

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

BALDOCK AND DISTRICT COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD AS A VIRTUAL MEETING
ON MONDAY, 22ND JUNE, 2020 AT 7.30 PM

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors: Steve Jarvis, Jim McNally, Michael Muir, Val Shanley, Tom Tyson and Michael Weeks*

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

Also Present: *At the commencement of the meeting approximately 2 members of the public, including registered speakers.*

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Audio Recording – 48 Seconds

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the virtual Baldock and District Committee meeting that was being conducted with Members and Officers at various locations, communicating via audio/video and online and advised that there was the opportunity for the public and press to listen and view proceedings.

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer gave advice regarding the following:

Attendance

A roll call was undertaken to confirm that the required Members, Officers and Registered Speakers were present and could hear and be heard.

If for any reason the meeting was not quorate an Officer would interject the meeting and the meeting would adjourn immediately. Once the meeting was quorate the meeting would resume.

If a remote Member were to lose connection the Chair may adjourn the meeting for a short period to enable connection to be re-established. If the Chair did not adjourn the meeting the Member would be deemed to have left the meeting at the point of failure and be deemed to have returned at the point of re-establishment. Only Members present for the entirety of debate and consideration of an item were entitled to vote.

Live Streaming

The meeting was being streamed live on the Council's YouTube channel. If live streaming failed the meeting would adjourn. If the live stream could not be restored within a reasonable period then the remaining business would be considered at a time and date fixed by the Chair. If the Chair did not fix a date, the remaining business would be considered at the next ordinary meeting.

If technology failed for a member of the public who had attended to participate and was unable to do so, the Chair may decide to adjourn or proceed to the next item of business to allow for connection to be re-established. If connection could not be restored within a reasonable period, the Chair could decide to conclude the remaining business.

Noise Interference

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer asked all in attendance to ensure that electronic devices were muted.

Rules of Debate

If a Member wished to speak they should use the raise hand button and this would alert the host that they wished to speak.

Members were reminded that the normal procedure rules in respect of debate and times to speak would apply.

Voting

When requested to vote, Members were informed to vote using the Green tick for 'Yes', Red Cross for 'No' and Blue Raise Hand for 'abstain'.

Details of how Members voted would not be kept or minuted unless a Recorded Vote was requested or an individual requests that their vote be recorded.

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer would clearly state the result of the vote and the Chair would proceed to the next agenda item.

2 ELECTION OF A CHAIR OF BALDOCK AND DISTRICT COMMITTEE FOR THE CIVIC YEAR 2020/21

Audio Recording – 4 Minutes

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Officer called for nominations for a Chair of the Baldock and District Committee for the Civic Year 2020/21.

Councillor Jim McNally proposed Councillor Michael Weeks which was seconded by Councillor Val Shanley and it was:

RESOLVED: That Councillor Michael Weeks be elected Chair of Baldock and District Committee for the Civic Year 2020/21.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio Recording – 5 Minutes 10 Seconds

There were no apologies for absence.

4 ELECTION OF A VICE-CHAIR FOR THE BALDOCK AND DISTRICT COMMITTEE FOR THE CIVIC YEAR 2020/21

Audio Recording - 5 Minutes 10 Seconds

The Chair, Councillor Michael Weeks, expressed his thanks to the former Baldock and District Committee Chair, Councillor Val Shanley, for chairing the Committee in 2019/20.

The Chair called for nominations for a Vice-Chair for the Baldock and District Committee for the Civic Year 2020/21.

Councillor Michael Weeks proposed Councillor Jim McNally which was seconded by Councillor Val Shanley and it was:

RESOLVED: That Councillor Jim McNally be elected Vice-Chair of the Baldock and District Committee for the Civic Year 2020/21.

5 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio Recording – 6 Minutes 41 Seconds

There was no other business notified.

6 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio Recording – 6 Minutes 46 Seconds

- (1) The Chair welcomed those present at the meeting, especially those who had attended to give a presentation;
- (2) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be audio recorded;
- (3) Members were reminded 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.

7 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - INDEPENDENT BALDOCK BEER FESTIVAL

Audio Recording – 7 Minutes 42 Seconds

Ms Tara Geere and Mr Brent Copsey, Independent Baldock Beer Festival, thanked the Chair for the opportunity to address the Committee and gave a verbal presentation regarding their grant application, including:

- The Baldock Beer Festival was more than a beer festival – there were music acts and activities for children;
- The event started on a Friday evening and ran over the weekend;
- The Independent Baldock Beer Festival was set up as a Charitable Trust in 2017;
- Every event raised money to be used for the benefit of Baldock;
- Grants had been given out to numerous organisations;
- There was a 'hardship fund' that was utilised to send children on residentials and/or to assist with the payment of buying specialist equipment;
- Money generated at events was donated for the public benefit in Baldock; and
- The festival would have taken place in May. However, in light of the coronavirus pandemic, the event had to be cancelled. Therefore, money has not been able to be raised.

The following Members asked questions:

- Councillor Jim McNally;
- Councillor Michael Muir; and
- Councillor Michael Weeks.

Ms Geere responded to Members questions as follows:

- Following the cancellation of the Beer Festival and Octoberfest as result of Covid-19, there was a cash flow issue which was the reason for requesting grant money from the Committee;
- There was enough space to hold events if social distancing measures were in place at the time as they were able to use the field at the Knights Templar school;
- Money raised would be used to benefit Baldock and the surrounding villages; and
- People attended the beer festival and the Octoberfest from all over North Herts but also visitors came from London, St Albans and Cambridge.

Members agreed to contribute towards the grant request of £1,000 from their Discretionary Budget. The Community Engagement Officer advised the breakdown of the contribution as follows:

Baldock Town - £520.00, Baldock East - £160.00, Arbury - £180.00, Weston and Sandon - £140.00.

8 GRANTS AND COMMUNITY UPDATE

Audio Recording – 27 Minutes 50 Seconds

The Community Engagement Officer informed Members that the grant awarded to the Independent Baldock Beer Festival could be taken from the 2019/20 Carry Forward.

The Community Engagement Officer presented the report entitled Grants and Community Update and drew Members' attention to the following:

Funding:

- Paragraph 7.3 on page 7 within the report which summarised the funding available to the Committee during 2020/21.

Impact on events:

- Owing to the coronavirus pandemic, many events have had to be cancelled including the Baldock Festival and The Big Lunch. Other events have been postponed until September including the Baldock Cycle Challenge;
- Owing to the uncertainty of the pandemic, it was not possible to confirm whether Autumn events would be able to take place; and
- The Community Engagement Officer was in communication with the organisers of the Baldock Chartered Street Fair with regards to that year's event. The Community Engagement Officer had reminded the organisers that to maintain the charter there must be a presence in the town during the 3 day fair period.

Impact on Community Buildings:

- The Baldock Community Centre and Baldock Arts & Heritage Centre were closed in light of the pandemic – both venues had received £10k from the NHDC Business Grant.

Support Groups in response to Coronavirus:

The Community Engagement Officer had been supporting the numerous support groups that have been set up in response to the Pandemic.

The Community Engagement Officer has also assisted with Operation Shield.

RESOLVED: That the actions taken by the Community Engagement Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being for Baldock be endorsed.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

- (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.

9 GRANT APPLICATION - INDEPENDENT BALDOCK BEER FESTIVAL

Audio Recording – 26 Minutes

Councillor Muir proposed, Cllr McNally seconded and it was:

RESOLVED: That grant funding of £1,000 be awarded to the Independent Baldock Beer Festival to assist towards the cost of purchasing a storage unit for storing equipment at Brandles School.

REASON FOR DECISION: To improve services provided by local organisations and groups which are accessed by the community.

10 WARD MATTERS AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS - MEMBERS' REPORTS

Audio Recording – 31 Minutes 18 Seconds

Members discussed the impact that the coronavirus pandemic had had on Baldock and the surrounding villages.

Members were informed about the cancellation of various events owing to Covid-19, including the Big Lunch, Street Food Heroes and the Cycle Challenge had been postponed from 5 July to 20 September 2020.

Members were informed about the variety of groups that had been set up to support people during the pandemic, including:

Baldock Coronavirus Support Group:

The Group had 3 aims: Deliver food parcels to those in need, provide volunteers and shop for those isolating or shielding and collect prescriptions.

Listening Service:

A listening service had started to provide support to people. The service did not offer advice or counselling but referred people to the appropriate service. It was being led by a Samaritan.

Baldock in Lockdown:

A group open to any amateur photographer.

Other support groups:

- A group in Ashwell got local shops together to deliver food to those shielding.
- A young people's art initiative had been set up to support young people during the pandemic. The initiative was working with Gallery 1066 and Knights Templar.

Other Members' Reports:

- Baldock Household was running until July and full details could be found online;
- The Christmas Fair was still due to take place on 5 December;
- There was a phased re-opening of the market. Currently, stalls were open on a Wednesday and there had been good footfall. More stalls would not be opened until it could be ensured that social distancing measures could be adhered to; and
- The fireworks at St Mary's was still due to take place on 8 November 2020.

11 POSSIBLE AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Audio Recording – 49 Minutes 35 Seconds

The Chair requested that the following items be brought to the next meeting of the Baldock and District Committee:

- An update from Affinity Water on Ivel Spring.

The meeting closed at 8.27 pm

Chair