the Community and Partnerships Team.
- 11. TOPICS FOR FUTURE COMMUNITY FORUMS**
To discuss topics for future meetings.

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REPORT (FOR RECOMMENDATION & NOTING BY COMMUNITY FORUM)

BALDOCK & VILLAGES COMMUNITY FORUM
DATE MONDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2026

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

SERVICE DIRECTORATE: GOVERNANCE

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To advise the Community Forum on the current expenditure and balances of the Community Grant budget.
- 1.2 To bring to the Forum's attention details of recent requests received for Community grant funding, made by community groups and local organisations.
- 1.3 To enable Forum Members to make recommendations to the Executive Member for Governance, on grant applications.
- 1.4 To advise the Forum of the activities and schemes with which Community & Partnerships officers have been involved in and some important community-based activities that will take place during the next few months.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

THAT THE COMMUNITY FORUM:

- 2.1 Considers and notes the information within this report.
- 2.2 Makes recommendations to the Executive Member for Governance on the grant applications detailed below.
- 2.3 Caring Herts CIC - **£1,500** towards setting up a new Wellbeing Hub in Baldock at a total cost of £13,050.

3. BACKGROUND/ RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The Community Grant budget for Baldock & Villages Community Forum 2026/27 is **£9,587**.
- 3.2 Community grant payments totalling **£2,098** have been made to date, as itemised in Appendix 1.
- 3.3 The remaining budget available for community grants for the Baldock & Villages area for 2026/27 therefore stands at **£7,489**

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Following the decision of Full Council on 18 April 2023, a Community Forum shall consider applications for community grants in its area and make recommendations to the Executive Member for Governance on them. The Executive Member has delegated authority to make these Executive decisions under section 14.6.9(b)(iii)A of the constitution, in consultation with the Service Director: Governance. That decision

will be subject to a 5 clear working day call-in period, following publication in the Members Information Bulletin (MIB) and on the Council's website.

- 4.2 The Terms of Reference of the Community Forum can be found in Section 9 of the constitution which states that the forum will *'consider and act as an advisory body to the relevant Executive Member responsible for grants who approves these (in consultation with the relevant Director)'*.

- 4.3 Other issues raised in this report are for information and noting and therefore no direct legal implications arise.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 As outlined in Appendix 1 and under item 3.3 the remaining Community Grant budget available is **£7,489**.

- 5.2 The total amount of funding requested for this meeting is **£1,500**.

- 5.3 If the application outlined in Appendix 2 is recommended by the Forum and subsequently approved by the Executive Member for Governance, there would be **£5,989** available for Community Grants for the remainder of the 2026/27 financial year.

6. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Good risk management supports and enhances the decision-making process, increasing the likelihood of the Council meeting its objectives and enabling it to respond quickly and effectively to change. When taking decisions, risks and opportunities must be considered.

- 6.2 There are no relevant risk entries that have been recorded on Ideagen Risk Management, 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.

7. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their 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.

- 7.2 Community Grant funds are awarded to community groups that clearly demonstrate positive impact on the community and wider environment. The projects outlined in this report seek to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

8. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Social Value Act and "go local" policy do not apply to the matters contained within this report, as there are no recommendations on procurement.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no known Environmental impacts or requirements that apply to this report.

10. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The activities of the Community & Partnerships team are covered by existing budgets.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Terms of Reference for Community Forums, Section 9 of the Council Constitution updated April 2024.
- 11.2 Community Grants Criteria Policy March 2025.

12. APPENDICES

- 12.1 Appendix 1. Baldock & Villages Community Grant Budget 2026/27
- 12.2 Appendix 2. Caring Herts CIC
- 12.3 Appendix 3. Community Updates

13. CONTACT OFFICERS

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BALDOCK AND DISTRICT COMMUNITY FORUM

SUMMARY FINANCIAL POSITION 2026/27

<u>Original Budget</u> <u>2026/27</u>	<u>Carry Forward Budget</u> <u>2025/26</u>	<u>Total Funding</u> <u>2026/27</u>	<u>Grants</u> <u>Allocated</u>	<u>Unallocated</u> <u>Budget</u>
£8,600	£987	£9,587	£2,098	£7,489

FUNDED PROJECTS

<u>Project</u>	<u>Forum Date</u>	<u>Grant Allocated</u>
Avenue Park Sports Club - purchase lockers for the female changing rooms at the club	15th June 2026	£598
Baldock Community Centre Association - new chairs and tables	15th June 2026	£1,500
TOTAL BALDOCK AND DISTRICT		£2,098

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=Document Control:

Version	Issue Date	Changes
1.0	NA	First Draft (BE)

Reference	CG-596			
Name of Organisation	Caring Herts CIC			
Organisation Type	Community Interest Company			
Ward	Districtwide, but this application is specifically for Baldock			
Project Type	Wellbeing for older people			
Green option considered?	N/A			
NHC Councillor involvement that may constitute a conflict of interest	None known			
Previous financial support within six years	June 26 – Letchworth Forum £1,500 approved <i>NOTE: They have applied for £1,500 from both Hitchin and Royston as well in this round of grants, towards different projects/Hubs.</i>			
Documentation reviewed and approved*	Safeguarding	YES	Accounts	YES
	Demonstrates clear governance	YES		
Total applied for	£1,500	Total project cost	£13,050	
Officer Summary				
Caring Herts CIC was set up this year to take over the running of the Community Wellbeing Hubs that had previously been supported by Garden House Hospice. Caring Herts CIC exists to support older members of the North Hertfordshire and Stevenage community who are experiencing loneliness or social isolation, giving them confidence to live well and enjoy life to the fullest. They currently run 15 Wellbeing Hubs every week, consisting of seated exercise and offering companionship, advice, a listening ear and, most importantly: fun. They wish to set up a new Wellbeing Hub in Baldock. As people live longer, this brings both opportunities and challenges. Longer life can be fulfilling, but increasing evidence and practical examples from attendees informs that there are significant increases; risk of social isolation, loneliness, and declining mental wellbeing if community connections are not supported. They have previously evaluated the effectiveness of this service: • 92% of their hub attendees feel less lonely and isolated • 87% feel more mobile, balanced and steady on their feet • 77% feel more independent They anticipate it will cost £13,050 to set up and run this new group in Baldock for a year and they are seeking funding towards the costs of hall hire. They anticipate raising £8,000 through membership fees and £3,300 through other fundraising. They have already secured £250 from the Baldock Rotary Club. The total requested is therefore £1,500.				

*Funding will only be released on receipt and approval of all supporting documentation

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Districtwide Community Updates
• The Community Partnerships Team have launched the Communities Hub, an online resource for community groups, residents and partners across North Herts. Alongside information on grants, council events and local organisations, the Hub aims to connect communities, support engagement, and provide opportunities for residents and groups to raise local issues. • Co-ordinating various local and district wide Network Groups including Youth Action, Food Provision, Arts and Culture, Green and Growing and the Community Centres Network Group. • Members of the team attended the North Herts and Stevenage CVS's 'Be the Good' volunteering summit. • Continuing to facilitate NHC Councillors' Community Surgeries. • Sharing and disseminating information on social media and to mailing lists, keeping in touch with the community, voluntary, statutory, and non-statutory agencies.
Area Community Updates
• The Hertfordshire Health Walks team have continued the Baldock Health Walk after their initial 8-week trial. The walk is a circular route from Baldock Community Hub starting at 2pm each Friday. Everyone is welcome. It is a gentle walk of approximately 40 minutes which is wheelchair and pushchair friendly. There are refreshments available to purchase in the Hub at the end of the walk. Hertfordshire Health Walks Hertfordshire County Council • The Community Partnerships Officer for Baldock & the Villages has met with PCSO Gordon and agreed how to strengthen communications to ensure the Police are aware of major upcoming events in and around Baldock. • Confirmation to Councillors that the Community Partnerships Officer for Baldock & the Villages is available for meetings or ward walks if that would be beneficial.

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