

**BALDOCK AND DISTRICT COMMITTEE
15 MARCH 2021**

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

TITLE OF REPORT: GRANTS & COMMUNITY UPDATE

REPORT OF THE POLICY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

COUNCIL OBJECTIVES: BUILD THRIVING AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To advise the Committee on the current expenditure and balances of the Committee Grant budgets
- 1.2 To bring to the Committee's attention details of recent requests received for Committee grant funding, made by community groups and local organisations
- 1.3 To advise the Committee of the activities and schemes with which the Community Engagement Officer has been involved in.
- 1.4 To bring to the Committee's attention some important community-based activities that will take place during the next few months.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Committee be recommended to consider allocating funding from their discretionary community budget towards the project below.

£500 to Sandon Sports and Social Club to assist with the cost of purchasing a new storage unit for storing equipment at the venue as outlined in 8.1.1.

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| 2.2 | That the Committee agrees that any unspent funds from the 2020/21 financial year be allocated to Community & Environmental initiatives for 2021/22. |
| 2.3 | That the Committee be recommended to endorse the actions taken by the Community Engagement Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being for Baldock. |

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To ensure the Committee is kept informed of the work of the Community Engagement 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 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.
- 3.3 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.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1. There are no alternative options being proposed other than those detailed within the text of this report. However, during debate at committee, Members may wish to comment and offer additional views on any of the items included 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 bodies/groups has taken place regarding funding proposals for Committee Funds.

6. FORWARD PLAN

- 6.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key Executive decision and has therefore not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1 With reference to the Council's Constitution, Section 9.3 Area Committees will include budgets for the purpose of providing grants and discretionary budgets that may be used within the area of the Committee for economic, social and environmental well-being. Under the current grant criteria there is no upper limit outlined for the amount of grant funding to be allocated which can be decided at the Committee's discretion.
- 7.2 Members are asked to note the information detailed in Appendix 1. Baldock Area Committee Budget Spread sheet, which relates to the Area Committee budget balances for 2020/21. The spreadsheet also details pre-allocated sums carried forward from the previous financial year, including balances and past expenditure.
- 7.3 Funding available for the Committee to allocate during 2020/21 is summarised below:

	2019/20 Carry Forward	2020/21 Base Budget	Total Budget
Baldock Town	£128	£2,400	£2,528
Baldock East	£262	£1,000	£1,262
Arbury	£0	£880	£880
Weston & Sandon	£157	£700	£857
	£547	£4,980	£5,527

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 Grant Applications

8.1.1

Applicant	Sandon Sports & Social Club
Project	Purchase of a storage container for storing cricket and football equipment at the venue
Sum requested	£500
Total project cost	£2,500
Match funding	£2,000 from own funds
Previous support	Yes, in the past 5 years the group has received £750. This was awarded in 2017 for new windows and external repairs.
NHDC Policy met	Yes
Council objective:	Build thriving and resilient communities

Sandon Sports & Social Club is seeking funding support from the Baldock & District Committee to assist with costs for the purchase of a new storage container at the venue for football and cricket equipment. The Club has made the request following a burglary and vandalism of their current shed in February 2021. This application was received after the deadline for grant applications but is being accepted as the vandalism has made it necessary for a new storage facility as a matter of urgency which cannot wait until the next Committee meeting in June/July 2021. The storage facility will home equipment with a value in the thousands.

Sandon Sports & Social Club has been in operation since 1930 providing a venue for both cricket and football for people from the village and surrounding areas. The group is made up of 6 Volunteer Committee members and numerous volunteers from both the cricket and football clubs using the facility. The new storage container is needed due to the current one being recently burgled and vandalised. This new storage container is made of stronger materials and will help keep the equipment secure. The application is criteria compliant and given the extensive match funding being provided by the club the officer recommendation is an award of £500.

8.1.2 Grants in the Pipeline

The Baldock Community Engagement Officer (CEO) has been working with a number of groups / organisations who are seeking funding support from the Baldock & District Committee. Due to a number of factors these applications were not in a position to be tabled at the March meeting so have been deferred until a future meeting. Details of the applications are included in the table below:

Group	Project	Funding Requested
Baldock Run Talk Run	This is a group for people who wish to use running as a means to help with mental health and is part of a bigger family nationwide. Funding is requested for hoodies / t-shirts, marketing initiatives and promotional materials.	The group is looking for £750.
Greening Ashwell	This is a new community group (+40 members) which has been formed to challenge climate change with local initiatives including tree planting and other	The group is looking for £250

	environmental improvements throughout the village . We are particularly keen to involve children and young people as well as older residents.	
Magic Moments Pre-school	This group has been heavily impacted by the Pandemic and will be seeking funding support to assist with possible room hire costs and new equipment including a laptop.	The group is looking for £1,000

As well as the above groups, the Baldock CEO was working with 1st Baldock Scouts who were hoping to seek funding from the Baldock & District Committee to assist with a soundproofing project at the building. It was not possible to progress this application as the building used by the Scouts is owned by NHDC and as there is less than 5 years left on the lease, it would not be compliant to use Baldock & District funds for this project.

8.2 Community Engagement Updates

8.2.1 Events Update for 2021

Due to the ongoing Pandemic, several of the events planned for the first half of the year have either been cancelled or postponed. The Baldock Beast Half Marathon which was due to be held in February has now been postponed until the 31st October. The Baldock Beer Festival which opens the Baldock Festival in May has been cancelled. At the time of writing this report it is unclear whether the two-week Baldock Festival will be held. The Baldock Events Forum is still planning on running The Baldock Big Lunch on Sunday 6th June and the Baldock Cycle Challenge on Sunday 27th June. The Baldock CEO is in constant liaison with all event organisers and will be assisting them with event paperwork as required. The Baldock CEO will provide the North Herts Safety Advisory Group (SAG) with status updates for of all the events and will ensure the North Herts SAG calendar is updated accordingly.

8.2.2 Support for Businesses during the Covid-19 Pandemic

The Baldock CEO continues to signpost local businesses and community groups to business support grants that are available to them during the Pandemic. This has included funding support available during the tier 3 period as well as the current national lockdown.

8.2.3 Hand Sanitiser and social distancing signage for local community groups and venues
During January 2021, the Baldock CEO delivered on behalf of North Herts CVS, hand sanitiser to a number of venues in Baldock including Baldock Community Centre, Baldock Arts & Heritage Centre, 1st Baldock Scouts, Baldock Market and Magic Moments Pre-school. The Baldock CEO also delivered social distancing signage to groups and venues within Baldock and the villages which were provided by Hertfordshire County Council.

8.2.4 Baldock Arts & Heritage Centre

The Baldock CEO continues to liaise and support staff at Baldock Arts & Heritage Centre with the Phase 2 works at the building. At the various stages of the works the Baldock CEO will arrange the release of funds as part of the buildings full repairing lease arrangement. Phase 2 of the project is due to be completed by 2023. Whilst the centre has been closed during the current lockdown, internal decorating works have been carried out. This has included the painting of the museum office and the backstairs at the venue. The Baldock CEO has released funds as requested from the Phase 2 budget. The next project to be undertaken will be replacing the flooring of the main hall which is planned for March/April.

8.2.5 Covid-19 Testing Site at Baldock Community Centre

The Baldock CEO assisted the NHDC Commercial Director in determining suitable sites for Covid-19 testing. The Baldock Community Centre was identified as a possible site but after a site visit with the NHS it was decided to use different locations instead.

8.3 **Highways Matters**

8.3.1 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.

8.3.2 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 Sections 9.8.1 (a) and 9.8.1 (b) of the Council's Constitution in respect of the Area Committees' Terms of Reference, notes the following:- To allocate discretionary budgets within the terms determined by the Council and to allocate devolved budgets and activities within the terms determined by the Council.

This is outlined in the current Grant Policy agreed by Cabinet in January 2020. Section 9.8.2 (h) of the Constitution in respect of Area Committees' Terms of Reference notes that they may:- Establish and maintain relationships with outside bodies/voluntary organisations operating specifically with the area including, where appropriate, the provision of discretionary grant aid/financial support etc. but excluding grants for district-wide activities.

- 9.2 Chapter 1, s1-8 of the Localism Act 2011 provides a General Power of Competence which gives local authorities the powers to do anything provided that it is not specifically prohibited in legislation.
- 9.3 Section 137 of the 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.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 As outlined in Appendix 1 Committee budget 2020/21.
- 10.2 The agreed base budget for this financial year is £5,000. This has been maintained at the same level as 19/20, following full council's agreement to reverse the planned efficiencies. Carry over amounts from the 2019/2020 budgets is £547, giving a total budget remaining for the Committee for the 2020/21 financial year of £5,527. If funding of £500 is awarded to Sandon Sports and Social Club, the amount to be carried forward to the 2021/22 financial year will be £5,027.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no relevant risk entries that have been recorded on Pentana Risk, 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. 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.

12.2. Area committee funding is 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.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

13.1. The Social Value Act and “go local” requirements do not apply to this report.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

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

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

15.1 There are no pertinent Human Resource implications associated with any items within this report.

16. APPENDICES

16.1 Appendix 1 - 2020/21 financial year budget sheet.

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18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 18.1 Review of Policies and Procedures for Financial Assistance to Voluntary and Community Organisations, November 2002.
- 18.2 Review of Grant Policy Cabinet February 2020.