

## APPENDIX B

# Business Plan

### Baldock Community Forum CIC T/A Baldock Events Forum

#### Introduction

Funding to support Town Centre Partnerships was originally allocated to the four towns of North Herts, as part of a Full Council budget decision and was intended as pump-priming funding to enable Town centre partnerships to be established and each town to appoint a Town Centre Manager (TCM). It was always the intention that the new body would generate additional funds to complement the Council support. This was linked to the Council's priority at that time, as identified in the Corporate Plan of "Town Centres".

Baldock Town Partnership Ltd (BTP) was originally formed in June 2007 by which a Town Centre Manager could be employed for Baldock. NHDC was a member of this company (<https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/business/economic-development/town-centre-management>). In 2015/16, the relationship between BTP and NHDC finally broke down irretrievably and funding from the authority was cut. The Baldock TCM had not been in place for some time and there was a real danger that the programme of community events that had been developed would collapse.

Councillors Mike Weeks (who was NHDC's representative on BTP) and Jim McNally were involved in talks with NHDC, initially to try and resolve matters constructively. When it became apparent that a working relationship between the two organisations no longer existed, the Councillors worked with NHDC to form a new company to take on the management and organisation of community events in Baldock.

#### Baldock Community Forum CIC

During the latter part of 2016, efforts were made to recruit a new TCM; one who would be effective in the role, with the relevant skill set. Richard Sell was identified and agreed to work without payment until the new organisation received funding from NHDC. Richard took on the running of the Baldock Christmas Fair for BTP at the last minute, rather than see it fail completely. Richard also ran the final BTP event, the Baldock Half Marathon in February 2017, due to problems within BTP. Lessons learned from both those events have been applied to future planning. The Head of Finance and other officers of NHDC have been involved and advised at every stage of this project.

From an early stage, it was noted that one reason for the failure of BTP was that it was no longer representative of the community. There was only one director of the company, James Lunnon, and no real effort was being made to involve local people, other than to raise funds from them, or use them as volunteers. This had the effect of significant portions of the community withdrawing their support from BTP, resulting in a situation that was in danger of becoming adversarial, rather than co-operative.

Another barrier to success was the view in Baldock that the BTP was continuing to manage community events and that there was, therefore, no need for a new organisation. This view has been reinforced by the fact that NHDC continues to show BTP as the relevant organisation for town management, giving obsolete details on the website (see above link). This situation still exists at the time of writing.

Baldock Community Forum CIC trading as Baldock Events Forum, was incorporated in January 2017 as a Community Interest Company and the structure of the organisation is markedly different from BTP. The company is headed by five directors (Chair, Finance, Events, Fundraising and Marketing). Underneath this layer are more than 30 appointed Advisors, who are representatives of community organisations, and/or people with specific skill sets, who are willing to assist the Forum in its stated objectives. The registered office of the company is situated at the Baldock Community Centre, reinforcing the community roots of the Forum.

The company was formally launched at a public meeting in March 2017, which was attended by over 100 people.

To give an indication of the support that the Forum currently has within the town, listed below are various organisations that Advisors represent:

Baldock Festival  
Baldock Beer Festival  
Baldock Arts & Heritage Centre  
Balstock  
Baldock Community Centre  
Knights Templar School  
Baldock, Bygrave & Clothall Planning Group  
Baldock Rotary  
St Marys Church  
2<sup>nd</sup> Baldock Scouts.

We also have the support of the following businesses:

Tesco  
Tea at Tapps  
Staffy B  
Tapps Garden Centre  
Taste Café  
Chilli Lounge Restaurant  
Merry Go Round  
Empower Ltd.

**The Board.** The Board comprises the following people:

**Chair** – Jim McNally. Retired senior police officer (Metropolitan Police); former Director of Studies, training and accrediting Counter Fraud Specialists (NHS); Former Enforcement Manager, UK, for Business Radio and Senior Policy Advisor (Ofcom). Currently a Councillor for Baldock Town (NHDC) and President of the Great Britain Diving Federation.

**Finance** – Carrie Dunne. Self-employed author, tutor and working in local businesses. Recently retired from Teacher training (Maths & Science), as company director and university lecturer. National Curriculum Government Advisor and member of Carol Vorderman's mathematics report. Previously an Ofsted Inspector and Operations Director of an Ofsted contract. Began career in teaching and advising in nursery, primary and secondary schools.

**Marketing** – Paul Calver. Baldock resident for over 30 years. Company Director and Founder of a Building Services Company, running local authority decent homes projects. Project Managing building projects. Property developer. Set up and runs a successful local magazine, covering Baldock and the surrounding villages.

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**Events** – Vacant

**Fundraising** – Vacant.

**Town Centre Manager** – Richard Sell. Self-employed consultant. Former IT Director at GlaxoSmithKline, leading an international team responsible for business critical systems. Currently the Community Officer for Letchworth Rugby Club.

## Objectives

The objectives of the company are: -

- To strengthen the local community, empowering and enabling local groups through the development and, where appropriate, provision of a vibrant programme of events in the town.
- To engage our community through all appropriate means, by which we will accurately and effectively assess local need to ensure events are popular and well patronised.
- To enlist the support of capable and passionate people from our community to help in the provision of local sporting, cultural, social and arts events.
- To work with community members, and organisations to secure aid and assistance from the community in the planning, organisation and running of events.
- To secure funds from within the town and externally, in support of our aims.

## Targets

1. Establishment of a Town Centre Manager.
2. Successfully running our first event (The Big Lunch – 18 June 2017).
3. Forward planning for other events in the 2017 programme (notably the Baldock Cycle Challenge in July).
4. Obtaining startup funding for the new Community Interest Company.
5. Establishing a high social media profile within Baldock.
6. Developing and organising an effective and holistic Events Programme for the town of Baldock.
7. Providing a central hub for Baldock community events, streamlining communication between organisations and the local authority.

## Tangible Outputs

1. **The Town Centre Manager** has been in post since January (formally, since the public meeting in March). Salary commenced on 1 April and is being paid for by funding from the Chair, as funding has been delayed from NHDC.
2. **The Big Lunch.** Planning for this event is at an advanced stage; tickets have been issued to outlets; food suppliers & entertainment agreed and arrangement made for tables, chairs etc to be provided on the day.
3. **The Baldock Cycle Challenge.** Planning is well under way for the Baldock Cycle Challenge; registration is now open and we expect a significant number of entrants.
4. **Startup funding.** This has proven more difficult than envisaged. Due to the delay in a decision by NHDC, the Chair, Jim McNally has provided funding to run the first event and pay the TCM. Without this funding, the company would be wound up and the provision of events in Baldock would be highly likely to be retaken by BTP.
5. **Social media profile.** A Facebook page has been set up. In addition, we are active on Twitter and will soon have our own Instagram account.
6. **Baldock community events hub.** An events programme has been developed and will be available to all on our Facebook page/website. This will be a living document, which will provide support, particularly to those smaller events in the town, that may struggle to advertise effectively. We are also talking to NHDC about the prospect of the Forum providing a 'One Stop Shop' for local community events, as far as licensing and H&S are concerned.

## Marketing Plan

In order to ensure the success of this project, it is critical that the local community are fully engaged and involved in both the content and organisation of community events. To that effect, we intend to use social media and other internet based sources, in parallel with more traditional forms of communication to market our product. We have already made considerable progress in this area:

- Baldock Events Forum logo developed and promulgated, providing the BEF with its own identity within the town. The logo was selected through a vote by the community from a number of options provided by a local designer.
- Facebook page set up and running.
- Twitter account set up and initialised.
- Instagram account to be set up within the next month, for group sharing of event photographs etc.
- Website to be set up in the near future.
- We have been unable to obtain the websites used by BTP for community events, so the Forum has been obliged to set up our own. Event websites set up ([www.baldockevents.co.uk](http://www.baldockevents.co.uk) & [www.baldockcycle.co.uk](http://www.baldockcycle.co.uk)).
- The Comet has agreed to host a monthly article by the Forum, written by the Town Centre Manager.
- The Baldock Events Forum has been and will continue to be promoted by the monthly community magazine "On Our Doorstep", which is delivered to every household in Baldock.

## Timescales

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The transition period during which time the Baldock Community Forum CIC would take over from BTP was forced upon the new company by the inability of BTP to effectively run community events and the complete breakdown of trust between BTP and NHDC. The Forum had to rapidly get in place processes and people to ensure a smooth takeover while minimising any disruption that might occur.

Set out below is the proposed NHDC funding for community events in Baldock for the next four years; it is imperative that this funding is available. Because of the situation that the Forum has found itself in, with the BTP remaining active in certain areas, the Board consider that we will have to curtail funding requests to the local community until the Forum has proven itself and can demonstrate value for money. Some local businesses continue to donate to the BTP and if the Forum were to aggressively promote sponsorship at this time, internecine argument would be likely, resulting in a factionalising of the community and disharmony.

The Forum plan to initiate local funding gradually, commencing with event sponsors and eventually, towards the end of year one, the implementation of a phased funding strategy, involving local businesses and organisations.

### **NHDC Funding**

2017/18 - £13,650;

2018/19 - £6,785;

2019/20 - £4,583;

2020/21 - £2,292

2021/22 - £0.

Without this funding, the future of the Forum cannot be assured; it is likely that BTP will resist our initial efforts, as they lose sponsors to the new model.

### **Finance**

Procedures for running the Forum's finances are currently being drawn up by Jim McNally, Chair, and the Finance Director, Carrie Dunne.

The business bank account was opened with a balance of £2000.00 with a personal deposit from Jim McNally. This will help with start up costs (e.g.: BEF logo and domain names), run the first event (The Big Lunch) and pay Richard Sell, the Town Centre Manager.

NHDC has agreed to fund the BEF a total of £27,310 over a 4-year period, reducing in amount each year. For the financial year 2017/2018 this will help with start up costs for the remaining events. The BEF will be self-sustaining in year 5 (2021/2022).

Funding will be boosted by annual sponsorship or by sponsoring specific events. So far, sponsors include Knights Templar Sports for The Big Lunch and Paul's Cycles for the Cycling Challenge. Negotiations continue with regard to other potential sponsorship opportunities.

A budget will be devised for each event based on BTP's available accounts with updated costs. It must be said that the available figures are not particularly helpful. The budget for The Big Lunch will be £1200 with projected sales of 300 tickets and monies from sponsors and stalls.

### **Monitoring the success of the project**

Development & enhancement of the Baldock Town Events Programme. This programme is a living document, but at the moment the Forum is committed to organising at least five events in 2017, set out below:

<b>Baldock Beast Half Marathon</b> (BTP Event)	26 February 2017
<b>Big Lunch</b>	8 June 2017
<b>Baldock Cycle Challenge</b>	23 July 2017
<b>Baldock 10K run</b> (provisional)	Sept/Oct 2017
<b>Baldock Street Food Festival</b> (provisional)	Oct/Nov 2017
<b>Baldock Christmas Fair</b>	Dec 2017.

### **Future Management Plans**

- Select and recruit directors for posts that are currently vacant (Fundraising and Events).
- Continue to hold quarterly Board Meetings with Advisors to ensure community cohesion and relevance. The first such meeting was held on 22 May 2017 and produced a number of really positive outcomes.
- Develop and enhance a co-operative relationship with NHDC and other stakeholders.
- Ensure that early planning for each event is initiated.
- Develop open and constructive relationships with event suppliers in Baldock, to the benefit of the whole community.